

in sheaves by every mail, and especially to make clear to him the murky sentences and "gloomily deceiving terms" of the French communications, in which he scented a world of sinister meaning and stealthy aggression. To all this, pitiless as were his exactions in the detail of it, she made no objection. She even found time, in the midst of all, to pursue her Oriental studies and get even with her taskmaster by roping him in, much to the old royal pedant's delight! as her instructor. But such compliance would have availed her little towards establishing a tolerable position for herself, had she not shown him quite unmistakably that she was no mere tool in his hands, but, on the contrary, a very distinct and independent personality, encountering him infallibly, at certain well-marked points, with a will of her own, as much more sovereign as it was finer than his. The first conflict between them arose upon the question as to where she was to live. By the terms of the engagement she and her boy had his royal word for a house of their own in the neighbourhood of the palace. This, however, he chose to forget. It would be more economical, which told much with him, and at the same time more convenient, to have her within a minute's call within the walls. But she had made up her mind once for all not to hear of this highly eligible arrangement. The king was equally determined to have it his way. As early as the second time he vouchsafed her audience, he declared in his most majestic and definitive voice: "It is our pleasure that you shall reside in the palace with our family." That was to be the end of the whole affair. It was not so. "It would be quite impossible," she replied, for her to obey His Majesty's commands in this matter. The gates were locked every evening and she would feel like a prisoner. "Of course she would!" Mongkut thought. All Siam was, in relation to him; just a cage of prisoners. That was mere foolishness. But she stuck to it, and reminded him of his gracious promise. Now this was too much. No one had ever dared to pester him with such imbecilities in his life. "His own words of a month ago!" That was a month ago and this was to-day. A month ago he had imaged