

Besides, she was, on the whole, very happy in her work of teaching, especially in the case of the Crown-Prince, the Chowfa Chulalonkorn, who died some years before her, but not until she had in rather a notable way seen the travail of her soul with him. It was he who, very much under her influence, among other reforms abolished slavery in Siam. All her pupils of the harem were devotedly attached to her, and grew to put almost unlimited faith in her beneficence and might. She became to these poor helpless creatures a kind of sanctuary from the incalculable caprices of their all-powerful lord, which might at any moment fall upon them in the shape of ruthless scourgings, imprisonment in a foul *oubliette*, or even death. She was born with a strong faculty for hatred of injustice and cruelty and all unreason, and with the very highest gift of woman implanted in her breast in a degree of vigour which is rare indeed, the dare-devil courage of protective motherliness. With all that too she was unexpectedly "canny," as the Scotch say, and sometimes showed a good deal of tact in managing the royal beast. For instance, she would break in upon one of his fits of fury by appealing to his omniscience on some point of Oriental grammar—a transparent device, which, however, never failed to bring uppermost in him for the moment the spectacled pedant and at least suspend the monstrous lash or chain of the tyrant underneath. Besides, the prime-minister, essentially a man of singular justice of mind, was apt to back her up, often with a happy appearance of fortuitousness. The result was that on many occasions she was enabled to stand between the dragon and his wrath, and figured in the imaginations of these simple souls (wiser than we to see authentic *avatars* and condescensions of the divine in their living helpers, instead of waiting till these have been dead for a comfortable spell of centuries before piling up temples over their bones and ashes!) as a kind of tutelary goddess under whose wings the oppressed could flee for refuge. This woman "was a shelter from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."