

concubines as wished to learn English,—saw him, very much from the inside, this learned sage, enlightened ruler, and astute man of the world, this royal "Causeway Saint" as the Scotch would call him, was quite an extreme case of the "house deevil." He was there just what the vast majority of manhood would have been had they been stuck up on his dehumanizing pedestal, surrounded by squatting slaves whose idea of supreme bliss was that they might be used for the gratification of his most preposterous whim, a petulant and cruel despot, roused to murderous rage by the slightest rub against his grain, a spoilt baby with thunderbolts for a rattle and gum-comfort!—who bitterly resented the mockery of being called in the English geographies an "absolute King," because, in his own words, he could not (as he would have dearly loved to be able to do) "kill one of his enemies by pointing his stick at him." Had he only been charged with the high voltage thus pithily desiderated, there would have been much need for lightning-rods among the Jesuits and other French residents in Bangkok, and even Mrs. Leonowens herself would scarcely have escaped the fate of Semele.

For though, as we have seen, she did not exasperate this very wide-awake pagan with the lamentations of Exeter Hall and good Bishop Heber's hymn, or any other melodious baas of compassion for the "heathen in his blindness," she was indeed "one great difficulty" to him. She showed him that there were still more stringent limits to his power than the highly regrettable inefficacy of his bamboo-cane for death-dealing. His immensely varied experience of her sex had aroused the reasonable expectation that she as a woman would give little trouble. It was his fate, however, in this particular instance, to run against the shock of an entirely novel type.

He meant to get his money's worth out of her with a vengeance. She was not only to teach English to his wives and children; she was also to help him in his voluminous foreign correspondence, copy in a fair round hand "for his readily *perusal" the letters that came to him from abroad

*Adverb, because the noun "perusal" is verbal. Excellent Greek construction!