

POINTS OF VIEW.

"Oh, give me time," she, trembling, said, "a little time to think it over." He smiled and kissed her drooping head, And yielded like a ten' ter lover. "She's but a child," he mused that night, "Who shuns from fate, afraid to test it; She really seemed quite in a fight." He little knew how ne'er he'd guessed it. "How shall I break with Jack?" she mused, "He's got my letters. Oh good gracious! And Harry has my ring," she groaned; "He'll keep it, too, he's so adacious. "Was ever girl in such a fix?" I must get rid of Wil and Stephen, And George, and Archibald; that's it. And poor, dear cousin Tom makes seven." As thus she grieved in accents wild, He said, while joy his features brightened: "Yes, she is nothing but a child. And that is why she seemed so frightened."

—[The Club.]

SIAM AND ITS PEOPLE.

Public interest in Siam and curiosity as to the resources, degree of civilization, habits and customs of the Siamese have been quickened by the Franco-Chinese imbroglio, and accordingly the following article will be found interesting and instructive:

The Siamese trace their descent from the first disciples of Buddha. Their descendants have established themselves in a province of what is now North Laos, were so annoyed by their enemies that they deserted their country and founded a city in Western Siam. The conquered Southern Siam, then held by the Cambodians, and changed their seat of government to Aguthia, a short distance north of the present capital. The Lao, the Cambodians, the Peguans from the West, Chinese captives and Hindus were all brought together in the capital city; and this period (1350) marks the commencement of Siam's authentic history.

Along in the seventeenth century foreign ideas commenced to be kindly received in Siam, and a European merchant who had become a great favorite with the people and the king on account of his practical ability and the interest he took in their welfare, was appointed governor of all the northern provinces. He suggested to the king the propriety of erecting a fort, on European principles, to protect his capital. The king accordingly selected a plot of garden ground on the west bank near the mouth of a canal, and constructed a fort. This garden ground became a portion of the site of the unique city of Bangkok, and the fort still stands near the royal residence. Aguthia was destroyed by the Burmese when they conquered Siam in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The fort had been erected for a century, and the city of Bangkok had so far advanced in magnificence that a few years after the destruction of the old capital it was occupied by the royal family. The first king to hold his court in Bangkok was of Chinese origin, he having delivered his country from the Burmese.

There is probably no country in the world where Buddhism has so absolute a sway as in Siam. Even more profusely than in Burma is the wealth of the kingdom lavished upon temples and priests. It is stated that in the capital alone there are 20,000 priests supported by voluntary contributions.

THE SIAMESE CAPITAL.

Bangkok, the capital, is in many respects a singular city. Its population is estimated at all the way from 500,000 to 1,000,000, and is curiously mixed and cosmopolitan. Siamese and Chinese predominate in its streets, though the Malays are also very numerous, and frequent Europeans demonstrate the presence of Western civilization and interests. They are, in fact, the leaven of Siam, and to their influence and the spread of Western ideas are due the various improvements noticeable in the great city from which political power proceeds to the utmost boundaries of Siam. The army is officered by Europeans, chiefly English and Danes; the navy is commanded by Europeans, and of the many business enterprises in Siam, most of those which connect it with the outside world are superintended by Europeans. There is little love lost, however, between the native and foreign elements of society, and the intense hatred felt for all foreigners by the large Chinese population may at any moment prove disastrous to all foreign interests.

English, French, German, Russian are all alike to the low class Chinamen, who cannot distinguish between their languages, and all are hated alike. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that the presence of a hostile fleet in the river may at any time excite the passions of the populace to an uncontrollable degree, and mob violence in the East has a meaning which is unknown in Western lands.

Bangkok is the Eastern Venice. Formerly all its houses were built on the land, but the prevalence of cholera many years ago so alarmed the government that it ordered the houses on the banks to be abandoned and directed the people to live on the river itself. Thousands upon thousands of houses were consequently built on rafts and moored to the banks of the river, and although the policy of river houses has been to some extent modified by the government, no inconsiderable part of the capital is still on the waters of the Menam. The houses are of slight materials, constructed on bamboo rafts, each attended by a canoe, for to the river resident of Bangkok a skiff is as indispensable as a street car to the suburban resident in an American city. Formerly the right to build on the banks was reserved to the king, nobility, clergy and privileged characters.

This right has been greatly extended, and now Bangkok has spread its limits on both sides of the Menam. The most striking features of the city are the palaces and the temples. The former are located in a citadel securely fortified against sudden attack or prolonged siege and comprise the palaces of the two kings and a variety of temples and other structures pertaining to the court. As the first king has about 5,000 women attached to the court in one capacity or another, the palaces are, as may be conjectured, very roomy.

GUARDS OF THE HAREM.

Prominent among the attendants are the Amazon guards of the harems. They are women trained to the use of arms and employed to guard the king's wives, and whenever a lady of the harem appears in public, she is attended by a retinue of these female soldiers, who answer with their lives for her seclusion. Several very magnificent temples are within the limits of the palace walls, the most remarkable being that of the "Sleeping Idol" and that of the "Emerald Idol." The Sleeping Idol is a statue 150 feet long, overlaid from head to foot with gold, in many places covered with inscriptions and representations of the transmigrations of Buddha. Not far away is the palace of the White Elephant, who is really a deity and throughout Siam is reverenced as such. He has

his court, his attendants, his throngs of servants, and is treated like a prince. The White Elephant is an albino, not completely white, but here and there having spots of cream color over his otherwise dusky hide. The Emerald Idol's temple is a wonderful structure of the utmost magnificence, the doors and much of the wall being plated with gold. The idol itself is said to be a solid emerald twelve inches high by eight wide, the hair and dress of the rude figure being made of gold studded with precious gems.

Siam is one of the least known of the great countries of Asia. It lies at the lower part of the peninsula of farther India, and it is cut up by the gulf of Siam. The mighty river Menam runs through it from north to south, and the whole country is a network of canals. In the winter a large part of it is covered with water and the people go from house to house and from place to place in the skin boats.

Siam is about four times as big as the State of New York; it contains about 10,000,000 people, and the country and the people, body and soul, belong to the king. The king has the right to every man's labor, and the women whom he falls upon must enter his harem. He has the most arbitrary power of any king of the East, and he is one of the rich monarchs of the world.

THE ROYAL PALACE.

His palace in Bangkok is a magnificent structure, with golden elephants guarding its entrances. It has twenty-five acres of ground about it, and it is said that 5,000 people live within the palace walls.

The king is said to have 300 wives, but the queen, who is the chief of these, is his majesty's half sister. She is a very bright woman and has made herself beneficial to her charity. She rules the royal and smokes cigarettes.

Siam is the home of Buddhism. There are 25,000 Buddhist priests in the Siamese capital, and these are of all ages, from 16 to 80. They go about with shaved heads and yellow stripes of cloth wound about their half-naked bodies, and they chew the betel and smoke cigarettes as they go bobbing from house to house.

Chulalong Kom, the king, is one of the brightest of Asiatic rulers and has done much to advance civilization in Siam. He has put telegraph lines throughout a great part of his kingdom. There is now a street car line in Bangkok and the city has electric lights.

It used to be that the money used in Siam was cowrie shells, or silver and gold buttons. The king has adopted a coinage, making money much the same as that of ours. He has a mint of his own, and he imports Mexican dollars and recasts these into coins for the use of his people. The coin of value in Siam is the rial, and the chief silver coin is about the size of a half dollar.

He has a post office department, and Siam belongs to the international postal union. The king talks English, and he is thinking of building a railroad which will open up the interior of his rich kingdom. Siam is full of valuable resources. It has mighty forests of teakwood and its mines contain the finest of gold and silver.

The king has an income of about \$10,000,000 a year, and he is said to have about \$50,000,000 stored away in his coffers. He has his own secretary of the treasury, but he signs all the checks himself, and is said to be a very fine business man. He has his cabinet, just as our president has, and he has his war department, state department, interior department and agricultural department.

His country is divided up into forty-one provinces, presided over by governors, and he runs things to suit himself, making such appointments as he chooses. THE BURDEN OF TAXES.

The people of Siam are taxed for all they are worth. Everything under the sun has to pay a percentage to the government. A great part of the revenue of the king comes from the gambling establishments. The people are a nation of gamblers, and the gambling taxes bring in \$500,000 a year. The taxes are all farmed out, as are also the people, who as slaves of the king are ordered to work for him a part of every year.

It is only the Chinese who are not subject to such service, and they are released from it by the payment of a poll tax. There are many Chinese in Siam, and it is said that they are fastswallowing up the country.

The king of Siam is very anxious to strengthen the relations with foreign powers. He realizes the danger which constantly menaces his country from its geographical position. It is the meet of the sandwich of farther India. One slice of this sandwich belongs to France, and includes Cochin China. The other slice belongs to Great Britain, and it takes up the provinces of Burma. Siam lies in the centre, and it is richer than either.

Both France and England are land hungry, and they look with greedy eyes upon Siam. It is one of the richest plums which still hang on the tree of barbarism in the far East.

The army is nothing to speak of. Every man has to serve the state for three months in the year, but there is no armed militia. In case of a war, that neither of these great countries wants the other to have it. Probably eventually it will be divided between them. The king of Siam is still a young man. He will be 40 years old September 21. He is not over five feet high, but is very straight and well formed. In his court dress he wears a vast fortune of jewels.

His head is crowned with a golden pyramid of jewels. He puts upon state occasions a coat, vest and broadcloth suit, which are loaded down with jewels, and he often wears upon state occasions precious stones which are worth \$1,000,000. The Siamese do not wear trousers. The strong, which they tie above the waist and tuck in at the back, takes their place. The king wears silk stockings, shoes which are pointed like the toes of the Turk, and his costume is a beautiful one. He is not a bad looking man; his face is olive brown, his eyes are black, his forehead is high and his eyes are slightly almond in shape. He is very fond of his wife — that is, his half-sister wife — and he makes a great deal of the crown prince.

NATURE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The government of Siam is in some respects much like that of other countries having a limited monarchy, while in one particular it is curiously different. There are two kings, a first and a second, each of whom has a state establishment, but the other is honored as a sovereign. The whole country is divided into districts, the government of each being administered by a local official who is Siamese or Luosian, or Malay, according to the prominence of the people in these nationalities in the population. The reigning king is Chulalong Kom I., known also as Somdet Phra Paraminde Maha, who ascended the

throne in 1863, and who governs by means of a council of six princes and from ten to twenty members, appointed by himself. Nominally a limited monarchy, there are so many ways of setting aside the established laws of the kingdom that although the Siamese call themselves the Thai, "the free," and their kingdom the Muang Thai, "the free kingdom," they are practically under the same kind of government as most other Asiatics.

The king of Siam is, comparatively speaking, a rich monarch, having an annual revenue somewhat exceeding £2,000,000, of which sum £287,000 comes from the land taxes, £35,000 from the taxes on fruit trees, £100,000 from the spirit tax, £120,000 from the opium tax, £100,000 from the gambling tax, £143,000 from the customs duties, £90,000 from the tin tax, £27,000 from the tax on edible birds' nests, and about the same amount from the fishes tax.

As all the taxes are, however, farmed out, and the Siamese tax farmers are no more honest than the people of the same business in other parts of the world, his majesty of Siam loses no small sum annually from the peculations and embezzlements of his agents, and it is even asserted that scarcely more than half the amount due reaches the royal coffers. He probably makes up the difference in the personal service exacted from all Siamese natives, every Siamese inhabitant of the kingdom being required, if called upon, to give at least three months' labor in the year to his sovereign. The result may be beneficial, so far as the king is concerned, but as he frequently calls for this service at a time when the crops should be planted, cultivated or gathered, the result is far from beneficial to either the agriculture or the general prosperity of the kingdom.

All the inhabitants are required to render military service, exceptions, however, being made in favor of the priests, of the Chinese, who are taxed instead; of slaves, of government officials and of those who are willing and able to purchase exemption by hiring a substitute. The whole kingdom is practically, therefore, at the king's command both in time of peace and of war, and although it is, in some respects, one of the richest countries on the globe, its natural advantages lie unimproved, and a territory almost the size of Texas has thus an annual export of only about \$12,000,000 a year, consisting mostly of rice, tea, pepper and other tropical products.

THE EMPIRE.

The limits of Siam on the north and east have always been rather indefinite, for to the north, adjoining British Burma, there lay a number of semi-independent States, which sometimes owned allegiance to Siam and sometimes to Burma, as the influence of one or the other preponderated. The same difficulty existed in the East, where the Annamites sometimes paid tribute to China and sometimes to Siam. Siam itself has in times past been a dependency of the Chinese empire, and even now a sort of allegiance is acknowledged and a tribute paid. So far as the Siamese territory can be estimated, its utmost limits at the time of its greatest extent were about 1,200 miles from north to south and 700 miles in width, or very nearly one-third the size of the United States. That, however, was before the English conquests in Burma, which considerably reduced the nominal size of the empire. Its present area is estimated at 250,000 square miles, while it has a population of 2,000,000 Siamese, 3,000,000 Luosians, and 1,000,000 each of Chinese or Malays.

The Siamese have been a bad reputation by travelers being turbulent, quarrelsome and destitute of good qualities, but apparently do not deserve it, for the best authorities describe them as a peaceable, polite and kindly people. They are not particularly good-looking, having a Mongolian aspect, with large heads, broad faces, wide mouths, short noses, low foreheads, and the teeth, in accordance with the prevailing fashion, stained a repulsive black. Like most nations having little beard, they regard this feature as a blemish, and early in life carefully extract the hairs from their faces. Except a small tuft on the top of the head, the cranium is shorn, while the clothing, as is common in Eastern and torrid countries, is of an exceedingly airy and primitive character.

The fertility of the cultivated land in the Menam valley is described by travelers as something wonderful. Most of the river valley is what is called in this country bottom land, which is annually overflowed and fertilized by the river, and is described as yielding as bountifully as the valley of the Nile. The wealth of the forests is wonderful, but on account of the climate large trees have never yet been explored, and what may lie beyond is unknown. In the tropical jungles of Northern and Central Siam, however, grow the gutta-percha and lac, the strongest woods and hundreds of medicinal herbs. The bamboo is found everywhere, and it and the rattan form a large portion of the houses of the population; teak, rosewood, ebony and other valuable timber trees are found in profusion, and must in time become sources of great wealth to that power will also fall heir to a good deal of trouble with the population, which is so mixed and heterogeneous a character that the elements of serious difficulty are always present.

WHY TREES ATTRACT LIGHTNING.

No tree is entirely protected against being struck by lightning. When the atmosphere is overcharged with electricity all of them are liable to become the aim of some bolt, but the beech is the one in the whole category of trees that is more rarely struck than any other.

Professor Hellman, in his statistics on this subject, says that lightning strikes pine wood trees fifteen times oftener and oak trees fifty-four times oftener than the beech. This is very well known to frequenters of timbered regions. Traces of lightning bolts are most frequently found on oak trees, while only rarely are they found in the beech. It was thought at first that the condition of the ground had much to do with this unequal distribution of lightning strokes of trees, but this is not the case. It is the characteristic condition of the tree itself that accounts for it. Trees which contain oily substances to a high degree, even in the summer, may be regarded as comparatively lightning-proof, while those containing glucose matter attract the lightning more frequently. Dead branches are very apt to increase the danger. It need only be cited that acorns are valuable because they contain fifty-four per cent. of glucose matter and only four per cent. of oil, while from the beech, pig-nut oil is made. —[St. Louis Post-Dispatch.]

DIFFERENT IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

The ladies in Japan gild their teeth and those of the Indies paint them red. The pearl of teeth must be dyed black to be beautiful in Gzurat. In Greeneland the ladies color their faces with blue and yellow. However fresh the complexion of a Muscovite may be she would think herself ugly if she were not plastered over with paint. The Chinese must have their feet as diminutive as those of the she goats, and to render them thus their youth is passed in tortures. In ancient Persia an aquiline nose was often thought worthy of the crown, and if there was any competition between the princesses the young lady herself, and of the young lady herself, and of the enjoyment of the company for whom she is asked to perform.

It is now seen, even by a great many parents, that unless Miss Martha has a taste for music, just as Miss Martha has a taste for drawing and painting and Miss Elizabeth a taste for housekeeping, it is useless to drive her to the piano stool for a certain number of hours practice daily; for it is the lesson of experience in many households that Miss Mary will get out of practice just as soon as she has a sufficient excuse for avoiding her irksome daily task. And if her voice is more musical on the easy level of conversation than in climbing up and down the stairs of the diatonic scale the comfort of others, besides that of Miss Mary, comes into the question, with a title to be considered. —[New York Press.]

THE MUSIC MYTH.

By the "music myth" we mean the old-fashioned idea that a young woman's education is not complete unless she can perform on the piano or some other musical instrument at least well enough to accompany her own voice in song. There is reason to believe that this myth is going out of fashion. It has long been insisted on, with a more or less cruel disregard, at times, of the wishes of the young lady herself, and of the enjoyment of the company for whom she is asked to perform.

AT ENTOMOLOGICAL PARADOX.

Of all the wonderful creations of nature few will excite greater amazement if given microscopic examination and careful attention than the "vine-fretter." Catch one of these little mites at the moment of its birth, this in the spring or early summer, when they are actually born and not hatched as other insects are, and put it where it has no chance of contact with others of its species. Within a surprisingly short period it will give birth to others of its kind. Instantly isolate the new arrivals and after they have acquired a certain growth it will be noted that they, too, are reproducing their kind, just as their progenitor had done; all of which proves that these beings of extraordinary fecundity are real androgynous creatures without distinctive sex.

During the spring and early summer, as hinted above, all vine-fretters are viviparous, that is, they bring forth their young alive. Toward the beginning of autumn, strange as it may seem, all is changed, among the new, as well as the older generations, each laying eggs which are not hatched until the return of warm weather the following spring. There may be other insects equally as paradoxical in the manner of reproduction as the vine-fretter, but "ye curious man," has not yet discovered them. —[St. Louis Republic.]

AROUND THE HOUSE.

To prevent starch from sticking, a good plan is to put a teaspoonful of clean white lard into a pint of thick starch and stir it thoroughly through the mixture.

To clean mahogany, take one pint of turpentine and one-half pint vinegar; wet a woollen rag with the liquid, and rub the wood the way of the grain, then polish with a piece of flannel and soft cloth.

To clean plush invert a hot flat iron, place upon it a single thickness of wet cotton cloth, lay the plush upon the cloth, with the wrong side downward, and rub gently with a dry cloth until the pile is raised; then take the plush from the iron, lay it on a table, and brush with a soft brush.

FOR THE FAIR SEX.

CORN STARCH AND POWDER.

Every season the young woman who assumes great superiority to her kind because she doesn't use powder, "but merely corn starch," appears upon the scene. There is no more virtue in corn starch than in well-selected powders. It does not contain mineral substances injurious to the skin, as some cheap powders do, but it has exactly the same effect in clogging the pores of the skin. It is, moreover, somewhat coarser than the best powders prepared for the face, and is, therefore, not quite so soothng. If women must powder let them buy a good, simple face powder and use it as lightly as possible. And let them remember to wash their faces very carefully with hot water after using it, in order to clear and open the pores of the skin. —[St. Louis Star-Sayings.]

NEWEST OUTCOME IN HOLLAND.

The brown holland suit, though popular several years ago, was never pretty in itself nor becoming to its wearer unless her complexion was youthful and beyond reproach. Still, in point of cut, it was superior to the newest outcome in Holland. This has a skirt extremely wide around the hem, standing away from the feet on the front and sides. A pleated trimming divides the skirt midway of its length. The coat is shorter than an Eton jacket, so as to reveal a bit of the blouse bodice all around. This jacket has revers out of proportion to its size, and these, as a rule, are overlaid with linen gimp. Anything better calculated to cut up the figure cannot well be supposed. —[