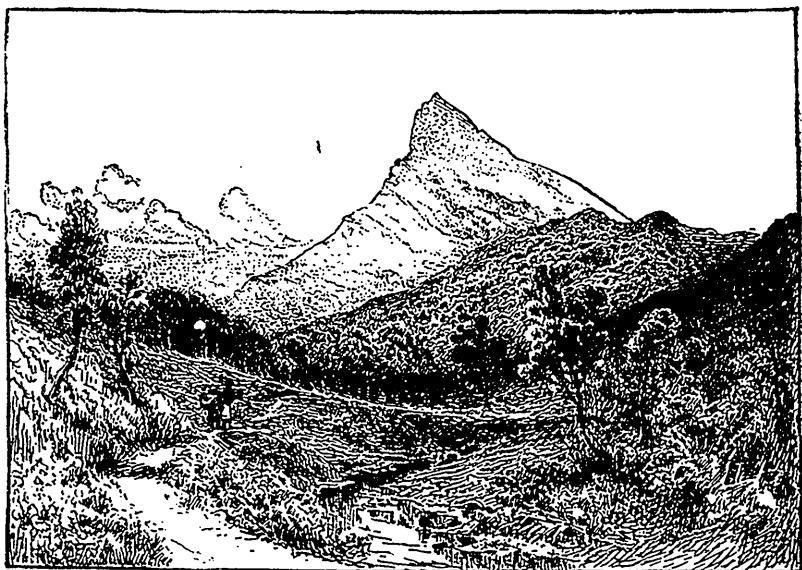


The kings and priests of Burma, Siam, and Cambodia send regular yearly tribute to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth, and more or less reverence is paid to it in India, China, and Japan.

The queen of all palms is the Talipot, which for thirty years from its birth pushes up its straight white, shining trunk, with its crown of dark-green leaves, till it reaches a height of a hundred feet or more. Then it blooms—and such a bloom!—a tall pyramidal spike of white blossoms forty feet above its crown of huge green fans, perhaps the noblest flower the world produces. Each bloom forms a nut, and the tree, having scattered its seeds to become palms in their turn, dies of the supreme effort.



ADAM'S PEAK, CEYLON.

But the great sight is the giant bamboo, which grows in mighty clumps by the bank of the fine river that flows round the gardens. These form enormous green thickets more than 100 feet high, and the same in thickness, consisting of eighty or 100 tall, cylindrical stems, each from one to two feet thick. They grow so closely crowded together that a cat would find it difficult to find her way through. They shoot seventy or eighty feet into the air without a break, and then spread out into immense branches of slender little leaves that give the appearance of gigantic green ostrich feathers. As everyone knows, the bamboo is one of the most useful plants that grow in the tropics, and I might fill my book with a description of all the uses to which it may be put.