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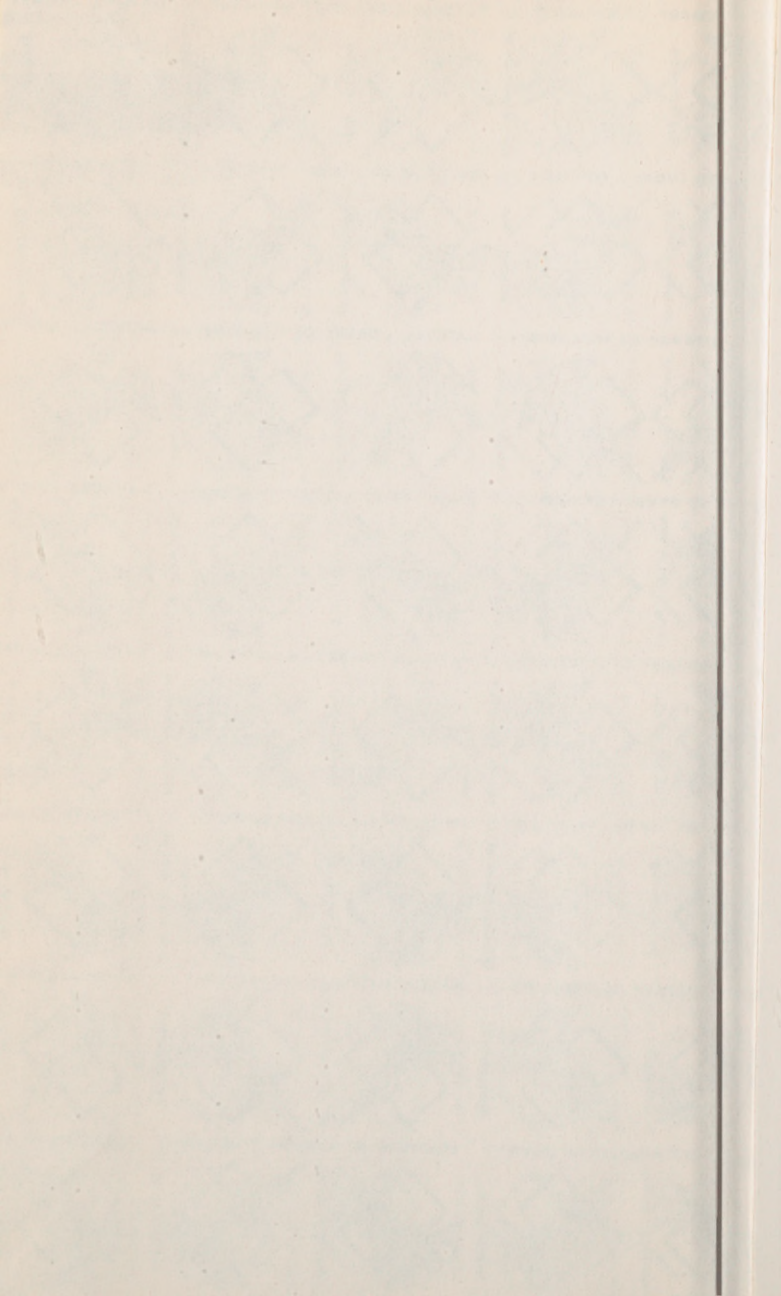
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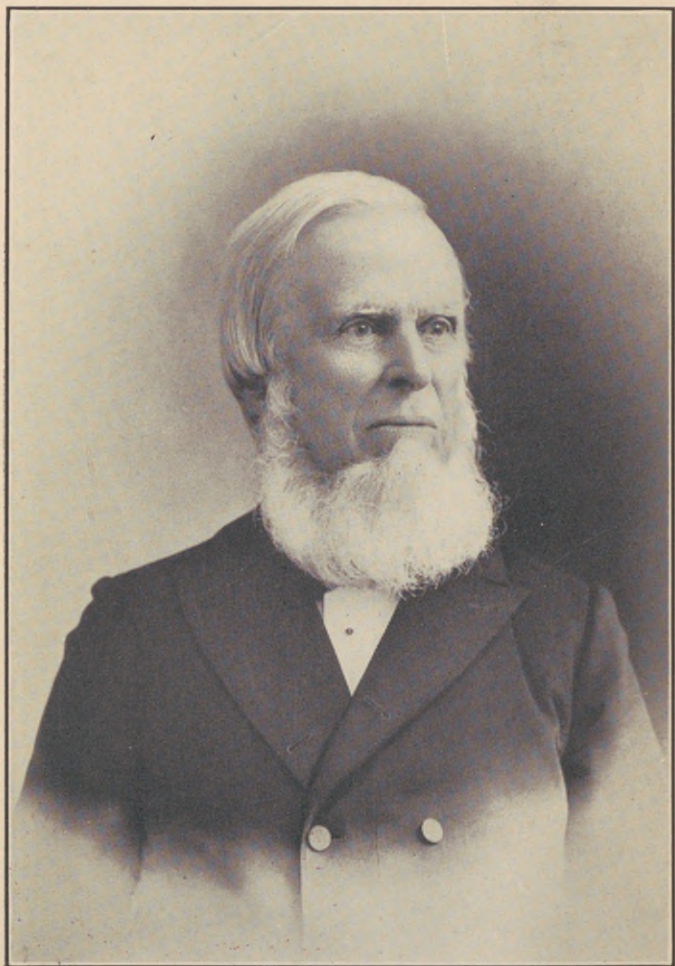
SAMUEL REYNOLDS HOUSE

"THE MAN WITH THE GENTLE HEART"









REV. SAMUEL REYNOLDS HOUSE, M.D.



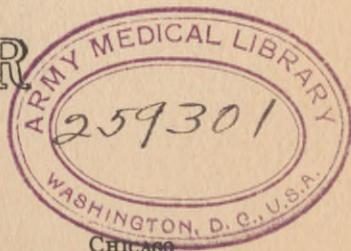
"The Man With the Gentle Heart"

# Samuel Reynolds House of Siam

Pioneer Medical Missionary  
1847-1876

By  
GEORGE HAWS FELTUS, A.M., B.D.

ILLUSTRATED



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## Preface

QUAINT, old-time title pages sought to present an epitome of the contents of the volume. While the name of Dr. House occupies the sole post of honour on this present title page, none would be more urgent than he to have that place shared by his wife, Harriet Pettit House, and her assistant, Arabella Anderson Noyes, and by their godson, Boon Itt, whose achievements occupy a good share of the pages that follow.

The essential material in this book has been drawn from the letters and journal of Dr. House, now for the first time available for the purpose. This material has been supplemented by correspondence with various individuals connected with the principal persons mentioned. The facts thus ascertained have been interpreted and amplified by the careful reading of nearly every book in English on Siamese subjects. For this reason, the narrative may claim to be fairly complete and authentic.

Two reasons have prompted publication. One reason is to make accessible valuable historical materials. In the archives of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions no records covering this period have been found other than the meagre references in the annual reports of the Board. The diary of Dr. House's co-worker, Rev. Stephen Mattoon, was destroyed by fire; and, so far as is known, no other private records for those early years are in existence. The only primary source of information is the chapter, "History of



Missions in Siam," from the pen of Dr. House, in the volume *Siam and Laos*, in which his modesty has obscured the importance of his own labours. So this book is offered as a contribution to the history of the Church in Siam.

The other reason is that the Church is entitled to the stimulus of the heroic examples of these godly people. Biographies, at best, do not appeal to a large circle of readers. Missionary biographies appeal to fewer still. However, a book that stimulates a few hundred workers in the vineyard of the Lord may effect more good in the long run than a book of great but passing popularity. I venture to believe that few will read the record of the life-work of Dr. and Mrs. House and the brief story of Boon Itt without being quickened by the example of their persistent faith, buoyant hopefulness, sublime trust and apostolic devotion.

Not the least worth while do I count it to be able to place this narrative in the hands of the young Church of Siam that she may transmit to the rising generation the story of "THE MAN WITH THE GENTLE HEART."

I acknowledge with appreciation the hearty encouragement of friends to publish what my own inclination would have allowed to remain in private manuscript. Also, I gladly state that publication would not have been possible without the financial assistance of friends who feel that the Church of today should have the privilege of knowing these noble characters, but who themselves prefer to remain unnamed.

GEORGE HAWS FELTUS.

*The Manse, Waterford, N. Y.*

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## I

### A SUDDEN PLUNGE INTO WORK

**D**R. SAMUEL R. HOUSE did not have time nor need to "hang out a shingle" upon reaching Bangkok. He had been there only a few days—not long enough to unpack his goods—when "a message came from some great man by three trusty servants that a servant whom he loved very much had got angry and had half cut his hand off with a sword."

This wound was not accidental but self-inflicted. It was a perverted result of a Siamese custom. In those days slavery prevailed in the country. Besides the war-captives who were cast into slavery, custom made it possible for any of the common people to be sold into servitude. If a man failed to pay a debt there were two alternatives before him, to be confined in one of the horrible jails until he discharged his obligation, or to sell himself or his wife or children into slavery to remain in that state until the accumulated value of the services should cancel the debt.

Only too often these debts were the result of gambling, a vice that was universally prevalent under license of the government. If the debtor was fortunate enough, he might sell the chosen victim to some lord who was willing to accept the services in pledge for a loan with which to pay the actual creditor. Such an arrangement was not altogether without its

advantages, for many an improvident spendthrift had a comfortable living for himself and family assured by the better management of his lord. But once in servitude the victim was likely to be held in peonage indefinitely, because usury on the loan was liable to mount up faster than the value of services rendered.

It will readily be imagined that a man so improvident as to permit himself to fall into slavery would not be the most willing worker, and many would be the tricks of the lazy man to labour as little as possible. A rather common scheme to avoid an unpleasant duty or merely to spite the over-lord was to go to the extreme of inflicting upon self a wound that would incapacitate from work. Such was the nature of this first surgical case to which Dr. House was called.

The readiness with which this great man summoned a strange foreign doctor will be easily understood when it is known that for twelve years previous there had been an American physician in Bangkok. Since 1835 Rev. Daniel B. Bradley, M.D., representing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A B C F M), had been practising medicine and he had established a high reputation among all classes for western medicine and surgery. On account of the recent death of his wife, Dr. Bradley, with his young children, had sailed for home only a few weeks before the arrival of the new missionary.

When Dr. House set out for Siam he knew that Dr. Bradley was there and, having had no practical experience in his profession before leaving home, he looked forward to beginning his labours in association with one who not only was a skilled practitioner

but who also knew the pathological conditions of the Siamese. When, upon arrival, Dr. House discovered that Dr. Bradley had withdrawn he felt some alarm at the absence of professional counsel, for he had a constitutional lack of self-confidence that caused him to feel a painful burden of responsibility in prescribing for patients. At the end of the first six months he wrote :

“ Whatever seemed once likely to be my fate it is pretty certain now that there is more danger of my wearing out than of rusting out in this land. Have been on the run or occupied with visitors all the day and evening . . . and my poor brain has, like its fellow labourer the heart, been compelled to go through with a great deal. What sights of human misery I am compelled to see. And to feel that I have not the power of skill to alleviate,—the iron enters my soul.”

Whatever may have been the first effect of being compelled to enter upon his profession alone, it is doubtful whether Dr. House ever perceived that this constraint was probably one means by which he gained the confidence of the Siamese within a very short period. For instead of being regarded either as a competitor or as an assistant to Dr. Bradley, he was accepted at the outset upon the reputation which his predecessor had so firmly established. It was this repute of western medicine which caused the great man to send so promptly for an unknown physician to treat the self-mutilated servant.

Quickly it became known among the people of Bangkok that another physician had arrived. The calls for treatment came in such numbers and with



such importunity that in self-defense it was deemed wise to open the dispensary which had remained closed since the departure of Dr. Bradley, although there was only a limited supply of drugs on hand and the nearest base of supplies was London. The dispensary, or hospital as it was sometimes called, of which Dr. House thus suddenly found himself the proprietor and whole staff, was just one of the innumerable floating houses which lined the river banks of the Siamese capital. It is said that when this new capital was being established the common people were not allowed to build houses on land but permitted to live only in boats. At any rate, until modern times the larger portion of the population lived in floating houses.

These houses are simply constructed. A raft of bamboo forms the foundation, which is moored to the bank or to poles driven into the mud. Upon that foundation a one-story house of boards, thatched with palm leaves, is built. The house is, customarily, divided into three rooms. At either end, extending clear across the floor is a kitchen and a common bedroom. The space between is occupied by the common living-room and a porch. The living-room is fully open along the porch, from which it is separated by the rise of a step. Closely packed together in irregular rows, sometimes two or three deep, these houses are ranged along the banks of the river and of the many canals that form the Venetian highways of the city. The channel beneath the houses, kept from being stagnant by movement of the tide, served at once as the sewer and the family bath. Many of these houses are occupied as stores, with their mer-



chandise exposed to the full view of the customer who does his shopping in a boat.

It was such a house as this that served the missionary as a hospital. But "hospital" is scarcely the proper word to use judged from the equipment, which consisted of a chair or two, a table for operations and a few mats for the patients. But the place had one great advantage—the open side exposed the work of the foreign doctor to the gaze of the curious natives who stopped while passing in their boats, and then related to their friends the wonders they had seen.

Here in this rude native shelter, until he gave up his profession, Dr. House applied himself with deep devotion and self-abandon to relieving the physical sufferings of the people. He placed himself wholly at their service, and made no discrimination between rank of those he served. Frequently he would not reach the dinner table till the middle of the afternoon, detained by the importuning patients; and he even laments that the people would not summon him in the night time in case of serious need.

#### SOME TYPICAL CASES

His record of patients, to one who is not familiar with a physician's records, gives astonishment at the kind of cases which seemed to predominate. One class was the ulcers and running sores—many of them most aggravated. These usually were the result of long-neglected wounds. He writes of extracting bamboo splinters great and small that had become imbedded in the flesh and remained there to produce serious inflammation and infection. In such cases an ignorance too dense for intelligence to comprehend

was the contributory cause of untold suffering. A second class of cases frequently appearing was that of fresh wounds resulting from drunken brawls, street fights, treachery and revenge, or self-mutilation. Scarcely a week passed but a patient was brought in with head cut open, face gashed, back lashed, or some other gaping cut. But most loathsome of all were the diseases which the doctor characterised as the result of vices—diseases which found victims among all sorts and conditions of men who “working that which is unseemly” received “in themselves that recompense of their errors which was meet.”

A cursory review of one day's succession of patients will be suggestive. Here returns a man with a tumor on his ear, having the previous day been advised to come for an operation:

“With good courage and I believe without a trembling hand, I sat down to this, my first operation not only in the Kingdom of Siam, but the first operation I think I ever undertook. It was a simple one, and oh, I cannot but catch such a glimpse of my Father's lovingkindness in thus gently leading his poor ignorant child by such simpler cases into the confidence in myself necessary to do the more serious cases which will doubtless fall to my lot. . . . Believing that without His blessing the simplest operation would fail and with it the most doubtful one might prosper, I lifted up my heart a moment to Him in whose name I had ventured to come among this people to try to do them good.”

While attending him, a boat came up with two women, one a loathsome object full of sores and scabs—face, hands and limbs—the scars of former ulcers. A Chinaman with a scrofulous neck—a lad

with gastric derangement—a boy whose leg was transfixed with a sharp piece of bamboo—so moves the procession. As he returns late for dinner he observes:

“This morning was fully occupied till dinner at 2 p.m., trying to do the works of mercy—how could I send any away empty! And oh, how happy I should have been in such Christ-like works had I but knowledge of the diseases, and judgment and skill. As it is now, the deciding what is to be done with each case is an act of the mind positively painful, because I am constantly fearing that I may not follow the best possible plan.”

On another day thus reads the entry:

“On going down to the floating house at 9 a.m., found several new patients. A Chinaman of fifty, with caries of the lower jaw, skin of cheek adhering, pus has discharged from a large cavity within the mouth. Another Chinaman with syphilitic destruction of the bones of the nose—a hole left in the flattened face where pus was discharging. . . . He seemed to be in great torment—eaten of worms literally. Now a mother brings a naked child of five, having large ulcers and a lump on the thigh, the sequel of the smallpox had two or three months ago. A Chinaman brings the child of a friend; poor lad, the smallpox had destroyed one eye and blinded the other—so no hope, no remedy.”

#### BUSY DAYS AND A BURDENED HEART

The hours at the hospital were daily from early morning, frequently from six or seven o'clock, till noon. During the latter part of the afternoon he answered calls in various parts of the city. By these calls he came into the homes of the people and be-



came better acquainted with them than he could have done under ordinary circumstances. He gives what he calls a fair specimen of the missionary physician's life in Siam when his hands are full:

"When I awaked in the morning found two sets of servants waiting for me—one from Prince Chao Fah Noi, who had sent his boat for me to go up to his palace just as soon as I could finish my breakfast; another from Chao Arim, the King's brother, wishing me to come over and see some one in his palace very sick. My first duty of course was to attend to little George, whom I found still living, though much the same. This occupied the time before breakfast. After a hasty meal, stepped into the sampan sent for me (the servants still waiting to take me across the river to Chao Arim's)—having dismissed the Prince's servants with a note requesting to be excused. On the other shore entered gates of the city wall. . . . While I was waiting for the Prince to be notified of my arrival, servants gathered around; examined my clothing, one wished me to take off my hat to see if my head was shaved, another admired my watch—the ticking pleased the children mightily. Some strong ammonia I had pleased them very much. A young man with a flaming long jacket of red silk (no shirt or vest above his waist cloth) came out; all servants squatted on the ground. This young Prince conducted me up a rude ladder to the bamboo dwelling of the sick man.

"Returning, invited to see the great man himself. The audience halls of these great men are after all rather well-adapted to the climate; immense rooms, lofty ceilings, furniture of matting, etc. Returning to my place, found a boatman from the Moorish Madras merchant's awaiting me. Accompanied the Hindoo, who had been sent for me, in his open boat with umbrella over my head; the sun, however, very hot, though this is our cold season. Some distance down the river landed at the Nackodah's commercial establishment, and found myself



in the midst of quite a number of intelligent looking and polite Mahommedan Hindoo merchants and clerks, with their picturesque costume; the turban of twisted shawl and robes of thin white muslin, and sandals. Was received very courteously, conducted to a bamboo house nearby. The patient, a fine looking man, swarthy, with aquiline nose and mustache, lay on a mat bed behind a screen. . . . And now the voice of Dit, a servant of Chao Fah Noi, was heard; he had followed on after me, not finding me at home—the Prince being very desirous of seeing me. So I stepped into the handsome boat he had sent, and was soon at the palace. Here received with a smile of welcome. . . . Wished me to shew him how to make chlorine gas. Succeeded well. Gave him a piece of fluorspar and directions for etching glass. Left several jars of chlorine. His boat in readiness to take me back. . . . In the evening a call from Prince Ammaruk, in his priestly yellow robes, several priests with him.”

All these interesting scenes and varieties of experience, however, did not lighten the burden of the heart. When a patient suffered pain and inflammation after an operation, he cries out:

“How can I go forward in a profession where I may inflict suffering. If it was only injury to property and not to life and health and senses! Alas, how hard a destiny, how could I choose this profession!”

On a Saturday night he sighs:

“And so ends another week during which mercies have been ever changing, ever new. It has been a week of labors for Christ . . . and yet, though my poor head is ready to ache with the task of deciding, judging, pre-

scribing, I find a sweet kind of weariness that comes from serving Jesus Christ."

Such a tender heart and sympathetic nature suffered most where it could help the least. The obstetrical customs of the country in particular caused the doctor both distress and irritation on account of the lamentable ignorance displayed and of the needless sufferings caused.

#### CHEER FROM GRATEFUL PATIENTS

The experiences of his professional practise were not all depressing. Operations were successful in spite of his fears, and when least expected. Most cheering was the gratitude of the patients, many of whom acknowledged their lives reclaimed from death by his hands. The marks of appreciation on the part of some of these were most touching.

"Have been permitted by a gracious providence this week to have the happiness of saving the life of a fellow-creature, which the venom of a poisonous snake was appearing fast to be destroying. Poor fellow, he was thankful enough. The first symptom of returning consciousness before he regained his lost power of speech was his attempt to put his feeble hands together and raise them to his forehead in token of his gratitude to his doctor. When three days after, sound in health and limb, he came to see me. 'Doctor, you are very, very good,' was his very emphatic expression of what filled his heart. And then he grasped my hand—a liberty men of his condition in life seldom take—in both his and repeated, 'You are very, very good.'"

Dr. House had adopted the policy of gratuitous

service. His motive was to exemplify the Christian spirit by rendering these inestimable benefits without charge. Perhaps at the time he did not know the philosophy of the Siamese in the matter of good deeds.

The theory of the Buddhist religion is that a good deed gains merit for the doer. As a sequence, to be the recipient of a favour is to assist the other person to earn merit; and since the merit is ample reward for the good deed it is not necessary to make any personal return for the favour received. When Dr. House later came to understand this philosophy he perceived why it was that "of ten healed only one returned to give thanks." Yet there were not a few whose natural sense of gladness was not wholly suppressed by their religious theories. One day, three or four years after he had been in Siam, he went out along one of the canals into the country to a limekiln to get some lime for the new house under construction at the mission. An old woman came out to wait upon him, and to his surprise she refused to take pay; and explained that some time previously the doctor had healed her little girl.

The set policy not to accept fees was not so easily understood by the Chinese to whom he ministered. Frequently, to avoid offense, the Doctor found it necessary to compromise by accepting gifts in lieu of money; and then he would be the recipient of generous presents of fruit, quantities of rice, numerous cakes of sugar and small chests of fine tea—gifts in such abundance that he had to share them with his friends to dispose of all.

But not least of the rewards for professional service



did he esteem the acquaintance and friendships among the patients. These people came from many parts of the country and there were numerous representatives from other countries. Sailors from European ports sought him out for medical treatment, Chinese tradesmen and junk captains, Malays, Burmese, Peguans, Cambodians, Lao, and the foreign merchants from India. Then, too, Bangkok the capital of Siam was visited periodically by officials from the distant provinces, many of whom came for professional advice to the foreign physician. The contact established with these various peoples, and especially with the provincial governors, served to excellent advantage in after years when the doctor made tours into the far regions. In particular, the under-Governor of Petchaburi who came for professional advice, invited the doctor to visit his provincial capital, and in later years when he had been promoted in office and rank in Bangkok he remained the steadfast friend of Doctor House.

#### WITH THE PATIENTS

There were bits of humour now and then amidst the procession of human tragedies.

“While feeling the pulse of the patient and holding my watch to count its beat, another man sitting by begged me to feel his, and after I had counted it he gravely asked me ‘in just how many years after this he would die.’”

Some of the humour was grim humour indeed; for one day he was hastily summoned only to find that the supposed patient was a corpse. Humorous from



one point of view but quite perturbing for a physician was the innocent disregard for the directions left with medicines; indeed the doctor could never tell whether the failure of a prescription was due to the ineffectiveness of the drugs or to the failure of the patient to take the medicine as prescribed, for he found that the patient was liable to take the whole potion at once or just as liable to have another member of the family take the remedy vicariously.

Quite frequently, when the callers from a distance came to see him, they made the parting request for medicine to take home with them, and thought it altogether needless for the doctor to know what disease they expected to use it for. Pathetic was the case of the cholera patient consumed with fever who begged the doctor to give "medicine to cure the desire for drinking water." Even more simple-minded was the old man who came to inquire if he could be healed if he "wyed" to Jesus,—that is to make the reverential bow of worship customarily accorded to the image of Buddha. Then there was the deaf man who came back to report that he had read "the Christian book of magic" and that it had failed to cure him.

Not the least perplexing of these absurd situations was the difficulty of securing necessary permission to administer the medicines even after the doctor had been especially summoned:

"The poor woman who lay on a mattress bolstered up was in great distress evidently—and I soon found that no time was to be lost. I shall never forget how piteously she turned her anxious eyes towards me as she faintly said, 'Can you heal me?' I recommend certain treatment. Nothing could be done, however, till the

matter had been submitted to the Praklang. So a messenger was despatched, His Excellency again aroused from his nap;—and what a message brought back: The application of hot cloths would be permitted, but the more effective treatment proposed was something new—he did not know—he could not consent to it. Thinking then of another mode of treating the case and not dreaming but that this I might venture to give—but no; this prescription must be reported to headquarters before it could be administered. Again a messenger was despatched. The answer came back: we must wait to see what a hot fomentation would do; if this did any good then the prescription might be tried.”

## II

### “THE MAN WITH THE GENTLE HEART”

“**T**HIS day thirteen years ago, while a just-arrived student at Dartmouth College, it pleased my sovereign Maker to manifest His everlasting love to me by inclining my heart to choose Him as my portion, and His service as my reward.”

Such is his salutatory in the service of God, as recorded by Samuel R. House, in his journal under date of Feb. 22, 1848. He had been in Siam less than a year; long enough however for the novelty of his situation to abate a little so that he had time to reflect. Reflecting, he sees how that youthful dedication was—so far as he was consciously concerned—the beginning of the lines of life that led him to Siam.

Four years later, on the anniversary of his arrival in Siam, contemplating the fruitlessness of those years and ready to incriminate himself for “a culpable ignorance of the language,” he again writes:

“How different doubtless am I regarded at home by over-esteeming friends. How false a biography would that be, some of them would write. . . . Let no one eulogise such a character, such a worthless, unworthy life as mine. If a Christian hope be the joy of my life, by the grace of God I am what I am; but my waywardness, my inefficiency is all my own.”

The cause of this despondency was not within him-



self. It was the miasma arising from the spiritual decay around him. But as none liveth unto himself, so none dieth to himself. The example of such persistent faith belongs to the church; and it has too great a value for the living to allow the judgment of a passing despondency to prevail.

At length comes the valedictory. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of permanent work in Siam by the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) in 1897, Dr. House wrote to a friend:

“And now in my eightieth year, sole survivor of that little band, I feel it a privilege indeed to look back and see what God hath wrought since that day of small beginnings. Verily the little one has become a thousand—yes thousands. I am sure you, my friend, will congratulate me on being yet alive this blessed day of an abundant ingathering from that long barren mission field. How the loved ones that have entered into rest would rejoice if they could see how their patience of hope and labour and love have not been in vain in the Lord. There are many in heaven to raise the song of jubilee with them, even there.”

From that early dedication of self to God while in college, through the years “cast down but not destroyed,” to the golden jubilee—what a strain of human effort, what a magnificent persistence of faith, what a glory of hope realized!

#### HIS CHARACTER

The man who had this notable experience would not have been singled out, even by those who knew him intimately in early manhood, as the one most likely to achieve the results which we are to review.



The qualities casually observed by acquaintances were in his case those which men do not ordinarily associate with success. A study of his private journal and letters manifests traits which are corroborated by many who knew him personally. He was a man of deep piety. He was scrupulous regarding the outward appearance of religion, yet more so concerning his inner life. He was verily a man of God. His mental nature had a strong inclination to introspection, which led to self-depreciation and self-distrust. He recoiled from a new venture until he became convinced that it was the will of God; then, though still distrusting his own ability, he laid hold of the task with a simplicity of faith and a devotion to duty which made him invincible. It is an example of how the Holy Spirit, when fully occupying a man's heart, enlarges and fortifies his native capacity until the one who is small in his own esteem becomes a giant.

That habit of introspection may have been due in part to the austere idea of religion which prevailed at the time; at any rate it gave him a somber demeanor. The solemn side of life seems mostly before him, although his associates found a playfulness and jocularity about him that offset his soberness. Only thirty years of age when he left home, yet from the first his letters to his father read more like the letters of a father to a son. But deeper and stronger than either of these traits was his tender sympathy. It was more than a sympathy of sentiment; it was a sympathy that caused him to share the sufferings of others. Concerning his medical work he said: "When I cannot relieve, I suffer." This eagerness to relieve

pain led him to a forgetfulness of his own interests which his physique marvellously endured.

Then, too, he had a timidity which at times amounted to phobism and made it difficult for him to reach a decision and even caused him to appear fickle in purpose. But fortunately, along with that weakness he had a courage which nerved him to face any hostility or danger with a daring which compelled opposition to give way; and by that quality he carried through many a venture which for a time seemed doomed to failure. Humble to a point of self-abnegation, at times he was as lordly as a monarch in the exercise of the prerogatives of the liberty of the gospel; and beyond a doubt it was his refusal to imitate oriental truculence before provincial officials which inspired that class with respect for the rights of the foreigner. Among the Siamese who still remember him, he is spoken of as "*the man with the gentle heart.*"

#### HIS PARENTAGE

Samuel Reynolds House was born in Waterford, New York, Oct. 16, 1817, being the second child of John and Abby Platt House. His parents both united with the Presbyterian Church of that village upon profession of faith, in 1810. At that time the Waterford congregation was in collegiate relation with the congregation of Lansingburgh, located eastward across the Hudson River, under the pastorate of Rev. Samuel Blatchford, D.D. In the next year John House was elected an elder in the collegiate church; and when the Waterford congregation became a separate organisation, in 1820, Mr. and Mrs. House be-

came charter members of the new organisation, and Mr. House was continued as an elder—an office which he held till his death, April 27, 1862.

The active interest of Mr. House in the spiritual work of the church is indicated by the fact that he conducted a Sunday school for coloured children in a room in a carpenter shop, and when the young church erected a house of worship, in 1826, this Sunday school was transferred to the gallery of the church. He is also recorded as having been the superintendent of the regular Sunday school of the church after it was established. His interest in the church continued active up to the close of his life. In his later years, when the congregation was considering the construction of a new “session house” for the use of the Sunday school and prayer-meeting, John House sought the privilege of erecting the building at his own expense; and that fine building, erected in 1859, remains today as a memorial to his love and zeal for the church.

Abby House was one of the original members of the “Female Cent Society” of the Waterford church, organised in 1817. The object of this society was to “afford assistance to poor and pious young men pursuing their studies in the theological seminary at Princeton.” The quaint name of this society was double with meaning. Each member was pledged to contribute one cent a week to the fund, which was then placed in the hands of the moderator of Presbytery to dispense. Later the society co-operated with the American Education Society until the General Assembly forbade that organisation to operate within the denomination in competition with the new Board



of Ministerial Education. The word "female" suggests that the sex was about that period emerging into the self-consciousness of a separate work for religion and was not content to keep its labours hidden behind the mask of the male portion of the families.

If we were to seek for the motives that led young Samuel to dedicate himself to foreign missions we would not be surprised to find that the mother had some of the credit. He says that he was prompted to become a missionary because his mother dedicated him to God for foreign missions from his infancy. Out of that maternal inspiration came also the prayer of his youth:

" Make me a good boy  
And a blessing to my parents  
And a blessing to all the world."

The ambition thus early implanted was nurtured during the boyhood years by stories of missions. When in later years he visited the Hawaiian Islands on his way to Siam he recalls those stories:

" How little did I dream I was ever to see them, when that dear mother of mine used to tell me such interesting stories about the missionaries there and show me, out of her treasures kept in that always-locked drawer of her bureau, the precious bit she had of native cloth made of the bark of a tree. And when she took me to the 'Monthly Concert,' as she always did, how much I used to be interested in news from those far away isles."

#### RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

Closely associated with the motives to enter the



mission field are a man's religious convictions. Those earlier missionaries were conspicuous for their lively sense of peril for impenitent souls. Dr. House had a spiritual sensitiveness which shared this feeling to the full. Frequent lamentation is to be found in his journal for the certain perdition of ones with whom he had been acquainted, and who died without an evidence of accepting the Christian faith. This was not merely a professional attitude towards the heathen. Upon news of the death of an old school mate he exclaims:

“Oh, did he die safely! What would I not give to be assured he did. But oh, I tremble. Procrastination thou art the thief of time, the murderer of souls. And conscience reproaches me with having too long postponed the sending to him that letter on the subject of the claims of personal religion, a draught of which has for years been lying in my portfolio. It might, under the blessing of the Holy One, have done him good—at any rate it was my duty, my privilege to invite him, to urge him to walk with me towards heaven. I have sinned. I have been unfaithful.”

When a Siamese lad who had been connected with the mission for a few months was suddenly carried off by the cholera, the anguish of the doctor brought him to tears of self-reproach, not because his skill had failed but because he had not been more insistent in urging the gospel upon the boy.

At this distance of time one can see that the failure of some of the Siamese to be persuaded was due to a want of concatenation in the heathen mind between the physical facts already familiar to them but not

comprehended, and the spiritual truths of this new religion. Behind the sublime faith of the missionary there was a rigidity of logic which failed to take these mental difficulties into account; as for instance when a young priest proposed this dilemma: "Who was the mother of Jesus? Mary. Who made Mary? God. Was Jesus Christ God? Yes. But if Jesus Christ was God, how could He make Mary his mother before He Himself was born?" Turning from the disputant, the doctor declined to discuss the problem because he thought the man was caviling.

At one period the doctor entertained a vivid expectation of the culmination of the Christian dispensation at an early date. He had enough of the mystical in his religious nature to look for signs. Thus he writes in view of the conditions of Europe in 1848:

"All Europe, every kingdom has felt the shock of the political earthquake in France. Kingdoms, principalities and powers tremble. These are signs that herald the near approach of the Coming One. The day of the world's redemption surely draweth nigh."

And again two years later he writes to Dr. D. B. McCartee at Ningpo:

"Surely the world must needs wait for but few of the signs, that are to herald His coming, to be fulfilled. 'Wars and rumors of wars,' earthquake and pestilence and famine, the 'running to and fro,' the gospel preached for a witness in every nation—what signs of the 'ends drawing nigh' is left unfulfilled in our day—unless it be that a few countries (central Africa, New Guinea, etc.) remain still unevangelised. The last of God's elect, how-

ever, may be born—nay, the messenger who is to call him, in Providence may have started on his errand; and who knows but that privilege is for you or me.”

But that type of speculation has its own antidote, viz., time. As his years drew out their number, the visions of youth gave way to the dreams of old men; and in reviewing what had been achieved and what remained to be accomplished the doctor displaced these speculations with the simple faith that the Lord would come again in His own time, but at a time unrevealed to men. It needs to be remembered that Dr. House had been trained in medicine, not in theology. Whatever may have been illogical in his tenets, there was in his heart the profound conviction not only that Jesus Christ was the only Saviour of the world, but that the Siamese would accept the Christian religion, if only they could be induced to examine fairly its claims.

#### EDUCATION

Samuel received a careful and thorough education. After elementary work in the private academy of Waterford, at the early age of twelve he spent a year or more in the “ Washington Academy ” of Cambridge, New York, then under the principalship of Rev. Nathaniel Scudder Prime. In later years he recalled with pleasure some of his classmates: “ We read *Cæsar* together; John K. Meyers, David Bullions (Latin grammarian), E. D. G. Prime (editor of the *New York Observer*), and I recited to Samuel Irenæus.” In 1833 he entered the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, five miles from home.



In the winter term 1835 he entered Dartmouth College at Hanover, New Hampshire, but remained only till the close of that academic year. It was here that occurred the deeper spiritual experience which he recalls in the words that open this chapter; a conscious conversion during a revival which swept through the college that winter. It was following this experience that in the same year he united with the Waterford church upon profession of faith. Why he did not continue at Dartmouth does not appear; probably the difficulty of access would have been a chief factor. However, in the fall of that year he entered Union College, at Schenectady, a few miles from his home. His work at Rensselaer and Dartmouth qualified him to enter the junior class, so that he graduated in the year 1837. He received the degree A.B. in course and the honour of  $\emptyset$  B.K.; and following three years of post graduate work in teaching, he received the degree M.A. from his alma mater. The three years immediately following graduation from Union were spent in teaching; one year in Virginia, a year as principal of Weston (Conn.) Academy and a year as principal of the private school "Erasmus Hall," in Brooklyn. He now entered upon his medical course, spending the year 1841-2 in the University of Pennsylvania, and the next year in the Albany Medical College. With the lapse of a year not accounted for in the record,—probably teaching in Virginia, to which he refers in telling of some chemical experiments—he graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York with the degree M.D. in 1845.

Upon completion of his medical course he offered



himself to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (Old School), and was commissioned in 1846. He was assigned to Siam together with his college-mate, Rev. Stephen Mattoon, of Sandy Hill, New York, (now Hudson Falls). Placing himself under the care of the Presbytery of Troy he was licensed to preach.

### III

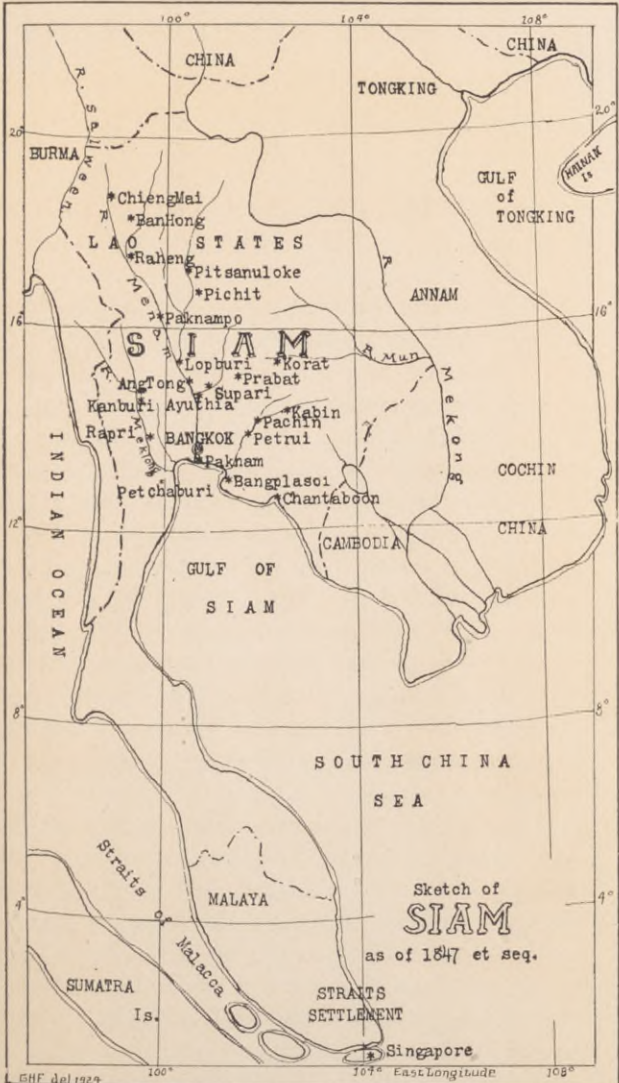
## THE LITTLE CHISEL ATTACKS THE BIG MOUNTAIN

**S**IAM was the first nation of the Far East to make a treaty voluntarily with Europe. Siam was the first Asiatic power with which the United States entered into diplomatic relations. Siam was the first Oriental people to adopt Western customs, upon accession of King Chulalongkorn, in 1868. Siam was the first non-Christian land to grant religious liberty to its subjects in relation to Christian missions, in 1870.

Siam was the first field entered by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions after its organisation. In Siam was organised the first Protestant church of Chinese Christians. In Siam the first zenana mission work was undertaken. Siam is the last independent state in which Buddhism is the established religion.

Yet Siam is little known to Western people. She is neither belligerent nor turbulent, therefore offers no military spectacle. She has no foreign ambitions, therefore arouses no diplomatic concern. Her trade is largely with China, therefore she makes no impress upon the commercial mind of the west. She lies off the beaten path of world traffic, therefore tourists seldom visit the land.

Siam lies in what was formerly known as "Farther



GHF del 1924

SKETCH MAP OF SIAM





India." Shaped somewhat like a long mutton-chop, the northern portion is an irregular-oval, approximately six hundred by five hundred miles in reach, from which a long narrow leg extends some five hundred miles southward down the Malay peninsula. Within the fold of these two portions lies the Gulf of Siam. The main portion of the land lies between  $12^{\circ}$  and  $20^{\circ} 40'$  north, and is confined on the east by French possessions and on the west by British Burmah.

Northern Siam occupies almost the entire drainage system of the Menam River, and a part of the western watershed of the Mekong River. The central part abounds with swamps, jungles and briny wastes, intersected by many branch streams and canals. The bulk of the population live along these watercourses. Bangkok is the largest city, and is both the commercial and political capital. Chiangmai is the principal city of the northern province, which was formerly known as Laos but is now a political part of the kingdom.

The relations of Siam with the nations of the west date back to the days of the Portuguese adventurers in the early part of the sixteenth century; relations which were not diplomatic but purely commercial. About the middle of the seventeenth century the king of Siam entered into relations with the English, French and Dutch, but only to the extent of an exchange of royal courtesies, which after a time became quiescent. Intercourse with the west was renewed by Siam when, upon her solicitation, a treaty was made with Great Britain in 1826. Doubtless fear was the motive which prompted King Phra Chao Pravat

Thong, who reigned from 1824 to 1851, to propose this treaty, for England had just compelled the neighbouring state of Burmah to open her doors to trade as the result of war.

The volitional act of the Siamese monarch was apparently a shrewd stroke of diplomacy, for having granted the right of trade admission and inland travel, the king adopted a policy of ignoring the few foreigners within his domains and thereby discouraging his people from having intercourse with them. At the same time he held a monopoly of Siamese shipping and levied heavy impost and expost so that what trade there was served to enrich his private treasury. In 1833, Honourable Edmund Roberts, who had been sent by President Andrew Jackson to explore the possibilities of trade with the native states of Farther India and Cochin China, succeeded in effecting a treaty only with Siam. The privileges granted under this treaty were not exercised to any great extent and were almost allowed to lapse because no consular representative was appointed. The early American missionaries relied chiefly upon the privileges kept alive by the "factories," as the foreign trading establishments in Bangkok were called.

#### EARLY MISSIONS

When one of the early missionaries explained to a nobleman that their purpose in coming to Siam was to supplant the native religion by Christianity, the nobleman replied: "Do you then with your little chisel expect to remove this big mountain?"—referring to Buddhism. How this mountain began to crumble during Dr. House's twenty-nine years of service will

be best understood by giving a sketch of the work previous to his arrival.

The early treaty with Great Britain gave first entrance for Protestant missions. In 1828 Karl Gutzlaff, M.D., of the Netherlands Missionary Society, and Rev. Jacob Tomlin, of the London Missionary Society, went up to Bangkok to spy out the land. Before that date the Siamese had been the distant object of interest on the part of Ann Judson, of Burmah, who, as early as 1819, having met some Siamese at Rangoon, became interested enough to prepare in their language a catechism and the Gospel of Matthew—the first Christian books in the Siamese language. While Gutzlaff and Tomlin found the doors of Siam open and discovered that there was a considerable Chinese population there, they were not encouraged by their supporters to effect a permanent occupation. For this reason they issued an appeal to the American Church then newly awakened to missionary zeal, sending one copy of the appeal to the American Baptist mission in Burmah and another to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the United States. This message was taken to America in 1829 by Capt. Coffin, of the American trading vessel which at the same time brought the famous Siamese Twins.

The A. B. C. F. M. was the first to respond. In 1831 they directed one of their men located at a Chinese treaty port, Rev. David Abeel, M.D., to proceed to Siam and make a survey. At Singapore he was joined by Mr. Tomlin, who had returned thither for recuperation, and the two reached Bangkok just a few days after Dr. Gutzlaff, disheartened by the death



of his young wife, had sailed away to China. Mr. Tomlin this time remained only some six months, but Dr. Abeel continued until November, 1832, when he was forced to leave on account of health. His survey of the field resulted in a report to the A. B. C. F. M. which induced them to attempt a permanent work. In the meantime, in 1833, the Baptist mission in Burmah responded to the appeal by sending two of their number, Rev. J. T. Jones and wife, to establish a mission. Two years later Rev. Wm. Dean was sent out from America by the Baptists as a co-labourer of Mr. Jones but to devote himself particularly to the Chinese.

In pursuance of Dr. Abeel's report the A. B. C. F. M. sent out two men, Rev. Stephen Johnson and Rev. Charles Robinson, who reached Bangkok July, 1834, and these were joined the next year by David Bradley, M.D., and wife. Both the Baptists and the A. B. C. F. M. at this time regarded their work in Siam largely as a point of vantage for China proper on account of the large number of Chinese here accessible. The work among the Chinese was so fruitful that in two years' time Mr. Dean was able to organise a church among them, the first church of Protestant Chinese Christians ever gathered in the Far East.

Siam was the first field to be taken up as a new enterprise by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions after its establishment by the General Assembly. Until 1831 the Presbyterians in America had functioned chiefly through the A. B. C. F. M. in their foreign work. In that year a few presbyteries west of the Alleghanies organised the Western Foreign Missionary Society, to conduct their own foreign work. Beginning with missions to the Indians (then



regarded as "foreign") they established work in India and Africa in 1833. The direction of its own foreign work by the church was one of the points involved in the division of the Presbyterian Church into the New School and the Old School in 1838. The Old School took over the Western Foreign Mission Society in that year as a nucleus for a new Board of Foreign Missions which their General Assembly established; and that Board has been in continuous operation ever since. In its first year the new Board directed Rev. R. W. Orr to proceed to Bangkok and report on the eligibility of Siam as a field for operation. Mr. Orr reported, recommending not only work among the Chinese but also advocating work for the natives. Accordingly the Presbyterian Board sent out Rev. Wm. Buell and wife, who reached Bangkok in August, 1840, the first missionaries to be sent out by the new organisation. These two remained for some three years, when on account of ill health of Mrs. Buell they were obliged to withdraw; and thereupon the mission was suspended for a time.

When, as a result of the opium war, the doors of China were opened, in 1846, both the A. B. C. F. M. and the Baptist society transferred their Chinese workers from Siam to China. The difficulty of getting response from the Siamese had caused their workers to devote their energies largely to the Chinese; and now when this Chinese work was terminated their missions in Siam were greatly weakened both in numbers and in effectiveness. The A. B. C. F. M. retained its Siamese workers until 1849, when it transferred its enterprise to the American Missionary Association, an organisation distinctly of the Con-

gregational Church; but this Association abandoned the field in 1874. In 1868 the Baptist Society gave up all except its work for the Chinese in Bangkok, leaving the Siamese wholly to the Presbyterian Mission. Thus Siam was freed from sectarian rivalry long before modern "comity" was brought into practise.

It was at the juncture of withdrawing the major portion of the force to China and leaving the Siamese missions undermanned that the Presbyterian Church undertook to establish anew its mission in Siam, having the native population as the primary objective. To that end it sent out Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon who, together with Mrs. Mattoon, may rightly be regarded as the founders of the permanent work of the Presbyterian Church in Siam.

#### THE VOYAGE

In those days of foreign travel it was necessary to await a vessel that might by chance be sailing in the direction of the desired destination. Fortunately the ship *Grafton*, Captain Abbott, was found to be loading for a direct voyage to China, and passage was obtained for a party of missionaries en route for the Orient, including the trio for Siam. On July 27, 1846, the *Grafton* sailed from New York.

A journey to the Far East then was a matter of time and tedious delays, as well as of adventure. The course of the *Grafton* lay southward through the Atlantic, now near the coast of Africa, now near the coast of South America, with glimpses of Liberia and of Brazil; around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean, among the East Indies and

thence northward to China. The indirectness of the voyage by which Dr. House reached Siam is shown by this fact: one hundred days after leaving New York, the *Grafton* put in for water at Ampanan on the island of Lombok, one of the smaller of the East India chain. This port was within four weeks' direct sail of the Siamese capital; whereas the *Grafton* was headed for the port of Canton, to reach which required fifty days more; thence by another vessel it was necessary to retrace the course to Singapore and transfer for Bangkok.

Could the missionary have taken passage direct from Ampanan to Bangkok he would have reached his destination in about two-thirds the actual time consumed. But even the most direct course to China could not then be taken because the season had arrived for the north-east monsoons on the China Sea, which are a peril to sailors. The *Grafton* was compelled to pass to the eastward among the Isles of Spice, past Pelew Island, out into the Pacific, east of the Philippines, within sight of Formosa and thence westward to Canton. The doctor writes home to the children of the Sunday school that "It was a dream of childhood come true to sail among these fabulous islands." On the 28th day of December, one hundred and sixty days from New York, the *Grafton* arrived at Macao, the Portuguese port for Canton, which during the stormy days of early foreign relations with China was a place of safe entry, transfer and retreat for merchants and missionaries alike.

No vessel was to be found bound towards Siam, so the missionaries had to wait. The American merchants Olyphant & Co., of Canton, with hospitality



"as generous as it was elegant," took the doctor into their home for the sojourn during the delay. Dr. House visited the mission school of Dr. Happer, located at the port, and also went up to Canton to visit the hospital conducted by Dr. Parker, who had been a lecturer in the University of Pennsylvania when he was a student there. On Feb. 7, the party for Siam took passage on the *John Bagshaw*, Captain Dare. After a call at Hong Kong they had a quiet passage southward through the China Sea, and on the 23rd reached Singapore, the maritime capital of the South China Sea.

Here they were fortunate in finding in the harbour the native-built trading vessel *Lion*, Captain Dupont, owned by the King of Siam. Although the ship was modeled after western vessels, it was of the rudest native workmanship, without conveniences for occidental travellers; and even the orientals who took passage had only deck space allotted to them. For these three Westerners one small cabin was made available and had to serve them day and night for the twenty-four day voyage, a sail cloth being suspended in the middle as a concession to foreign ideas of privacy. Provisions had to be secured at Singapore and the Chinese cook of the vessel paid to prepare them.

The passage from the South China Sea into the Gulf of Siam proved to be the climax of the whole trip. A violent and prolonged storm was encountered which not only added greatly to the misery of the ship's company but imperiled their lives:

"For nearly three days," writes Dr. House, "we have

not had one cheering glimpse of the sun. Squall after squall of rain has burst in its fury upon us; indeed it has been almost one incessant rain, and the wind all the time from the most unfavourable quarter has at last increased to a gale, driving the ship from her course towards we know not what islands and rocks. . . . The waves are rolling wildly, scowling rain clouds begird the horizon and shut out the sky above us and the view before us. It is now three days since the captain has been able to get an observation, and the dead reckoning is in these seas little to be depended upon, owing to the strong currents. Our situation is no more safe than it is agreeable. . . . Every wave rolls us also to and fro, so that if one sits or stands he is obliged to be continually bracing himself, now this way, now that, to keep the center of gravity; and every now and then is pitched by some sudden lurch against the nearest object so that sides and arms and elbows fairly ache with the bruises. . . . And all this time there is in your ears the creaking of the rudder chains and the dismal splashing of the great waves as they surge up under the stern windows. But a greater annoyance yet remains to be spoken of. The deck over us (the roof of our cabin) leaks in a hundred different places upon us, not in drops but in streams. In my compartment there is but one dry place, and that is the mattress; and even that is not wholly dry, for now and then it drops down upon the pillow. The floor is as wet as if being mopped; wet trunks, wet books, wet baskets lie around. The chairs are too wet to sit upon, and so the bed is the only place for rest."

#### WELCOMED BY OTHER MISSIONARIES

Fortunately the voyage of twenty-four days was not all like this, and after the storm had abated there was much to make the days interesting. At length came the first sight of Siam:

“Friday, March 19. The first sight of Siam. Thy people, O Siam, shall be my people; *but* my God shall be their God. Here would I die and here would I be buried. . . . Henceforth I would live for Thee, my God. Thou art a kind Master; and oh, Thou hast bought me, every power and faculty; Thou hast bought me by Thy precious blood. Let me henceforth shrink from nothing—but sin and remissness in Thy blessed service. With the beginning of my missionary life I give myself anew, tremblingly but trustingly to do Thy will O God, my Creator, Guide and Redeemer.”

The following day, Saturday, March 20, 1847, Dr. House landed in Bangkok. The arrival of the new missionary party met with a most cordial welcome by the small group of fellow Americans already engaged in the work. At that time Siam was occupied by two American missions, besides French Catholic missions. The American Board was then represented by Rev. Jesse Caswell and Rev. Asa Hemmenway with their wives; while the Baptist Board was represented by the following men and their wives: Revs. J. T. Jones, Josiah Goddard, and E. N. Jenks, and Mr. J. H. Chandler, a lay missionary.

“Early on the morning of the 20th of March, just eight months to a day from the time of our leaving New York, we found ourselves at the bar which obstructs the entrance of the great river of Siam. . . . I was despatched with the captain in a swift, but alas open, boat that I might, if the ship was unable to get over the bar, make arrangements with friends to send down for Mr. and Mrs. Mattoon. After a rather broiling row of some twenty miles along a river far more beautiful than I had been led to suppose, arrived at the outskirts of this truly great city about sun-down. We had still some three



miles or more before we reached the residence of the missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M., and it was then dark. Was most kindly welcomed by Mr. Caswell and Mr. Hemmingway, the only missionaries of that Board now left; and glad indeed they appeared to see me."

On Monday the ship came up to the city and by that time plans had been made to house the newly arrived missionaries in two of the vacant houses in the mission compound where they had been welcomed.

The relations between the three sets of missionaries were most cordial. So far as economy of effort made it wise they co-operated in their undertakings. It was the dispensary of the A. B. C. F. M. that Dr. House re-opened. The tracts used by the three missions were printed by the press of the Baptist mission. Members of each of the missions took turns at the tract house maintained in the bazaar. Although the Presbyterians had previously been engaged in work in Bangkok they held no property there; and for the present it was neither advisable nor possible for the newcomers to obtain a location for themselves. It was arranged that they should live in the A. B. C. F. M. compound until there was time to obtain a desirable site.

The compound contained several houses built after the native style; set high upon posts, with an open space beneath, a verandah on all sides, no windows but openings for air. In one of these houses Dr. House lived for the first two years, having a servant to take care of the house but taking his meals with the Mattoon family. This arrangement entered upon temporarily continued by force of circumstances for three years until the return of Rev. D. B. Bradley,

M.D., with another physician, when a readjustment of housing was necessary. Thereupon Dr. House moved to one of the "floating houses" moored in front of the compound, and this continued to be his abode for more than a year until a permanent site was secured for the mission.

The members of the three missions held a common service of worship each Sunday morning and afternoon. At the morning service the sermon was in Chinese or Siamese, while the afternoon service was wholly in English. It is interesting to learn that an "original" sermon was unusual, the preacher of the day commonly reading a published sermon of some well-known divine. On Wednesdays there was an informal conference for all workers and servants. On Saturday evenings there was a prayer meeting for the missionaries only. Later a "monthly concert of prayer for missions" was established. When the number of Chinese increased a separate service was held for them, and likewise a Sunday school for the Siamese pupils of the day school.

Occasionally there would be in attendance on worship some officers from any English vessel in port and then in turn one of the missionaries would visit the vessel and conduct a preaching service for the crew. After the treaty of Great Britain, in 1855, the number of English families increased very rapidly, and while at first many of these attended the services at the mission, their number soon warranted the erection of a chapel for their own use.

## IV

### RELATIONS WITH ROYALTY AND OFFICIALS

**S** OON after their arrival Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon were taken by their fellow missionaries to call upon two princes who had manifested a friendly interest in the westerners. The acquaintance thus formed proved to be of large influence both to the mission and to the Siamese nation. One of these princes was entitled Chao Fah Yai, which signifies "The older brother of the king," while his brother was entitled Chao Fah Noi, meaning "The younger brother of the king." As Chao Fah Yai later became King of Siam and his brother the Vice-King at the same time and as this new king played a momentous part in the opening of Siam to intercourse with the western nations as well as showed much favour to the mission work, it is essential to give a sketch of that important personage.

When, in 1824, the throne was made vacant by the death of the royal father of these two men, the older son had expected to succeed to the throne. Apparently this had been the father's intention, for he had given this son the name "Mongkut," meaning "crown prince." Through intrigue, however, the crown went to a half-brother who, under the title Phra Chao Pravat Thong, was the reigning king when Dr. House reached Siam. Chao Fah Yai, hav-



ing been thwarted in his aspirations towards the throne, entered the priesthood and retired to a watt, doubtless as the safest way to avoid the royal displeasure towards a rival,—a course which the custom of the country made possible for him.

The princely rank of this priest made him the leader of the Buddhist religion in Siam; and his great wealth enabled him to make his watt one of the most notable and influential in the country. He was a man of enlightened mind beyond his generation. In marked contrast to the king, he was interested in foreign affairs and amicably disposed towards the few foreigners living in Bangkok, especially towards the missionaries, because of their education and culture.

Having already learned Latin from the French priests, in 1845 (then about forty years of age), he invited Rev. Jesse Caswell, a missionary of the American Board, to become his tutor in English. To secure the services of Mr. Caswell he offered in return a reward which he perceived would be more prized than any fee of gold he could propose. He offered Mr. Caswell the privilege of using a room in one of the buildings connected with the watt for preaching the Christian religion and distributing tracts, and granted permission to the priests of the watt to attend if they wished. Mr. Caswell accepted the invitation and continued for three years, until his death, to teach English to the chief Priest of Buddhism in his own temple, and to preach Christianity to all who cared to listen. The esteem of the Prince for his tutor is evidenced by the fact that in 1855, when Dr. House was returning to America on furlough, he made the doctor the bearer of a gift of one thousand dollars to Mr.

Caswell's widow in token of appreciation of her husband's services, and again in 1866, by the same agent, he sent a gift of five hundred dollars. He also caused a monument to be erected, in memory of his tutor, at the grave of Mr. Caswell.

The more one contemplates the terms made by Chao Fah Yai with Mr. Caswell the more astonishing it appears. Here is the most influential priest in all Siam, the recognised head of the Buddhistic cult in Indo-China, inviting into his watt an uncompromising teacher of the Christian religion notwithstanding the known antipathy of the king to the westerners and their religion, and in return for instruction in the English language he grants him freedom to teach the moral and religious doctrines of Christianity within the precincts of consecrated ground and permits novitiates and priests under his authority to listen to that doctrine.

This broadmindedness of Chao Fah Yai is further shown by an incident which he related to one of the Protestant missionaries. Sometime previous to the engagement of Mr. Caswell a young priest of the watt became a Roman Catholic. The prince was urged to flog the young man for abandoning the religion of his country. To this suggestion the prince said he replied: "The individual has committed no crime; it is proper for every one to be left at liberty to choose his own religion." On a later occasion the Governor of Petchaburi, having forbidden the distribution of books by the Roman Catholic priests in his province because he said they sought to shield their converts from the authorities when accused of crime, conferred with Chao Fah Yai as to whether he should place the same

ban on the books of the Protestants; but the Priest-Prince was able to explain to him the difference of policy between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants and to dissuade him from forbidding the distribution of Protestant literature.

From his intercourse with Mr. Caswell, Chao Fah Yai was quickened with an interest in Western learning, especially the sciences. By his association with these missionaries and the discussion of the evidences of Christianity he came to recognise that his own religion had accumulated a mass of unauthenticated teachings, the accretion of centuries of priestly fancy; and he perceived that this accretion must be sloughed off if his religion was to meet the pressure of foreign civilisation, which he foresaw could not be forever excluded. Accordingly he became the leader of a new party in Buddhism which rejected the uncanonical writings which had accrued to the extent of some eighty-four thousand volumes and held only to the authentic teachings of Buddha. As the leader of this new sect the Prince-Priest was doubtless responsible for the reinvigoration of the religion of Siam, enabling it better to meet the contest of time.

The interest of Chao Fah Yai in the American missionaries was more on account of their intellectual culture than on account of their religion. On one occasion in conversation with Dr. House he frankly said that while he did not believe in Christianity he thought much of Western science, especially astronomy, geography and mathematics. His interest in these subjects was very keen and practical. From the study of navigation he was led into the subject of astronomy, and took interest in the calculation of



time, and was especially proud that his own calculation of an eclipse of the moon was almost identical with the Western almanac. His conversation showed considerable intelligence of the late developments in science. He was also a student of languages, and had a knowledge of several languages of eastern India, such as Singhalese and Peguan; he was familiar with Sanscrit, which had been a contributor to the Siamese language, and had studied Latin because he said he had been told that it was like the Sanscrit; besides these he was an expert student of the Pali, the sacred writing of Buddhism. The prince was also the first native prince of Farther India to procure a printing press, which he obtained from London, with fonts of English and Siamese type, and an alphabet of Pali of his own devising.

Apparently Chao Fah Yai approached the subject of Christianity as a vigorous mind approaches any ponderous subject that presents itself; he considered it philosophically. Every religion studied philosophically presents insuperable difficulties; a religion may be rightly judged only by its practical adaptation to life and its effects on the human heart. Had he attempted to study Christianity in a practical manner as he did the science of the West his conclusions would doubtless have been different. One evening the prince called at the home of Mr. Caswell just as the weekly prayer meeting was assembling and, upon invitation, remained to the meeting. His questions afterwards showed that he had given attention, for he inquired the meaning of such words as "redemption" and "Providence," which he had heard used.

While it is a fact that on several occasions the

prince emphatically disclaimed belief in the Christian doctrines, nevertheless the arguments of the missionaries were not without effect upon his mind, for he felt himself called upon to do an entirely new thing—to publish an apologetic for Buddhism in the points where the Christian arguments were most aggressive. In another manner also he gave evidence that the Christian arguments were pressing upon his conscience. The Baptist mission for some years had printed an annual almanac filled with Christian truth and containing, besides other items of civil information, a list of officials of the government and of the watts. In 1848, for the first time, Chao Fah Yai took exception to the religious character of the almanac in which his name appeared as head priest of his watt. He wrote to the editor of the almanac, expressing a “wish to have added to the description of myself in the English almanac ‘and hates the Bible most of all’; we will not embrace Christianity, because we think it a foolish religion. Though you should baptise all in Siam I will never be baptised. . . . You think that we are near the Christian religion; you will find my disciples will abuse your God and Jesus.”

Concerning his attitude to Christianity a comment from Mrs. Leonowens' book, *An English Governess at the Siamese Court*, casts a little light:

“He had been a familiar visitor at the houses of American missionaries, two of whom Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon, were throughout his reign and life gratefully revered by him for that pleasant and profitable conversation which helped to unlock for him the secrets of European vigor and advancement, and to make straight and easy the paths of knowledge he had started upon.

Not even his Siamese nature could prevent him from accepting cordially the happy influence these good and true men inspired. And doubtless he would have gone more than half way to meet them, but for the dazzle of the throne in the distance which arrested him midway between Christianity and Buddhism."

This was the Priest-Prince upon whom the newcomers made their first call of respect. The acquaintance formed at this time ripened into a friendship that continued warm and true to the end. Dr. House, in his journal, carefully records the details of the call:

"His Royal Highness was somewhat unwell, but he would come down. A servant was sent to ask if we would not take some refreshments. Soon a plate of stone-fruit was presented, resembling in flavour our peach; also a plate of Chinese cakes, white and thin, with a bowl of dark Chinese jelly and sugar. Knife, three-pronged fork and teaspoon were brought and we made an excellent tiffin.

"I looked around the room; Bible from A. B. Society, and Webster dictionary stood side by side on a shelf of his secretary, also a Nautical Tables and Navigation. On the table a diagram of the forthcoming eclipse in pencil with calculations, and a copy of the printed chart of Mr. Chandler. . . .

"This man, if his life is spared, is destined to exert an all-powerful influence upon the destinies of this people. He must possess a vigour of mind and much energy of purpose thus to commence the study of a new language at the age of forty. Indeed he seems Cato-like in other things. . . .

"Soon the Prince-Priest appeared with two or three following, dressed in yellow silk robes worn as a Roman toga. His manners were rather awkward at introduction, and his appearance not prepossessing at first,



though we became more interested in him as we saw him more. He seated himself on a chair by the center table, and asked our names and ages and whether married. Wished to know if I could cure sick as Dr. Bradley did. Whether I could cure the dropsy, for there was a case in the watt. He understands English when he reads it, but cannot speak it well yet.

"We asked to see his printing room; several young priests and servants on bamboo settees folding books. One composing type, one correcting proof. They gave us a copy of a book published in the Prince's new Pali alphabet—it was the Buddhist ten commandments and comments on them. Mr. Caswell had previously told him of the present of a keg of printing ink we had for him from our friend G. W. Eddy, of Waterford. He asked who it was from, and if 'they had heard of him in America'; and was evidently well pleased to find that he was known. Upon taking leave, he promised to call in return upon his guests in a few days."

This call of the new missionaries was returned by the priest, and on several occasions afterwards he visited the Doctor in his house. Occasionally he would send notes by his servants requesting various favours, medical attendance upon inmates of the watt, loan of books. On a second visit, when Dr. House went to engage the services of a young priest as instructor in Siamese, the prince proposed that the Doctor should come over to the watt and make use of the room which Mr. Caswell occupied for his class in English, and "there distribute medicines and teach the young men of the watt how to be doctors." Among the papers of Dr. House was found an autograph letter in English written by Chao Fah Yai about this time inviting him and the other missionaries to attend a cremation ceremony at watt Thong Bang-

koknoi; and offering him the privilege of distributing religious books among the head priests assembled there from several wats and to preach to them on the new religion. On other visits he inquired about the new instrument that "would send intelligence quickly" (the telegraph), asked why American vessels so seldom came to Bangkok, and discussed the difference between the Latin and English Bibles.

In proper sequence of courtesy the new missionaries were taken to call upon the other prince, Chao Fah Noi. For some reason this prince had withdrawn from his former intercourse with foreigners, but he very courteously received the callers and was manifestly pleased with the attention. He, too, was interested in Western learning and especially inclined towards the physical sciences. On the palace grounds he had several shops, one for a forge, one for iron lathes, one for wood-working. Power for all this machinery was developed by slave-muscle. In one room was a working model of a steam engine, two and a half feet long, made entirely by the prince's own hands. Being somewhat unwell he consulted Dr. House, but explained that he was under the King's physician and to refuse to take his medicine would be an act of disrespect to His Majesty, and for that reason would not ask Dr. House to prescribe for him.

The acquaintance thus formed was used, at first, by the prince more as a means of securing personal instruction on physical sciences. Frequently servants were sent to Dr. House to borrow books or to ask for advice on chemistry, electricity, photography, lithography and kindred subjects; and on various occasions the doctor was summoned to the prince's palace only

to find that his assistance or instruction was desired in some experiment. In after years, however, when Chao Fah Noi had become Vice-King upon the accession of Mongkut, his intercourse with Dr. House rested more upon the basis of friendship.

#### SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The acquaintance thus conventionally begun was quickened in mutual interest in an unexpected manner. When Dr. House reached Siam he found that the Baptist Mission press had for some time been publishing an annual almanac. He perceived that these almanacs were not only accepted by the ordinary people as they would accept Scripture tracts, but that they were eagerly sought after by a small number of nobles who were interested in Western science. These men were surprised to find that the eclipse for 1847 was much more accurately forecasted in this almanac than by their own astrologers, and they were eager to discuss the subject of astronomy.

This observation together with his own interest in science led him, in September of his first year, to institute a series of lectures for the benefit of the servants and employes of the mission compound "in hopes of waking up their dormant minds and accustom them to think, and so be a little benefitted by the preaching on the Sabbaths; as well as to impart useful information and to set before them the great proof of the existence and wisdom of the Creator, a fundamental truth all Buddhists deny." The doctor was to furnish the outlines and perform the experiments while Mr. Caswell, experienced in the language, was to do the talking. There was a fair equipment at



hand: chemicals, a magnetic machine, a globe, a set of physiological and hygienic charts and a skeleton.

The first lecture was on the digestion of food and the effects of alcohol on the stomach. The audience showed their attention and interest by responding with questions. After the lectures on physiology came several on astronomical topics such as the eclipse of the moon, phases of the moon and relation to the tides; then followed several on the gases. On the occasion of the first lecture on the gases, it so happened that Godata, a priest from Chao Fah Yai's watt, happened to call on Mr. Caswell and was invited to witness the experiment. The demonstration opened a new world for him. What he saw was too wonderful to keep to himself; he spread abroad his report and the effect was immediate.

The first to respond was Prince Ammaruk, the favourite son of the king, who requested the privilege of watching the doctor create the wonderful "winds." On the day appointed for the special experiment, Chao Fah Yai sent a request for Dr. House to accompany him that evening to call upon a brother prince who was quite ill. In reply the doctor explained his engagement for the evening, but offered to make the call after the demonstration, and suggested that the Priest-Prince might himself like to witness the experiment. To the doctor's surprise, the Priest-Prince came early in the afternoon to take the doctor to see the patient, so that they might have the whole evening free for the experiments. At the palace, Chao Fah Yai explained the evening's entertainment to the royal physician (a brother of the king) who promptly invited himself. By arrangement with

Prince Ammaruk several others were to come, so that at the appointed time the small house was filled with nobles and princes, and the verandah with their servants. Fortunately the experiments went off successfully; oxygen was generated and iron was burned in the oxygen; hydrogen was generated from water and exploded in combination with oxygen. Chao Fah Yai was particularly enthusiastic, and called in from the verandah some of his men to see the wonders, and himself volunteered to explain the facts to them.

The series of lectures awakened widespread interest among the progressive nobles. Dr. House became a notable in their esteem. Nearly all of the group who were present on that evening were amateur scientists; they had the air pump, the electric machine and other physical apparatus, but of chemistry they had no idea. Shortly after this Chao Fah Noi, who had been keeping aloof from foreigners, sent a request for Dr. House to spend the evening at his palace and instruct him in the making of gases. How long the series of lectures continued is not apparent; the journal continues reference to them while they are novel, but they apparently continued throughout that winter. Other subjects named were "The Weight of the Atmosphere," "The Barometer," "Heat," "The Oxyhydrogen Blow Pipe," "Carbon and Carbonic Gas," "Electro-magnetic Telegraph," and "Electricity." The original purpose of instruction for the servants was outgrown, and week after week one or more of the nobles who were dabbling in science were present with their ubiquitous train of servants. From this time on the journal indicates that the doctor's instruc-

tion in the Bible classes took the form of "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion."

The popular interest, however, was directed towards a particular subject, the skeleton. Very quickly news of this strange possession spread abroad, and every few days in season and out of season visitors would call and, scarcely able to restrain their inquisitiveness during the preliminary courtesies, hasten to request a sight of the skeleton. Even some of the ladies became interested in this curiosity; and one day a woman of rank, with half a dozen attendants and a train of servants, came with a request to see the skeleton. Long after local curiosity had subsided, chance callers from distant provinces would come to see this object of nation wide gossip.

Very remarkable, the skeleton itself did not seem to make so profound an impression upon these minds as the "argument from design" which their instructor deduced from the human anatomy to prove the existence of a Creator. Female curiosity also called for demonstrations with the electrical machine. During the reign of the old king some of the ladies of the palace had a prince arrange for Dr. House to bring to the prince's palace the machine which could make "fi fi" (fire from the sky), that they might see the marvel. The doctor, of course, was not permitted to enter the presence of the king's women, so he had to instruct the prince in the method of operation.

#### BOND OF INTEREST

An unexpected result of these lectures was that a bond of mutual interest was established between Dr. House and this group of progressive nobles, the very



party which in a few years dominated the new government of Siam. It would be interesting for one who knew the official entourage of King Mongkut to note how many of his supporters were included in this number who made Dr. House their friend because of his interest in science. Since Siamese noblemen were known by titles rather than by family names and since these titles change through elevation to higher rank only one acquainted with a person at a particular rank could identify these men with accuracy.

However the following are frequently mentioned in Dr. House's journal as showing a friendly attitude to him, and most of them interested in Western science. In the régime which began in 1851 his friends were: the king, the vice-king, the prime minister, the commander-in-chief, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of home affairs, the treasurer of the kingdom. In the régime of Chulalongkorn, which began 1868, his special friends were: The second king, the regent, the minister of foreign affairs, the master of the mint, the commander-in-chief, and the court chaplain. Besides these were several princes and nobles who did not occupy particular offices. Several of these men had primitive laboratories or workshops for experiments.

The series of lectures started such a revival of interest in scientific matters among them that Dr. House soon found himself the frequent host of several princes and nobles, seeking instruction in all sorts of subjects; and he was on various occasions invited to their shops to inspect their work or elucidate some obscure difficulty, as though he were a peripatetic professor. He was even seriously troubled by the bor-

rowing of books and instruments which they were not all punctilious to return. Moreover, he found himself an agent of some of these men, ordering machinery and supplies and tools from America for their use.

Chao Fah Noi said to him confidentially that any one who wanted to do something new in those days must do it in secret, for if the king learned of their activities he would call upon them to work for him so as to keep them from pursuing investigations. This prince, however, was not altogether secret in his experiments, for under date of July 4, 1848, Dr. House writes:

“This a.m., we saw something new on the river—a little model steamboat, not twenty feet long, with smoke-pipe, paddle wheel, all complete, steaming bravely against the tide, with H. R. H. Chao Fah Noi sitting at the helm. It was the first native steamer on the Meinam, entirely his own construction.”

But not for one moment did Dr. House lose sight of his prime objective. The favour of princes was no reward in itself; he was always concerned for the influence he might exercise through his contact with men of power:

“How taken with the new science is the Prince (Chao Fah Noi). Oh, that acquaintance and opportunity given me with him may be improved to win and turn him from his trust in false gods and rites! He has a good mind.”

Not a lecture, scarcely a conversation, on science but Dr. House sought to point out the unanswerable argument from “design in nature” as a proof of a Creator and of the truth of Christianity. To some, the

revelations of nature through science became also the revelations of a Divinity.

“ Brother Chandler spoke of a person (Godata) who after attending the chemical lectures last year, seeing evidence of wisdom and goodness in the composition of air and water, said ‘ There must be a God—there must be.’ ”

This same Godata it was who became chaplain to the army under King Chulalongkorn.

A study of Dr. House's journal seems to justify the assertion that his most far-reaching influence upon the mission work was through his relations with these progressive members of the nobility. It is even within a margin of safety to affirm that his influence was not exceeded by that of any other man up to the time of his retirement. This opinion does not underestimate such men as Rev. Jesse Caswell, Rev. Daniel B. Bradley, M.D., and Rev. Stephen Mattoon, whose labours also were pivotal in the development of missions in Siam. It only so happened that the association of Dr. House with the officials of the new government was more continuous in its bearing upon the work. Having gained their sympathy through his practise of medicine, and enlarged their interest through his knowledge of science, he won their complete confidence by his sterling character. When later these men, having obtained chief power in the government, turned to him for counsel in international affairs or when he went to them in behalf of the mission they knew that his judgment was fair and free from ulterior motive. During nearly the entire period of his service he was a valuable friend of the Siamese government and a wise advocate of the mission at court.



## V

LENGTHENING CORDS AND STRENGTH-  
ENING STAKES

A DIRECT effect of this growing interest in science was to show the value of Western education in such a way as to create a demand for the educational work of the mission. Not satisfied with their own enlightenment several of these progressive nobles requested Dr. House to tutor their sons in English with a view to instruction in science. As early as 1847, before the doctor himself could devote time to such work, Mrs. Mattoon had undertaken to tutor Kuhn Gnu, the son of the Praklang.

While at the tract house one day the doctor caught a glimpse of the desire and capacity of the common people for learning. A boy applied for a book. Knowing that the lad had received one the previous day, the doctor began to catechise him on that volume before giving him another. He was surprised to find that in a day's time the boy had mastered the details of the story of Elijah. Upon this the doctor observes: "Now this is in effect, as far as it goes, a school and a Christian school, where more knowledge is imparted perhaps than would be in a regular school."

Under the régime of the old king no regular school was possible, not only because the monarch was antipathetic to western ideas but because the Siamese had no common desire for education.

"It is next to impossible to interest the native Siamese in education, because it is the custom for all boys to enter a watt as novitiates for the priesthood, and as such are taught to read; but to read is the limit of their ambition."

The quickening of an interest in science among the upper classes proved to be the awakening of some of the younger generation to the desirableness of a broader education than the priests ever thought of giving.

The first mention of a school as a proposed department of the mission occurs as an entry in the journal on the first anniversary of the arrival in Siam, when the doctor records briefly: "Plans for interesting and instructing the young Siamese were discussed."

Looking back over the course of affairs it is apparent that the embryo of the mission school was the receiving of some children into the homes of the missionaries to be taught, while assisting in house work. As early as 1848 Mrs. Mattoon, with an eagerness to do something to elevate the condition of child-life, succeeded in obtaining two girls for this purpose, one of whom she named Nancy, after her own mother, and one Abby, after the mother of Dr. House. Later another was added, whom she named Esther.

In the next year Dr. House had apprenticed to him a Chinese lad of thirteen named Ati, the nephew of his Hainanese laundryman. The boy was bound for a period of three years, during which he was to act as a house servant in return for instruction in English. As a matter of fact this boy remained in connection with the mission for a much longer period. The part played by these children was not simply a demonstra-

tion of their capacity for a Western education but, even more importantly, they formed a nucleus around which to organise a formal school later. Until time was ripe for such an undertaking the missionaries could only try in the most experimental way to develop interest in education among the common people with whom they came into more intimate contact.

Although Dr. House fitted himself for the medical profession, he found that by taste and aptitude he was essentially a teacher. His fixed purpose was to impart to the Siamese the Christian truth about God and about salvation, confident that this truth would awaken the sleeping conscience. His discontent with his profession was to a large extent because it hindered him from the more direct propagation of the Gospel. Observation early disclosed to him, what other educators had discerned elsewhere, that the chief obstacle to the consideration of the spiritual message of Christianity was the false cosmogony as held by the people.

Their idea of the universe was based upon a total ignorance of many common facts of nature, an ignorance which completely excluded from their minds the idea of a spiritual God. They were so obsessed with fallacies about natural phenomena that there was but small common basis of physical knowledge upon which the missionaries could build an argument to dispose of these grotesque ideas. For instance, the popular explanation of a lunar eclipse was that a great dragon was trying to swallow the moon. When an eclipse occurred, the people would set up a din of kettles and drums to scare away the dragon. Since the moon always escaped, the people were the more



confirmed in their belief. Then there was the old notion of the earth being flat. In the midst of the earth was a great central mountain, whence Buddha had come, surrounded by a vast plain; and inasmuch as Siam occupied the middle of this plain, obviously there could be no other greater country. Before truth could penetrate such an armour of ignorance, it was necessary that nature be stripped of these false ascriptions in order that there might be a common ground upon which to consider the arguments for the Christian faith.

In the presentation of Dr. House's message there can be traced an orderly philosophy which reflects this situation. First he sought to remove some of these false ideas by pointing out common facts of nature which the natives had never observed. Next he sought to explain the conception of God as Creator. From this he led on to the love and mercy of God as revealed by Jesus. As a practical sequence he aimed to give an elementary education to the few who would receive it so as to demonstrate the Christian way of life. This meant in the course of time the development of a system of education.

#### SCIENTIFIC INTERESTS

Dr. House was peculiarly fitted for this work, for he had been providentially prepared to draw upon a wide range of scientific instruction. His years at Rensselaer Institute had developed his taste for natural philosophy and had given him a lifelong interest in the progress of science. His study of medicine had qualified him in practical chemistry, while his few years of teaching gave him needed experience in

laboratory demonstrations. While trying some experiments with gas in Siam he recalls "occasions of the same kind at Rensselaer school and in the Virginia school." Busy as he was, he managed to keep abreast of scientific progress through the journals of science, and was forward to adopt new ideas as he found them. In March, 1847, he writes:

"In evening read account of inhaling ether as a means of enabling one to perform surgical operations without pain to the patient. A wonderful discovery truly—inestimable in its benefit to the suffering of our race—and the author of it was an American."

At the first opportunity he applied the new idea to a patient in surgery:

"Old woman of eighty-four; piece of bamboo eight inches had entered her flesh, remaining still unextracted. O, how I wished I had an apparatus for inhaling ether—I prepared an extempore one."

In 1851 he reads of "a new way devised in Paris by suspending a pendulum from high dome to trace and render visible the motion of the earth on its axis"; and after a private experiment, straightway he makes the demonstration for his science-loving Siamese friends.

Like many missionaries, Dr. House was a student of nature, contributing to other scholars his observations. He was a member of the "American Oriental Society." He was a correspondent of the naturalist, Mr. John C. Bowring, at Hong Kong, son of the diplomat, for whom he undertook to collect and forward

specimens of Siamese insects and shells; and in this pursuit he became the discoverer of two varieties of shells previously unknown to naturalists, to which his name has been given, "Cyclostoria Housei" and "Spiraculum Housei." In his volume on Siam, Mr. George B. Bacon, speaking of the flora and fauna of Siam, remarks:

"The work of scientific observation and classification has been, as yet, only imperfectly accomplished. Much has been done by the missionaries, especially by Dr. House, of the American Presbyterian Mission, who is a competent scientific observer."

In his modesty he was surprised to find that his activities in this line were known in Europe. Dining at the Prussian Embassy at Bangkok, in 1862, he was introduced to the son of Chevalier Bunsen, who remarked that "he had heard of Dr. House in Europe; he has given his name to a new species of shell; he was the first to make Siamese shells known to the world." When Dr. Lane left Siam, in 1855, Dr. House took over from him and continued the meteorological observations because "it may be valuable by-and-by for the Siamese." On one occasion he had a bit of amusing chagrin in trying to determine the elevation of a mountain. He had constructed a new thermometer for himself and proposed to estimate the altitude by ascertaining the boiling point. After carefully explaining the theory to his native companions, placing the kettle on the fire, he eagerly watched for the first sign of boiling. To his astonishment the thermometer indicated that the chosen position, instead of being several hundred feet above the



sea, must be many feet down below the earth's surface—and then he discovered that there was a fault in his thermometer.

#### EARLY TOURS

For his eagerness to lengthen the reach of his arm and to extend the range of his voice, Dr. House found some satisfaction in occasional tours into the surrounding country. These were at once a relief from the exacting daily routine of the dispensary, a physical recreation, and an exploration of the regions seldom visited by Europeans. The first trip of any distance was made in company with Rev. Jesse Caswell during February, 1848, when the two took a ten day trip through the canals eastward to Petruï on the Bang Pakong River. In the next November, with Rev. Asa Hemmenway, he toured for a week to the west up the Meklong, with Rapri as the turning point.

These early journeys were veritable explorations. The boatmen seldom knew the country more than two days' distance from the capital. The doctor, in real explorer fashion, picked up in advance what little information he could, sketched rude maps and then on the journey directed or verified the course of the boat with a pocket compass. His technical knowledge served to great advantage. For future use, he records the directions by compass reading, the rate of speed and the distances as shown by the log, and notes natural objects which serve as landmarks. His skill at map making having been disclosed, some of the state officials requested him to draw, for their use, maps of the regions explored; and in discussing these

with them he found that the officials were almost totally ignorant of the topography of the king's domain away from the main water courses.

As these tours were all conducted on the same general plan, the description of one will suffice for all. A native long-boat was used, having a low cylindrical canopy of matting at the center to afford some protection from the sun. A crew of six or eight men would man the oars, or push with poles in shallow canals or in the rapids. The travelling ordinarily would begin before daybreak; during the heat of the day the party would stop for meals and for rest; then late in the afternoon the voyage would be resumed, continuing till dark. If out over Sunday the travellers were scrupulous to observe the day; seeking, if possible, a desirable location for the day of rest, but sometimes tying up in disagreeable places rather than push on in the early hours of the Sabbath.

The watts, or temple grounds, ubiquitous in the country, serve as caravansaries for travellers; their roofs and trees offering free shelter for wayfarers. As these watts were also the seats of learning, the missionaries always found an opportunity to present their printed page and to engage in conversation on religion. Books were offered to all met with along the way; to the fishermen seeking their game in the early morning hours, to the women working in the rice fields, to the labourers at the sugar presses, to the farmers in their garden patches, to the villagers in the hamlets through which they so frequently passed, and to the priests and novitiates at the watts. Some were too busy to bother with the proffered gift; some would accept with passive interest; some would accept with

marked interest and open a fire of questions. Still others, after discovering the nature of the gift received by their friends would pursue the voyagers, and swim out to the boat in eagerness for a book. Time did not suffice to enter into conversation, for the purpose was to scatter the seed as far as possible, so the boat would keep under way while packages were cast out on the land or into passing boats. At the noon stop, if natives did not gather around as usual, the doctor would start off to the nearest hamlet with a bag of books, sheltering himself under a large umbrella. Then would ensue the familiar yet ever different conversation about the Gospel.

#### TO PETCHABURI

After he became familiar with the methods, the doctor was ready to make long tours, once freed from the restricting cares of the dispensary. The married men did not find it convenient to leave their wives and young children for a long period so that this work was largely taken up by the doctor, who gained a keen relish for it. In December, 1848, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Mattoon, Dr. House set out with two boats for Petchaburi, the capital of the province by that name on the western peninsula. The trip had several points of interest.

In the first place the Lieutenant-Governor of the province had come to Dr. House for medical treatment a few months after his arrival; and being pleased with his treatment, invited the doctor to come to Petchaburi. Upon his recommendation the Governor of the province also, while in Bangkok, came to the mission house, curious to see the skeleton which



the doctor had. The Governor manifested such an interest and friendliness that Dr. House resolved to visit the provincial capital and discover the possibilities of mission work. Arriving at Petchaburi, they called upon the two officials and offered to them gifts of foreign articles. When they were about to leave for home, the officials in return sent very generous presents of fruit and sugar to their boats. In later years the under governor, having been promoted, made earnest solicitation for the missionaries to teach English in his capital, and as an inducement offered freedom to teach religion.

Another item of interest was of a different sort. Having learned that the original home of the Siamese twins was in the village of Meklong, near the head of the Gulf of Siam, the Americans sought out the family. They found only one brother living there, and learned that a sister was living in Bangkok, while the mother had died a year previously. The brother expressed a longing to see his brothers again or to hear from them; and at the doctor's own suggestion he wrote a letter to the absent twins, dictated by the brother. It told of the pious wish of the dying mother for them "to do merit for her spirit." Some years later, when Rev. Daniel McGilvray visited the twins in their home in South Carolina, they spoke of receiving this letter.

#### TO PRABAT

In the winter of 1849 Dr. House and Mr. Hemmenway made a trip to Prabat, about one hundred miles to the northeast of the capital. This place is the site of a watt erected over an imprint in the rock, reputed

to have been made by the footstep of Buddha. At that particular season of the year multitudes come from all parts of the kingdom to do homage to this "shadow" of Buddha. The doctor gives quite a detailed description of his experiences:

"A rocky mount, covered with a pagoda, rose before us to the height of three hundred to four hundred feet. On a lower elevation in front of this peak is the famous foot print; over which stands a very beautiful tho excessively ornamented structure, with elegant pillars on a side supporting a pagoda-like gilded roof, towering up seven stories, gracefully diminishing till they terminated in a handsome golden spire. On a rocky summit on the left stood a small pagoda, and on the right a higher eminence was crowned with a similar sightly structure. Before it was a long flight of stone steps leading up to the platform on which it stood. We ascended these steps, crossed a little court, entered another a little higher—and without ceremony entered the half-open door of the sanctuary before we were forbidden. Had we delayed a moment perhaps we should have lost the opportunity and had the gates closed against us. But we were in and made as good use of our eyes as we could during the few moments we were allowed to continue. More than one voice was raised in the silence that had prevailed within, saying to us we must go out, go out, or else kneel down and worship. One man with an air of authority came up and took us by the shoulder, ordering us roughly to take off our hats and shoes. So we went out.

"But we had seen the grave-like opening at the bottom of which the sacred footstep is said to be, though covered as it was with broad pieces of gold leaf and cloth of gold, and women kneeling low before it in an attitude of profound homage. The pavement of the room is of solid silver, the square blocks smoothly polished by the votaries as they pass in and out on knees. The foot-step is said to receive annually a great amount

of gold, while offerings of rings and other articles of value are thrown into the opening not infrequently."

Leaving the sanctuary the visitors climbed on up to the top of the hill to survey the country. Returning, Dr. House became separated from his companion; and as he approached the scene of the fabled footprint, he stopped to look at the elegant pagoda. Soon a crowd gathered around him, and in answer to a priest he explained why they had not worshiped before the footprint. Some were wondering at his garments; others were wondering at the unheard-of boldness in resolutely keeping on a hat while on holy ground. While he was talking, a rude push from someone behind and then yells from a hundred throats gave a threatening aspect to the situation. Fortunately, at that critical moment, a Bangkok priest, an old acquaintance, recognised him and was not afraid to come to the rescue. He then withdrew in safety, and finding Mr. Hemmenway, the two returned to their elephants and took up the journey to the boats. In the narrative of this trip Dr. House records having come upon a boy of about fourteen years, born without arms or legs, but perfect in other respects. The arm-bone was projected about four inches, covered with skin, calloused at the end from use. The boy could not raise or feed himself, but could make slight change of position by rotating alternately on each thigh.

A number of tours were taken in the dry seasons of '49 and '50. One through inland waterways to the Bang Pakong River and thence northward above Nakonnayok, meeting many Lao people living on the



river-bottom farm lands. Another to a point some two hundred miles up the Meinam, and a year later yet another trip was made as far as Paknampo, some three hundred miles up the same stream, and thence two days' journey up the right fork of the Meinam.

## VI

### CHOLERA COMES BUT THE DOCTOR CARRIES ON

**T**HE first recruits for the Presbyterian work came in 1849, when Rev. Stephen Bush and his wife arrived. Mr. Bush had been a college mate of Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon, and he came from Sandy Hill (now Hudson Falls), N. Y., the home town of the Mattoons. This little company of Christian men and women now decided to organise a church as a bond of fellowship and for the orderly administration of the sacraments. When it is considered that they had not yet won a single convert from either the natives or the Chinese, it is a remarkable testimony to their faith that they should have taken this step in anticipation of the future harvest. Dr. House records this action in his journal under date of Aug. 31, 1849:

“After tea we had a meeting of the members of the mission, and with all due solemnity organised a Presbyterian church in Bangkok, by the election of Rev. Stephen Mattoon as our pastor, and S. R. H. [Doctor House] as ruling elder. Brother Mattoon as senior member of the mission presided, reading at the opening of the meeting the first chapter of Revelation, that introduces the address to the seven churches of Asia by their Glorious Head.

“In the name of the Great Head of the Church we, a little band of five, united together in a separate church

organization, the beginning of great things we hope—the germ of the tree that shall overshadow the land. The lay members of this infant church were S. R. House, Mrs. Stephen Mattoon, and Mrs. Stephen Bush.” [Mr. Mattoon and Mr. Bush being clergymen were not eligible to membership in a local church.]

At the first communion of the new church, held on Sept. 30, a Chinese Christian was received:

“In the evening at a meeting of the Church Session Quasien Kieng, the native member of the A. B. C. F. M. mission church (received by Messrs. Johnson and Peet on January 7, 1844) was received into our membership on certificate of recommendation from the pastor, Rev. A. Hemmenway. An interesting occasion to us. A worthy brother, this Chinese disciple; may his wife and many others come in with and through him.”

This Chinese Christian, whose name is spelled variously in the doctor's journal and elsewhere, was Kee-Eng Sinsay Quasien, who served as the first Chinese teacher in the boys' school and who became the grandfather of Boon Itt, concerning whom more notice will appear later. Up to this time, so far as records show, there had been no genuine converts from among the Siamese in any of the missions. There had, however, been several from among the Chinese. Indeed when the king was urged to take action against the first missionaries he replied: “Let them alone; no one will give heed to them except the Chinese.” The first convert from among the Chinese sojourners in Siam was Boon Tai, who had come under the personal influence of Dr. Gutzlaff previous to 1831. A few others were converted



under the teaching of transient missionaries, and then came Mr. Dean, who established the first church of Chinese.

#### THE CHOLERA EPIDEMIC OF 1849

One day, in 1849, the startling news reached the mission compound that cholera had appeared in Bangkok. The plague spread very rapidly; almost simultaneously it appeared everywhere in the city. The very first notice of the presence of the pestilence that came to the doctor was the news that the Siamese printer connected with the Baptist mission had been stricken without any premonitory symptoms and died within a few hours.

“As may be imagined consternation seized upon all classes. The native doctors fled from their patients. Everywhere propitiatory offerings were made to the spirits, the people generally believing the pestilence to be caused by the invasion of an army of cruel malicious demons who had come invisibly to seize mankind and make them their slaves. And in accordance with this theory the preventative most relied on was a strand of cotton yarns, blessed by the Buddhist priests, which, tied about the necks or wrists, it was thought the invisible army could not pass. A cordon of such yarn hung looped from battlement to battlement entirely around the royal palace, a mile in circumference. . . .

“Awakened at day break by a Chinaman in a floating house across the river firing off crackers to propitiate his god. Met a Chinaman well-dressed, carrying a square frame on which little banners, red and white, some rice and fruit, little new-made clay images of men and animals, with little rags around them, red peppers, betel leaf and nuts ready for chewing, the end of an old torch—all laid down at a place where a dozen other such offerings to the spirits were placed.”

With such preventives as the sole protection against the cholera it is no wonder that the plague spread like wildfire. It was no respecter of persons—a dowager in the palace, a prince of Cambodia, a wealthy Hindu merchant were victims like the most wretched natives. The mortality was so inclusive that in many a house there were more dead than living; and in some instances the remnant of a family would abandon the house with its horde of corpses. Many of the mission servants and members of their families were attacked, and some of these sent in great haste for Dr. House. From early morning, all through the day, far into the night he visited the sick.

Terrifying as the plague itself was, the fear of death was almost eclipsed by the revolting disposal of the dead:

“You know it is the Siamese custom to burn their dead, but so fearfully did deaths multiply that a shorter mode of disposal was resorted to, and multitudes of corpses were thrown without ceremony, as you would throw the carcass of a dog into the river. These dead bodies could be seen any day floating back and forth with the tide before our doors, in all stages of putrefaction—on some of them crows perched, picking away at their horrid feast.

‘Go where you would through the streets, we would meet men bearing away the dead, hastily tied up in a coarse mat. The Siamese make loud lamentation at the moment of the death of friends, and as one would pass along it was no uncommon thing to hear the voice of wailing from this house and that. Once on my way to see a patient, the voice of one crying in great distress induced me to enter the little bamboo dwelling, whence the cry proceeded; and there on the mat-covered platform of a gambler’s shop (for such it was) sat a middle-aged

Chinaman with his head against the wall, sobbing at a piteous rate. He took no notice of my entrance; but, telling his only comrade that I was a doctor, I stepped up to him to feel his pulse, but he was pulseless and his limbs cold as stone—the hand of death was upon him. And I went on my way leaving him all heedless of my coming, crying bitterly as before.

“The most revolting spectacles were at the watts where Siamese custom requires the dead to be brought for burning or interment till burning is possible. . . . I have seen in one of these gehennas hundreds of loathsome corpses in every stage of putrefaction lying around unburied, unburned just where the hirelings that brought them or their friends, too poor to pay the expense of their burning, might throw them down—the hot sun and the rain doing its work awfully. . . . My own eyes have seen of such human carcasses, sixty thrown together in one huge pile with sufficiency of wood and over thirty in a smaller one near, all roasting, frying and burning to ashes with a thick black smoke going up from the dreadful pyre; with skull bones, legs half consumed, arms stiff in death projecting on this side and that as the pile settled down, till the men in charge with long poles would thrust and twist them back into the blazing heap. All day long, from an area of nearly an acre covered with the ashes of other freshly burned victims of the pestilence, would be continually going up the flames of scores of individual funeral piles; and this not on the grounds of one temple only, but from a dozen here and there about the city. And then when evening came, with the night air would be wafted to us such an unmistakable odor of burning flesh and singeing hair and bones.”

In the midst of his heroic labours, Dr. House awoke one morning with what he felt to be the symptoms of the cholera, and for a time he had dire thoughts of a certain and speedy death; but instant resort to his ef-



fective prescription and a quiet rest in bed for two days averted the threatened disease. Then he promptly resumed attendance upon patients. When it is considered that his professional services were sought in only a few instances, chiefly among the friends of the mission servants, and that his own aggressive zeal increased the number of patients treated by him, the heroism of his conduct stands out in bold relief. Even though there was no place of refuge for the missionaries, had it been possible for them to flee, yet their greatest security was to remain in such isolation as possible within their premises. But Dr. House's eagerness to save the lives of men that they might have a further chance to hear the Gospel impelled him to risk his own life to minister to every victim who would receive his services.

Concerning the prescription used during this epidemic, Dr. House published a report of his experiments, while in America in 1865, when there was prospect of an outbreak of Asiatic cholera in the United States. At first he began with the common prescription of the medical books of that date; then he turned to the use of calomel in very large doses, with better results; later he says that he hit upon the use of a mixture of spirits of camphor and water taken every few minutes and found this to be a specific for the disease, losing no patients under this treatment provided the attack was taken in time.

In general, however, he was handicapped by two difficulties. The disease made its attack so suddenly and developed so rapidly that unless remedies were applied at the earliest possible moment the end was fatal; but to many of the cases to which he came, the

summons of the physician had been delayed until there was no hope of saving life. The other difficulty was equally fatal; utter heedlessness to the directions. No amount of caution seemed sufficient to secure the imperative attention to the prescription. One patient, with a mild attack, he found to be dying when he called later; and upon investigation found that she had taken the medicine once when she should have taken it twenty times, but in the meantime had resorted to the powders of a native doctor. But in spite of these obstacles, Dr. House reported that of eight or ten really severe cases in the households of the missionaries, none died, and that he had records of seventy or more cures of persons elsewhere dangerously attacked.

The mortality of this plague of '49 was frightful. During the climax of the epidemic deaths were occurring at the rate of fifteen hundred a day in Bangkok. The river was thick with floating bodies, and vessels coming in reported that they had counted hundreds of corpses floated by the tide seven days out to sea. When the plague had at last abated the official estimate of the number of deaths in Bangkok and vicinity during the seven months was not fewer than forty thousand.

#### A CURIOUS MARK OF ROYAL GRATITUDE

The episode of the plague had rather a curious conclusion. When the pestilence had spent its force, King Phra Chao Pravat Thong decided that he would perform an "act of merit" in honour of Buddha for the cessation of the epidemic. Since the religion of Buddha requires great veneration for the life of ani-

mals one of the surest means to merit is to grant freedom to animals that are in captivity. Accordingly a levy was made upon every citizen to bring to the palace ground a stated number of animals or birds during a fixed period, and upon a given day these were all to be liberated at the king's command. To the surprise of the foreigners residing in Bangkok, they in common with the citizens received a demand for a gift of pigs and fowls and ducks in varying numbers and assortments.

The members of the Presbyterian Mission, assuming that this liberating of the animals was a religious rite, declined to make the requested present upon the ground that they could not "consent in any way to have anything to do with the system of idolatry in the land"; but, to avoid the appearance of offense, added that if the gift were a mere matter of custom, they would offer the required present as a compliment to the king. On the following day they received word from the Pra Nai Wai, who had charge of the levy, that the desired present had nothing to do with the religion of the country but was merely intended as a token of congratulation to the king on the occasion of the abatement of the pestilence. In view of this explanation, Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon reconsidered their decision; and accordingly the required donation was sent, accompanied by a letter of congratulation with an expression of thanks to God and of a Christian prayer for His Majesty's welfare.

For three days the river was alive with craft bringing the gifts to the landing at the king's palace, where the donor was credited. Then the gifts were taken to the depot where the aggregation was being fed by



proper officers till the day of liberation arrived. It was estimated that more than two hundred pails of rice were necessary each day for feed. Then on the great day a river procession took place, a gala affair such as the Siamese frequently held on festal occasions:

“The river at one time this morning, as far as eye could see around the bend and to the palace, had a procession of boats with banners, white and red, with music and beating of cymbals, with cages of all colours and sizes and shapes—some one, two or four stories high, some like beautiful pagodas, some shaped like vases; some with flowers, some with banners representing by picture the animals or birds contained in the cages.”

All proceeded to the river landing at the palace, where the captives were set free. It was estimated officially that nearly one hundred thousand fowls and ducks, some five hundred pigs and numerous boat-loads of live fish were included in the donations and were set free.

The incident, however, did not end here. A like request had gone to the French priests and the members of their parishes. At first the Bishop gave permission for the making of the present to the king; but later when it was rumoured that the king would liberate the captives to “gain merit,” the bishop not only declined himself to make the gift but withdrew his permission previously granted to his people. This reversal caused great indignation among the officials responsible for gathering the presents. After a conference in which the bishop was informed, as the other foreigners had been, that the gift was not regarded as a participation in a religious rite but only

as a customary token of congratulation, the bishop returned to his original attitude, restored permission to his people and offered a gift in his own behalf.

But thereupon a new turn in the affair developed; the eight French priests conferred together and concluded that the explanation was only a subterfuge, the real object of the gift being an act of worship; and they decided not to participate for themselves, notwithstanding the bishop's permission. This course had the disadvantage of placing them in the position of disrespect to the government, since their superior had approved of the participation. Accordingly the eight priests were admonished by the government that if they refused to acquiesce in the royal request they must leave the country. Remaining inexorable, the order was given for their banishment, but the bishop was permitted to remain because he had complied with the request. This decree remained in force until revoked by King Mongkut in 1851.

Some months later the foreign residents of Bangkok were surprised to read in an English paper of Singapore a statement that the deported priests, on their passage through Singapore, had given;—a version of the affair in which they appeared as heroes who had chosen expulsion rather than participation in pagan rites while the Protestant missionaries had purchased exemption by acquiescence. Unfortunately this interpretation of the incident to the glory of the eight priests placed their own bishop in an unfavourable light.

#### ABANDONING THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

The distress of mind which Dr. House felt so

keenly over the perplexities of his profession, coupled with eagerness for work that would give more direct propagation of the Gospel, caused him to determine that as soon as another medical man should come out to Siam he would abandon medical work. When at length Rev. D. B. Bradley, M.D., returned after a sojourn of three years in America and brought with him yet another doctor, Rev. L. B. Lane, M.D., Dr. House supposed that his longed-for time of release had arrived. In that expectation he wrote:

“After all, now that my looked-for medical helper has come, I do not find myself so inclined to give up the practise of medicine and surgery as I expected to. Indeed, I believe I verily love my profession more, now the time has come which I so long ago fixed as the time when I should most certainly renounce it. It is not such a burden to me as it once was. . . . And yet I must have time granted me for study. My heart is quite set on fitting myself to preach the gospel from house to house as a colporteur. Have I not the right to take time for the study of the language in which I am so sadly deficient!”

This reaction from his former depression is natural under the circumstances. Remembering that Dr. House had had no independent practise before going to Siam, not even having performed a surgical operation alone, it is no wonder that the large and varied number of cases which presented themselves to his untested skill should challenge his small degree of self-confidence. But the instant other physicians are at hand, that mental burden seems to find a measure of support in their presence.

In the entry of the journal just quoted, however,



there appears in the open what hitherto he had not even written in privacy—another and controlling reason for giving up his profession, viz.: the desire to give his whole time to direct dissemination of the Gospel. First he would devote himself to gaining proficiency in the language, for the chief purpose of evangelising. All through his journal in these early years it appears that his heart was more occupied with the healing of souls than of bodies. To him the hospital was a means of gaining intimate contact with people that he might tell them about Jesus.

Great was his chagrin, therefore, when he found that the arrival of two physicians was to give no immediate release. Dr. Bradley had returned with the intention of devoting himself to unattached practise, the A. B. C. F. M. having withdrawn its mission. Dr. Lane, who went out under the American Missionary Association, which for a time became the successor of the A. B. C. F. M., would not consent to take charge of the dispensary until he could command the language. There was nothing for Dr. House to do but to meet the exigency of the situation, and this he did by consenting to hold fixed hours at the floating dispensary but leaving to Dr. Bradley all outside calls. This arrangement allowed Dr. House half his time for the study of the language.

During this period of his connection with the hospital, in 1851, the smallpox broke out in Bangkok. Dr. House sent to Singapore for vaccine virus and at once began vaccinating any child whose parents he could induce to submit. For weeks he roamed about the city in his free hours soliciting patients for vaccination, explaining, entreating, warning, and almost

hiring parents to permit him to inoculate their children. As one reads through the daily entries of the journal at this time, he receives an odd impression of this foreign doctor going about the city begging permission to administer an ounce of prevention. Back of this he had two very earnest desires. The first and immediate purpose, of course, was to save life and to prevent the dire results of the disease, evidences of which he saw everywhere. But the deeper motive was, by the demonstrated advantage of vaccination, to induce confidence in Western sciences in general and in the good motives of the missionaries in particular, so that the people would be ready to give more serious attention to the gospel message.

After eighteen months of this arrangement, Dr. Lane took charge of the dispensary and Dr. House formally abandoned his profession. During the four and a half years he had a record of seven thousand three hundred and two patients. With characteristic unselfishness, however, he consented for a time to substitute when the other physicians could not respond to calls; but soon he found that old patients were taking advantage of this consent by expressing a preference for him, so that the cases were gradually increasing. Finally he took a firm stand and declined to do any professional work, except to assist in surgery.

After Dr. House had altogether retired from his profession there appears in his journal a soliloquy which indicates that another motive had been subconsciously urging him to this course which, only after he had some months' retrospect, had been permitted to come to expression:

"April 17, 1853. Is it not my duty to write a full expression of my feeling of my lost confidence in the healing art to the executive committee. I fear my parents would be tried when the faculty cast me off as I do their traditional notions. Peace with them is better than war, perhaps. And yet perhaps I am doing very wrong by standing in the way of some other medical missionary who would be sent out if I was not believed to be a regular practitioner.

"But the last consideration does but little trouble my conscience, believing as I do from the bottom of my heart, that the more medicine given the worse the patient is off; and the less, the better."

When once this idea gained the strength of expression he freely declared his opinion to his fellow-missionaries. Then we find the curious anomaly of a graduate in medicine arguing against the use of drugs and his patients contending for them. However this was only a passing phase of "unbelief" in an extreme degree, and his seeming trend towards faith cure had its own reaction when, a few years later, we find him having recourse to physicians and drugs when unaided nature did not bring relief for a wife's constantly aching head.

The change from the medical to the evangelistic and educational form of mission work had an effect upon Dr. House of which perhaps he was not quite conscious, but which is quite evident to one who reviews his life in the foreshortened perspective afforded by the journal. As manifest in the quotations already given, the medical profession proved to be depressing to him because the sense of responsibility in decisions coincided too closely with his natural diffidence; and there was a slow but constant ebbing of self-confi-



dence. Continuance in the medical work was liable to have lessened his general effectiveness for missions for this reason. But the more direct Gospel work of colportage, touring and teaching seemed to harmonise better with his mind so that he was buoyed up with hope and inspired with a courage that knew no obstacles. He had a greater faith in God than in himself, and the evangelistic work gave the fullest range to that faith, impelling him to attempt whatever he believed to be his duty without fear of failure.

#### AT THE TRACT HOUSE

The larger object which Dr. House had in view in abandoning his profession was to devote himself more directly to the propagation of the Gospel. His observation of the physical ailments of the people disclosed that a large portion of the cases was attributable to sensualism, brutality or ignorance. This brought him to the conviction that however merciful and needful was the work of healing, the Gospel was of primary importance to remove the infection of sin which was largely responsible for the bodily sufferings. When others arrived who with greater relish took over the medical work, he was eager to give himself to the Gospel.

But he found himself sorely handicapped for this work. The urgency for opening up the dispensary had allowed him no time for careful study of the language. After two years of constant practical use of Siamese he was afraid to undertake public address, for fear his blunders would bring ridicule upon his purpose. When he terminated his medical work entirely at the end of four and-a-half years he was

inclined to reproach himself for his defective pronunciation and faulty diction, a shortcoming which he never wholly remedied because the tongue had acquired its tricks through lack of early discipline. During these years the Gospel fervour in his heart consumed him with a fury because he could not give vent to his passion for evangelising. In the arguments with himself concerning the relinquishment of medical practise, he always came back to the imperative need for time to gain facility in the language. So, as soon as Dr. Lane took over the work of the dispensary, Dr. House gave himself to a diligent course of study under the tutorship of Kru Gnu.

The three missions maintained jointly a Tract House in the bazaar. Upon arrival of Drs. Bradley and Lane, Dr. House was sufficiently relieved from the stress of medical work so that he promptly took his turn at the tract house.

“Today I commenced going over to the tract house in the bazaar to distribute books. It will be long before I shall feel at ease in this necessarily hurried, confused mode of trying to do good, but I trust to be enabled to go through with it. The crowd not particularly unruly, but Satan put it into the heart of one of them to attempt to impose upon the newcomer again and again; now as a Siamese, now as a Chinese, now with and now without a hat,—to see how many books he could get from me. This is disheartening.”

An example of another kind of trial in this street work, Dr. House relates concerning Dr. Bradley:

“A Siamese nobleman told Dr. B. that he had watched him these many years, had seen him imposed upon every

way by the Siamese, yet he did not get angry; 'there must be something in your religion different from ours.'"

The distribution of books in the bazaar had a manifold value. It not only put the printed word in the hands of those who did not come to the mission compound, but it also served to advertise the mission, resulting in daily calls of a score or more seeking additional books. The free distribution of tracts in the bazaar had the advantage of opening the way at once for a public explanation of the contents of the tracts; and as these conversations were carried on in the hearing of a large circle, the propagation of the word was multiplied beyond the readers.

The men of the mission had devised a unique method of economising and at the same time assuring that the distribution should be as effective as possible. The printed matter was arranged in series. When any one applied for a book, he was asked if he had previously had one. If he had not, he was given the first in the series, but if he had, he would be catechised to see whether he had read it. If he showed that he was familiar with the contents, he was given the next in the series; but if he had not, he was advised to read the one he had. In many cases the applicant was able to give a very detailed account of the Bible story he had read, and frequently asked questions. This scheme made sure that the printed matter was being judiciously distributed and that there was being slowly but surely implanted in the minds of many people the simple facts of the Bible, preparing them for fruitful attention to preaching in



after years. Just recently a missionary magazine told the story of a woman of Bangkok who made a profession of Christian faith; and upon being asked where she first heard the Gospel story, replied that she first heard of Jesus from a street preacher in her childhood in the early fifties. The reach of faith in which those early missionaries sowed beside all waters was greater than the reach of our imagination to estimate the harvest.

Dr. House enters in his journal the story of several conversions which illustrate the extraordinary fruitage from these tracts carried away by visitors to the capital. The first of these cases came under his own personal notice, and the other was related to him by Mr. Jones, of the Baptist mission:

"A copy of the Chinese gospel of Mark had been given months ago to a boy in one of the Chinese schools. He took the book home; it was given to the children to play with, till only a few leaves remained. A relative of the man who had married this boy's sister came from China, and was visiting in the home of this boy when he chanced to pick up the tattered book. Reading, he became interested, and wished to know if he could get more. The next morning the brother of the boy fell in with the native assistant of the mission on his rounds distributing tracts, and invited him home with him to see the visitor. The inquirer was supplied with the book he wished and invited to come to the preaching at the station. He came, grew deeply interested, attended regularly and two weeks ago was judged a fit subject for Christian baptism, and received into the Church [Baptist]. . . .

"At the Baptist mission there appeared one day a man of sixty years. He had come a six-day journey from the north. He had never seen a Christian missionary,

but five years ago he came upon a Christian book. Becoming interested he gathered here and there several parts of the Old and New Testaments. From these alone he was led to forsake idols, and became well versed in scripture—better even than the servants in the mission compound. He came to Bangkok and sought the missionaries for further instruction. When asked, 'Who has been your teacher?' he replied: 'Jesus; He has said, Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find.' Within ten days after his appearance at the Baptist mission, he fell a victim of cholera."

#### CANVASSING THE CITY

Dr. House devoted a part of each day to street work. He had previously in his walks about the city prepared an accurate map. He now laid this off in districts and entered upon a plan of systematic visitation to every house in the capital. This plan afforded unusual opportunity to see the people in their homes and to engage them in religious conversation.

"At 1 p.m. went out for a couple of hours distribution of books. Met at a watt gate two old men. To one gave books; the other said he was an old man (seventy-four); his ears were deaf—he could scarcely hear; his eyes had become dark—he could not see to read; and what should he do? He seemed to wish to be instructed in the way of happiness, and I stopped to tell him of the love of God. Then we walked on together. . . . I could not part from him with Christ yet unspoken of, and so in the road I stopped again, sheltered by my umbrella only, till I had given him the idea of the Son of God dying in the sinner's place. I did not know or care what passers-by might think, I only thought of the poor old man's need of the Saviour.

"My first visit was to a floating house where a Siamese lady was sitting in the shade of the veranda. . . .

She was glad to get books—read fluently; said she already held to our way of worship, and gave a specimen of chanting some part of the Roman ritual.

“Next was sent for by a young prince to whose intelligent family I had given books last week. He gave me tea, etc. The woman at the next house said ‘Oh, yes, I would like books,’ and an interesting conversation ensued. She at once assented to there being a Creator, and though probably had never heard of one before, asked for His name. How happy I feel when coming to one such I tell of the God of creation, and unfold the wondrous story of redemption.

“At the next house found a clay modeler at work. He had a book, and brought it to me—proved to be an English speller. It had a hymn in praise of mother-love, also a church—, and a Watt’s catechism. The latter I translated to him, giving me an opportunity to give much religious instruction.”

This type of evangelistic work Dr. House very soon found to be much to his liking, and was surprised at his own versatility in religious conversation:

“I ought to bless God for giving me, as I believe I have, some talent for entering into conversation with strangers, introducing the great subject to those casually met. I was in early youth sensible of a great lack of talent of this kind, but cultivated it and now I am not the same I once was. . . . O, Master, fill my heart with Thy love, and then my lips must always and to all speak forth Thy praise.”

Occasionally he writes out an abstract of the conversation, especially if it had shown particular thought on the part of the interlocutor. A transcription of one of these entries will give a good idea of how the missionary “preaches”:



“Going over into the palace of our prince, found several Nai, intelligent headmen—one a Khun—gathered on the porch of the audience hall. They invited me to sit down and answer questions, ‘talk about religion’ they said. . . . Our religion differs in this, for one thing; whereas your god Buddha was originally a man who by merit attained to divinity, ours was originally God, who took on him the nature of man. ‘But what did he do that he might become God?’ they asked. So I told of eternity and Jehovah. They asked if we were hired to come over here; surprised we had no temple with idols; never was a more excellent opportunity to make known God’s blessed truth, or more respectful attention—all friendly, civil. And to many, what I said had all the interest of novelty. . . . What were God’s commandments? Is Jesus then the Son of God? Can a Siamese man, if he repent, be saved? Can you become God, will you become a God at last? Why did not God create all men alike? Why must he needs try us on probation? In what direction is hell?—these and innumerable similar questions were proposed mostly in good faith. And grace was given me and utterance to give what seemed a satisfactory answer to most of them.”

On another day, passing through the grounds of a watt, he was invited by a priest of his acquaintance to stop for a call. Tea was made ready and a pleasant discussion of religion ensued in the presence of several young priests:

“One thing he could not get over, we killed animals. Yes, so do you, I told him; and explained about animal-culæ in water—promised to let him see them through my microscope when it came.

“Transmigration endless! He told me that Buddha taught that if any one took a needle and thrust it into the earth anywhere in the wide world, and was to ask

his teacher if he had ever been there,—Yes, he had some time or other been buried there! So of any given place on the earth's surface. (This beats geology for stupendous periods of time.)

“Buddha taught that time passed very slowly in hell; and he illustrated it thus: Now 2,395 years since Gotama Buddha died—all that time but as half an hour to those in hell.

“‘Let me see your god and I will believe,’ said some onlooker. I asked him if he could see his own god? ‘Yes,’ he replied. ‘Stop,’ said my host, ‘you had better say nothing of that.’ But I went on to ask him if he worshipped brick and mortar which could not lift its hand, nor see nor hear.

“They all thought Nippant (nirvana) preferable to heaven—till I told of the assurance we had that ‘they go no more out.’”

#### VISIONS OF THE REGIONS BEYOND

During this systematic visitation, Dr. House obtained glimpses of “the regions beyond.” Medical work had already brought him into contact with the aliens in Bangkok. As he became acquainted with these groups by his travels throughout the city he became deeply interested in their home lands. Small as the mission force in Bangkok was, he began to meditate whether their efforts should be confined to the Siamese to the exclusion of all these other peoples.

At that time it was estimated that the strangers within the gates were equal to the native population of Bangkok. Chief among these immigrants were the Chinese. The Chinese held nearly all the trading in Bangkok. The semi-annual trade winds brought numerous junks from China laded with Chinese products; and each of these junks had its cargo of

human freight also. Sometimes a single junk would bring as many as three hundred; and the average annual immigration was estimated at one thousand. These people came largely from the Island of Hainan, and nine-tenths of those who sent their boys to the mission school were from this province.

There were but few Burmese in Bangkok; but of their old enemies, the Peguans, there was a large village on the west bank of the river. These people had originally sought refuge from the Burmese by taking service under the king of Siam, but in time had practically become his serfs. It was in their village that Mrs. Mattoon began her class of children which later was transferred to the mission compound. The Malays, few in number, could not be reached for want of acquaintance with their language. Dr. House records an anecdote which had come to his ears showing the shrewdness of these people in their native country:

“The chiefs obtained some Christian tracts. Whenever a trading vessel arrived, they showed these tracts to the captain. If the captain swore at the tracts, they concluded that he was not a Christian, and would have nothing to do with him. But if he displayed an interest and inquired about the tracts, they judged that he was sympathetic with religion and that they could trust him.”

During the cholera epidemic Dr. House was called to see the servant of a Cambodian prince living in Bangkok, and the visit resulted in an enduring friendship. The prince, the son of the king of Cambodia, was living in a grand palace provided by the king of Siam; and Dr. House was led to suspect that he was



held as hostage for the good behaviour of his father, over whom Siam claimed suzerainty. The prince urged the doctor to go to Cambodia, assuring him that he would be welcomed with open arms by the king; and that the people did not approve of the worship of images, for the Cambodians held that "God made man, and man cannot make God." The information gained from the prince prompted Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon to plan a trip into that country. They entered upon the study of the language for that purpose, but the death of the old king of Siam arrested these plans. However, the interest awakened in Dr. House led eventually to his notable trip to Korat.

But perhaps the most important of these chance relations was with the Lao. The doctor had early learned of the frequent trips of boatmen from the Lao land. With ears open for useful information, he gathered from a Siamo-Portuguese doctor, who had accompanied a Catholic priest to Chieng Mai, information concerning the route, knowledge of the receptive character of the people and of the deceptive nature of the reigning prince. His interest in the Lao grew until he felt prompted to leave the Siamese to his fellow missionaries and betake himself to the Lao country. A particular day of indifference to his message in the streets of Bangkok sent him to bed with a heavy heart:

"But ere midnight," he writes, "my sorrow was turned into joy as the privilege was presented to my view of yet going a messenger of the glad tidings to the tribes of the Laos to the north. To them shall my thoughts be given and my future life, if Providence but opens the way."

And again when he was depressed by the fruitlessness of the early labours he meditates :

“ I believe all the past of my strange history has been for a purpose—yet all unrevealed—and I will not trouble myself about it. May I ever be ready to serve my Master, anywhere at all times. But should I be permitted in his Providence to carry his blessed gospel to the Laos some future day, then I can read and understand the why of some things. To be thus privileged were better than to visit the home of my childhood, my aged parents, my brother, again—'twere better than to be blessed with houses or lands or wife or children of my own.”

To him the mission in Bangkok at that time was like a candle in a starless night, very faint to be sure, but making more dense the surrounding darkness that seemed to confine its light. His eyes strained to look into the regions beyond and his heart beat with passionate desire to evangelise the unknown peoples.

## VII

### PROVIDENCE CHANGES PERIL INTO PRIVILEGE

**I**N 1850 the United States sent Honourable James Ballestier, with a small suite including Rev. William Dean, a former missionary, as his secretary, to seek a more generous commercial treaty with Siam. After three months of bickering with officials he was constrained to withdraw from the fruitless effort. The king refused to give a personal audience to the envoy, whereas the envoy refused to deliver the letter from the President to any but the king. This point of etiquette was of vital importance. By refusing to give audience to the representative of another nation, the oriental monarch was signifying that he did not regard the other nation on an equality with Siam. It will be recalled that Commodore Perry, in seeking a treaty with Japan, met this same presumption. Even as late as 1868 China would not admit the equality of other nations by allowing their envoys to personal interview with the emperor. Acknowledging himself vanquished in this point of procedure, Mr. Ballestier withdrew.

Scarcely had the Americans departed when news was received that a British squadron was on its way, bringing an embassy to request a new treaty. The belligerent character of Great Britain at that time was known in Siam, so that this report sent a tremor of



fear through the body politic. With a large suite and a great display of naval force the British envoy Sir James Brookes met no greater success than the American. He left in high indignation at the treatment accorded him, threatening vengeance for the discourtesy shown to Her Majesty's communication. Upon his withdrawal the fear which preceded his arrival increased to a panic among the officials, who were terrified at the prospects of war as a result of the king's stubborn adherence to custom.

Hand-in-hand with the crisis in the international relations the affairs of the missions were fast drifting towards probable extinction. As the intercourse between the Siamese and Sir James Brookes became strained, the Siamese began to cut off communications with the foreign residents. This was only the shadow of what was to come. As soon as the British fleet left, a sudden wave of arrests gathered in all who were employed as teachers at the missions. Upon inquiry as to the reason, the missionaries were informed that the teachers were to be punished for breaking the law in teaching the sacred language Pali to foreigners. The only plausible ground for this charge was that the Baptist press had, at the request of a high official, undertaken to print the laws of Siam which were in that language. Next the house servants withdrew from the homes of the foreigners.

Another mark of increased hostility was in connection with negotiations for a piece of land for the Presbyterian Mission. Attempts had been made several times, but the transaction had been adroitly blocked. Since permission must be obtained for tenure of land by foreigners, applications were met

with procrastination which meant denial, or alternative locations were offered which were totally unfit for the needs. Just before the arrival of the two embassies, a friendly Siamese was found who was willing to lease a desirable piece of land; official permission was secured, the money paid over and the Mattoon family had actually caused their floating house to be towed to the new location preliminary to the erection of a building. Just at this juncture occurred the abortive negotiations for a revision of treaties. Without explanation or warning, a peremptory order came from a higher official, revoking the permit and requiring the missionary to return to the old location.

Under these circumstances Dr. House wrote home (Sept., 1850):

“It becomes a serious question what, as a mission, is our duty—it now being settled that no change for the better is to be hoped for. Three and a half years we have been seeking for a place where we could locate our mission, and in our own way aid in bringing this heathen people to Christ. But a separate home among them has been denied and we baffled in every attempt to secure premises on which we might build houses, gather a school and lay foundations for those that come after us. Thus far we have had no local habitation or name of our own—being merged in other societies, living by suffrance on their premises. . . . And now our teachers are taken from us; no one daring (with imprisonment hanging over them) to become teacher of the proscribed foreigner.”

The status of the mission was deemed so critical that Dr. House was authorised to report the situation

to the mission office in New York and to ask permission for the missionaries to quit Siam as the last resort and to attach themselves to missions in other lands. The reply, received nine months later, gave full authority to the missionaries in the matter, and provisionally assigned Dr. House as assistant to Dr. Happer in China. This assignment had been suggested by Dr. House in his letter to the Board because Dr. Happer, knowing of the crisis in Siam, had written him to come to China, adding that he "always thought Siam an unpromising field; and that after the Board gets out of it they might as well keep clear of it." While waiting for the desired authority to quit the field the missionaries kept an eye open for a favourable chance to get away in safety, deeming themselves warranted in escaping with their lives in any vessel that could be found to take them away. Thus did the Mission come very close to an untimely end.

#### DEATH OF THE OLD KING

The serious foreboding of the natives and foreigners alike was greatly intensified by the rumour that the king had shut himself up in his palace and would have no communication with his nobles. Daily the court assembled according to custom but the king took no counsel with them concerning public affairs. So few were permitted to enter the royal presence that it was difficult to ascertain whether he was sick or only in a pet as on a previous occasion. It was, however, a case of serious illness from a chronic disease which had rapidly become critical.

About the middle of February of that notable year, 1851, the king sent a document to the assembled no-



bles, briefly stating that he despaired of recovery, and left to the council of princes and three chief ministers the selection of a successor; and at the same time turned over the reins of government to these three ministers. Although the king at this time refrained from nominating a successor, he had some months previously expressed a preference for a favourite son, but the nobles would not confirm his wish. Besides this son there were two other aggressive aspirants for the throne; all three candidates being conservatives. While both Chao Fah Yai and Chao Fah Noi had legitimate claims to the throne there was no apparent prospect that either would be chosen, for the other three claimants were strongly united in their opposition especially to the former because of his known friendliness towards the English.

As the situation grew ominous of civil strife, the Pra Klang, the strongest of the nobles and the leader of the situation, proposed the name of Chao Fah Yai, having already taken precautions to win to his support the commander of the army; and let it be known that any of the pretenders who did not acquiesce would have to contest their claim with him. By such bold measures he carried the day, even the rivals reluctantly giving in their adherence; and on the following day the decision of the council was communicated to the Prince-Priest, who gave his acceptance on the 18th of March. The king-elect remained in his watt till the death of the king on April 3; he then was brought to the palace grounds in state and lodged in a house especially built for a temporary sojourn, and changed his yellow priestly robes for the ceremonial dress suitable to be worn until the coronation.

Before being brought to the royal premises, the king-elect graciously received three of the missionaries who called upon him, Dr. Bradley, Mr. Jones and Professor Silsby. No doubt it was to this occasion that Mrs. Leonowens refers in her book *An English Governess* (p. 242):

“Nor did the newly-crowned sovereign forget his friends and teachers the American missionaries. He sent for them and thanked them cordially for all they had taught him, assuring them that it was his earnest desire to administer the government after the model of the limited monarchy of England and to introduce schools where the Siamese youth might be well taught in the English language and literature and sciences of Europe. . . . In this connection Rev. Messrs. Bradley, Caswell, House, Mattoon and Dean are entitled to special mention. To their united influence Siam unquestionably owes much if not all her present advancement and prosperity.”

He authorised Mr. Jones to state that “should the English or American government send an embassy to Siam now he thought they would be kindly and favourably received.” He also received the Roman Catholic bishop, requested him to have prayers offered in his church for the peace of the country and consented to have the priests, banished by his predecessor, recalled.

No believer in Providence can fail to recognise the hand of God directing the course of affairs in Siam at this crisis. Had the old king continued to live, war with Great Britain was inevitable. Had either of the reactionary candidates been chosen civil strife would have been precipitated. In either case the founda-

tion stones of the mission would have been widely scattered.

#### CHANGED ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOREIGNERS

In May, 1851, the king was formally inducted into his regal office under the title Prabat Somdetch Pra Paramender Maha Mongkut. The accession was celebrated with prolonged festivities. The coronation was private, witnessed only by the princes and nobles. After an interval of a few days came the more public ceremony of enthronement, and to this the Europeans were invited:

“ We all (except of course the ladies) had the honour of being present by his own invitation. Indeed we had a regular audience from His Majesty; a strange and not a little imposing scene it was in that audience hall of the palace. A dinner was prepared for us after the European style, and though ‘ he could not shake hands with us as he desired—Siamese custom not allowing it,’ yet he sent some substantial proof of his regard in the shape of a gold flower and one of silver, together with a gold salung (value one-fourth eagle) and other specimens of the coinage of the new reign.

“ You will understand how marked are these attentions when you are told that no missionary was ever before on any occasion admitted within the walls of the palace, much less allowed to have an audience. . . . We were told from the throne in a public audience by the King himself (who perfectly understands our object in coming to his land) that he wished us to find ourselves pleasantly situated in his country and to go on with our pursuits as we have been doing—‘ Fear not!’ he added. That was the purport of what he said, and though he was addressing merchants as well as ourselves we knew he must have had us in mind as much as them.”



Then came the spectacular procession of the king and nobles around the walls of the palace :

“ According to immemorial custom on coronation occasions, H. M., with his nobles and princes in grand procession, marched around the walls of the royal palace, a mile in circumference. We missionaries with the other Europeans received special invitations to be present. . . . As the King came along, with pomp and glitter and display of wealth, sitting high on his throne carried by thirty-two men, he was distributing right and left to the crowds showers of silver coins. When he saw us he stopped to rain silver upon us with a right good will.”

A month later occurred the inauguration of Chao Fah Noi as Second or Vice King. A public pageant only slightly less magnificent was given, and again the missionaries with the Europeans were personally invited and honoured with special attention.

With the accession of King Mongkut a complete change of attitude towards the missionaries was instant. The new men appointed to high office were from the group of progressives. Those who were carried over from the old régime changed their attitude with facility, for after all they only reflected the royal mind. Princes who had eschewed intercourse with foreigners now courted their acquaintance, frankly declaring that fear of disfavour with the old king had formerly held them aloof. Teachers and servants eagerly returned to their posts. The people in the streets manifested a new respect for the foreigners. With great joy Dr. House records the change :

“ A new era with us—at least the dawn of a brighter day. We have a home at last promised us, and on a

really pleasant spot of ground they are going to allow us to build. With brothers Mattoon and Bush, went up to visit the ex-prince-physician (now foreign minister) at his new palace he falls heir to. Were graciously received. 'I have laid the matter of which you spoke, before the King. He said he gives his permission for you to come here (i. e., to site nearby) to live; desires me to give you any assistance; permits you to build for yourselves; can have the whole vacant space to the canal bank, if needed; wishes you to build many houses; about a thousand missionaries may come if they wish.'

"Almost too good to be true! Are we really then going to obtain what we have been seeking for in vain now these four and one-half years—a place to build a home of our own? A most eligible spot this; none better in all Bangkok."

Permanency being assured, the missionaries decided to construct houses of brick, making them as durable and as comfortable as possible. The erection of these houses required a constant oversight of the work and attention to details that cannot well be understood by people in America, for all the practical problems that the architect or builder would take care of as a matter of course had to be solved by the missionaries who had no experience in such work. In the midst of the enterprise the masons and carpenters struck and it required much diplomacy to adjust their demands. The first houses were completed and preaching services begun at the new compound in February, 1852. This site continued to be the location of the mission until 1857, when growth of the work necessitated a change.

#### MISSIONARY LADIES TEACHING IN THE PALACE

The most notable of all the friendly gestures was

the royal request to have the ladies of the missions teach English to the ladies of the palace. The significance of this extraordinary move was understood least of all among these ladies themselves. By his manifestation of approval for female education the king swept completely away the argument of age-long custom against the teaching of women. There continued to be practical difficulties but the insurmountable obstacle had been removed by a single gesture of the liberal-minded king. This notable request is recorded in Dr. House's journal under date of Aug. 13, 1851:

"Dr. Bradley and Mr. Jones received a communication from the grand chamberlain of the royal palace, etc. 'H. M. had heard from Pya Sisuriwong and Pra Nai Wai that the wives of the missionaries would teach, changing times (i.e. in turn) the royal girls and ladies, if H. M. allow. H. M. wishes to know how you will do, and desires several ladies who live with him to acquire knowledge in English, etc.'

"Dr. Bradley replied that the ladies of the mission had made themselves a board of managers of the affair and were ready to undertake the work. Next morning Dr. Bradley was summoned to the new prime minister's, and told that H. M. desired the teaching in English to ladies of the palace to begin today—that the astrologer had pronounced it a good day—and requested Mrs. Bradley to go at 9 a.m. She did so, her husband leaving her at the palace gate where the Pra Nai Wai received her and led her to the gate of the woman's apartments; there a number of women were waiting for her. While waiting outside, the young Princess of Wongna met her, carried in state under a yellow canopy, and shook hands with her. She was led to the hall where nine young ladies from sixteen to twenty (one of thirty)—



bright, intelligent and beautiful, she described them—were committed to her as her pupils in charge of the matron of the palace.”

The women of the mission who assumed this task were Mrs. D. B. Bradley, Mrs. Stephen Mattoon and Mrs. J. T. Jones (who later became Mrs. S. I. Smith). This work among the women of the palace Dr. House characterises as the “first zenana work conducted in any foreign lands,” antedating the zenana work in India by some five or six years. The number of pupils at first increased very quickly to twenty-five or thirty, but after the novelty wore off many of the ladies dropped out of the class. A few maintained an interest to the end, and even invited the teachers to visit them in their private apartments for more serious work of conversation.

The visits of the missionary ladies to the palace continued for a little over three years, when they suddenly and without explanation found admission denied to them. Some have surmised that the king became displeased at the religious influence. However the more probable explanation is that suggested by Dr. House's journal where the change in this order is associated with the temporary displeasure of the king towards the missionaries by reason of a letter calumniating his character, which coincidentally appeared in a newspaper of Straits Settlement and which he erroneously attributed to a missionary.

#### FIRST FRUITS OF THE MISSION

Along with the turn of the tide in the relations of

the government there came to the workers the cheer of gathering the first fruits from the seed of their own sowing. Though there was no evidence of the native Siamese being interested in the Gospel, yet the missionaries were not left without a token that their work was honoured of God. Two years after the organisation of the church, a Chinese convert was received. Under date of Oct., 1851, Dr. House wrote to his parents :

“ It is at last our privilege to write to you of one who, once a worshipper of idols, is now a worshipper of Jehovah. . . . His name is Ooan Si Teng, a Chinese twenty-four years old, born on the Island of Hainan, has been here some six years, speaks and reads Siamese and also reads his native language. He has been living in the family of Mr. Mattoon for the past two or three years. From his first acquaintance with us he has been convinced of the folly of idol worship and has renounced it. . . . He accompanied Mrs. Mattoon to Singapore as bearer for little Lowrie; and Dr. Lane, with whom Mrs. Mattoon resided while there, says of him that had he already been a professing Christian, his conduct could not have been more exemplary.

“ So it was with great joy that at our last communion October 5, we received him to the ordinance of the Lord's appointing. The eyes of more than one of us were filled with tears of joy as we looked on this interesting scene. . . . In all probability he was the first native of that Island to be converted to protestant Christianity.”

While there was bright hope of the immediate prospects on the field, from the Mission Board there came the discouraging reply, “ No money, no men,” in response to pleas for recruits. The reports of the dire

situation under the old king had not yet been overtaken at home by the news of the marvellous change under the new government.

#### PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH KING MONGKUT

As he had intimated, the king could not continue familiar intercourse with the westerners because none but the nobles might enter his presence, except by particular request. There was some speculation, therefore, as to the attitude he would assume towards the missionaries after the coronation ceremonies were over. Any misgivings they may have had were soon dispelled. For some years it had been the custom of the Prince-Priest to celebrate his birthday—"the day like that on which I was born," as he termed it—by inviting his foreign friends to a feast. The missionaries awaited the royal birthday with some interest, agreeing among themselves that his future attitude towards them would be more truly forecast by his treatment of his former custom. When the day approached the king sent an autograph letter "to all the white strangers," inviting them to the palace.

Concerning this event Dr. House wrote (Oct. 18, 1851):

"This day twelve-month, how different we were situated: our teachers arrested and in irons; our servants panic struck or in prison; and we seriously agitating the question of seeking a more open field to labor in.

"Now we are the invited guests of the King himself, on the occasion of his forty-seventh birthday, to dine at the royal palace with other Europeans. His Majesty's eldest son is deputed to do the honours of the feast, and we receiving a present of gold from the sovereign of the



land as a token of his favour; and nobles and princes courting rather than shunning our acquaintance."

King Mongkut entertained a particularly high esteem for Dr. Bradley and Dr. House. This admiration manifested itself not merely by including them under the bestowal of general favours but by marks of personal consideration. It was no small honour which the king conferred upon Dr. House by this request (July, 1852):

"Honoured today by the first personal summons I (or indeed any of us missionaries) have received to the royal presence. Nai Poon called to say that he was ordered some days ago to take me for conversation in English as His Majesty was 'losing all his English.'"

Frequently the king sent to Dr. House requesting him to translate for him items of political or scientific interest in English journals or to report news from the doctor's foreign mail. Before the king engaged Mrs. Leonowens, the English governess, who served also as his amanuensis, he occasionally would summon Dr. House to transcribe in a familiar hand letters in English to the king or to write for him letters to foreign rulers, including Queen Victoria and the President of the United States.

In his capacity as a surgeon, after he had given up the general practise, Dr. House was on two occasions summoned to assist Dr. Bradley at the king's palace. In January of 1852 he records his first attendance:

"At His Majesty's request—the prince physician desiring it, Dr. Bradley was summoned to take charge of one of the royal ladies who had been confined but a few

days before of a princess—His Majesty's first begotten since his accession. . . . Never before had any foreign physician been within the forbidden precincts of the harem of the royal palace. His Majesty, like a good husband anxious for his young wife, desired Dr. Bradley to invite me to accompany him as counsel in the case. So in the evening I went expecting to return by twelve o'clock. Parleying at the inner gate, women servants opened the gates and escorted us to the palace. Dr. Bradley had got the fire by which she was lying extinguished (custom required 'lying by the fire'), had put her on a close diet and other treatment. An old lady of rank waited to carry up my opinion of the case to the 'Sacred Feet.' At midnight, finding our patient had no new paroxysms, as we feared she might, we proposed going home. 'Go, how can you; you must stay till morning, you are locked in and the key sent to the king, so stay you must; no one goes out till daylight!'"

Some days after Dr. Bradley received from the king the following letter of appreciation:

"MY DEAR SIR:

"My mind is indeed full of much gratitude to you for your skill and some expense of medicine in most valuable favour to my dear lady, the mother of my infant daughter, by saving her life from approaching death. I cannot hesitate longer than perceiving that she was undoubtedly saved.

"I beg therefore your kind acceptance of two hundred ticals for Dr. Bradley, who was the curer of her, and forty ticals for Dr. S. R. House, who had some trouble in his assistance, for being your grateful reward.

"I trust(ed) previously the manner of curing in the obstetric of America and Europe, but sorry to say I could not get the same lady to believe before her approaching (threatening) death, because her kindred were many more who lead her according to their custom.

Your present curing, however, was just now most wonderful in this palace.

“I beg to remain your friend and well-wisher,  
“S. P. P. M. MONGKUT, *the King of Siam.*”

In September of the same year the two doctors were again called to the palace to attend upon the queen-consort. A still-birth had left the queen in a precarious condition, so that for more than a month Dr. Bradley was in almost continuous attendance throughout the day, while Dr. House took his place during the night. During this occasion it was necessary for them to remain in the palace on the Sabbath, and on that day the two missionaries availed themselves of a privilege accorded by the king, who agreed that when it was necessary for them to remain during Sunday they should have freedom to conduct worship in the palace.

“There in that hall of the queen’s apartments in the inner palace, to the interesting group around, Dr. Bradley read the scriptures . . . his auditors occasionally asking questions, sometimes for information, sometimes in a carping way.”

But the queen was not improving; and at her request the foreign doctors were permitted to leave and the Siamese court physicians restored to their functions, administering their medicines prepared from “sapanwood shavings, rhinoceros’ blood and the cast-off skins of spiders.” After a day the American physicians were again called in attendance, and although they judged the cause to be beyond help, continued in constant attendance.



“September 25. For first time without exception since Monday, September 13, am to sleep in my own bed at home—having all other nights slept in my clothes at the royal palace, relieving Dr. B. who has charge of the queen in his attendance at night, his family requiring his presence then.”

The death of the queen occurred on the tenth of October. On this occasion Dr. House was requested by the king to write a detailed account of the late illness and death of the queen; and this, together with matter of his own composition, the king had printed for distribution.

#### A MISSION SCHOOL ORGANIZED

Having obtained a permanent location, the Presbyterian missionaries advanced to the long-cherished project of a school. Under date of August, 1852, Dr. House makes entry:

“In evening we talked over plans for doing good, laying out mission work, schools, bazaar schools, a Chinese teacher. Will go to Rapri to visit our brother Quakieng.”

This last sentence refers to the Chinese who had been received into the young church upon certificate. He lived at Rapri (Ratburi), a few days' journey northwest of Bangkok, where he conducted a school for Chinese children. A week later the journal records: “On next Sabbath (15th) Quakieng will begin to explain the Scripture to the Chinese.” This indicates the first step forward, a teacher of the Chinese language introduced as a means of gaining pupils

from among the Siamo-Chinese children. From this time until his death he was fully associated with the school; and in November he removed his family to live near the mission compound.

At the annual meeting of the Mission, Oct. 4, 1852, the journal says:

“A superintendent of mission schools appointed; and myself appointed to that office. Shall have new responsibilities and important ones; would shrink, but dare not, cannot—must go forward. Perhaps will find what I have been waiting for yet. Talked over openings for starting schools. We all feel as if we are but just organized—as it were, commencing.”

This appointment was after the doctor had fully abandoned medical practise. The new school started off with good prospects. In October Mrs. Mattoon began to give instruction in Siamese language to the eight boys. The annual report to the Board, prepared perhaps two months later, gives the enrollment at twenty-seven, including the four girls in the families and day pupils; while in January the doctor comments:

“Our schools are doing well, but too few pupils. Geography and arithmetic in the boarding school (twelve pupils) now fall to me.”

The use of the word “schools” in the plural is accounted for by the fact that Mrs. Mattoon had succeeded about this time in organising a class in the Peguan village, across the river. But the period of daily instruction was manifestly not enough to counteract the influence of the community. Having through a number of months succeeded in winning

the confidence of the parents, at length, in February, 1853, she induced them to let their children (mostly girls) go to live in the mission compound:

“February 9. Tomorrow we expect to have quite an accession to the number of our boarding pupils—the whole (almost) of the scholars at the Peguan village, where Mrs. Mattoon has won the confidence of the parents as well as the love of the children. Teacher Kieng reports that their mothers were washing and scrubbing them as clean as possible today, and their teeth have all got quite white, so long have they left off chewing betel.

“February 10. And they have indeed come, the little ones whom Mrs. Mattoon has allured from their mothers, to take up their home with us. They hardly slept last night their mothers said and were up early—and yet some tears were shed. . . . The mothers came with them; showed them our school rooms, the new bamboo bedsteads, the maps—China, Burmah, Ceylon, England, America. Speaking of my mother—‘Is she yet alive?’ said one of them, ‘now why did you leave your mother and come to live in Siam.’ . . . Ploi is engaged by Mrs. Mattoon to prepare their food and to go to bathe with them.”

Thus began the first boarding school for girls at the Presbyterian Mission in Siam.

#### DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING PUPILS

One of the difficulties encountered was to secure pupils for a period sufficiently long to make the work worth while. So little did the Siamese parents value the opportunities offered that they even wanted to be paid to send their children. A custom of the country afforded a practical means to obtain and hold pupils for a period of years.



"February 14, 1853. Today an addition to my family and to my responsibilities. A bright little Taichen Chinese boy, eleven years old, son of the old Chinese teacher of Mr. Gutzlaff. The old man is in trouble—a debt with interest. So he came to us offering to sell the lad, knowing that the boy would be educated and in good hands. It is so difficult to secure any other way but by buying them, boys for any length of time for schools in Siam, that the end would almost justify the means, were we to actually buy them, as Siamese masters do. As it was I had a paper drawn up in which I was to have a boy for seven years for eight dollars, after which he was to be restored to the father free—a kind of apprenticeship."

The father was one of the cholera patients whom Dr. House saved from death. This lad's name was Naah. Some nine months later the father, upon his death bed, gave the boy to Dr. House.

A year or more later, commenting upon this practise of obtaining boys for the school, the doctor said:

"This we find is the best, if not the only way we can secure the keeping of these native children in our boarding school. And I do not hesitate to do it when we have the money to spare. At present have outstanding one hundred and nine dollars, invested in seven children."

And then he slyly wonders what the abolitionists at home would say if they heard of this plan of "buying children" to educate them. In the course of a few years the boarding schools grew to fill the capacity of the mission. From the beginning the curriculum included the principles of domestic economy and manual training in a practical form. The girls shared in the house work; the older ones also assisted in teaching the younger ones. The boys had their allotment

of work, so that the expense of the school was kept at a minimum; for the first full year the cost was only two hundred and eighty-one dollars, exclusive of Kee-Eng's salary.

#### TO KORAT

Tired from his confining labours, in December, 1853, Dr. House set out for a tour to the distant city of Korat, some two hundred miles in a northeast radius from the capital, but involving nearly twice that distance of travel. The undertaking had the approval of King Mongkut, who not only issued the usual passport but sent a letter commanding all officials to afford assistance and protection, and directing the governor of Korat to give supplies and other facilities as might be required. The journey occupied fifty-eight days and was made partly by boat, partly by elephant train and partly by buffalo cart. A party of five trusty natives accompanied him, including Ati, his faithful teacher.

Korat, the capital of the province of the same name, had a population of some thirty thousand. Dr. House was the first white person to visit the city, at least in modern times. The out journey was made by boat up the Meinam to Salaburi on an east branch of the stream two days above Ayuthia. There elephants were hired to carry the party with their burden of books and supplies. The course lay across country through the jungle and over the mountains, requiring seventeen days from Bangkok. In reporting home his safe return he wrote briefly:

"I have not had time since my return to draw up a

detailed account of all that befell me on the road, but I think I can promise you an interesting letter next time—that is, if a traveller's tale of life in the woods, riding on elephants (being thrown from the back of one and lying at the mercy of the huge creature—with those great feet pawing the air six inches from my head), riding in buffalo carts, footing it, roughing it; now shooting deer or peacock, now entirely out of provisions and making a meal of rice and burnt coarse sugar; seeing great tiger tracks and hearing their cry, sleeping in the open air by the watch fire, three nights and four days without seeing human habitation—with divers other adventures, will interest you; or if accounts of the glad reception my books and gospel message seemed to receive in the many villages and hamlets and in the city, where no messenger with glad tidings had ever gone before."

He was well received by the governor of the province, whom he had previously met in Bangkok. Intercourse with the governor proved that the doctor could not only show him wonders of western knowledge but could discover to him facts in his own realm of interests. Salt being a rare commodity and the local product being coarse and black, Dr. House showed him how to purify it, greatly to his delight. As a mark of appreciation the governor had brought in from the country three unusually large elephants for the visitor to see; while reviewing them, the doctor called his attention to a fact of nature concerning elephants, viz.: that the height of an elephant is equal to just twice the girth of its foot. His host would not believe this until he had his men try the experiment on several animals. The doctor had also found that the elephant provides a reliable pedometer; as its walking gait is quite uniform, it is necessary only to



measure the step of the particular beast (usually forty to forty-two inches) and then counting the number of paces per minute (usually seventy) the distance covered in a given time is easily calculated.

An amusing incident occurred while the stranger was exploring the city, and Dr. House relates the story with an evident sense of humour:

“Sallied forth at noon to take a walk east of town. In east gate got into conversation with some citizens; others came out to gaze at the stranger till soon had a fair audience to listen as I opened to them the great truth of the Being of God. An old man sat down on a stone in the gateway to listen—all was news to him and others—when a drunken fellow, sent of Satan as it were, came up and soon became very noisy, till I could only talk in snatches. Gentle means nor threatenings availed, but I gave some books.

“Leaving I was going quietly on the way to a watt outside the walls when my troubler came following after, noisy and cursing. I gave him that road and took another in another direction. He returned to follow me, when I thought I was justified in teaching him that there was a limit to even Christian patience. So I tripped up his heels, hoping to walk off out of his way before he could get to his legs again. But he was only drunk enough to be impudent, and now angrily followed after me. I picked up a broken limb and turned to meet my adversary. Brandishing my rather formidable weapon in the air over the fellow's head, I ordered him to wheel about and march back to the city gate. Many had gathered in the meantime to see what would happen. The fellow was frightened at my earnestness, quailed and marched; soon stopped to plead that he intended no harm, when I punched him with my umbrella with one hand to quicken his steps and flourished the sledge-hammer-like limb in the other, and off he marched again

as bid. This I repeated till getting tired, I tripped up his heels again and left him sprawling while I went on my way unmolested. . . . I cannot even now help laughing at the figure I must have made with my shillalah swinging over his head, and his mortal terror at the same."

Royal passports were not always honoured at face value by distant under governors. Dr. House found that while the king had commanded, the command was not much more than warrant for him to demand. After waiting some days for the governor to engage elephants for the return trip there was little hope of having his desire granted unless he took up the task himself. Vigourous action and persistence overcame the inhospitality which was displayed. The return trip was laid out through the western part of ancient Cambodia, through the Chong To'ko pass, thence to the headwaters of the Bang Pakong River, and home by way of Kabin and Patchin.

Through this region he met with even great indifference to the king's commands:

"On the long roundabout journey home from Korat, the person of whom I engaged my elephants took me for purposes of his own far round to the southeast of Kabin, the point I wished to reach at the head of navigation on the Bang Pakong River. Not unwilling to see the country, I put up with a good deal of imposition on the part of my guide . . . one of the greatest rogues I ever met. At the village where he resided I consented to proceed with buffalo carts instead of elephants at his urgency. We had travelled on with them some days when, one afternoon walking in advance of my party, I entered the little Cambodian village of Sakao, three miles east of Kabin on the military road to the capital of Cambodia.

"Here was an officer of the customs who was on the

lookout for some Cochin Chinese soldiers who had deserted from the king's service; and they being unaccustomed to a white face and I doubtless rather travel worn, and my appearance there unattended being decidedly suspicious, they were on the point of arresting me as a "deserter," when first the name and then the presence of my guide (who after awhile came along with my outfit) made all right, for the custom officer and my guide were old friends.

"Expecting to get away after an early breakfast next morning, I slept in one of the carts. . . . Next morning I tried in vain to purchase a fowl; went over to the headman to beg him help me. "He had no fowls, he did not think he could procure any in the village"; but while he was speaking I actually saw some running about under the house. I was beginning to think rather hard of Cambodian hospitality when, induced by triple price, a man slyly brought me a chicken.

"While I was eating my breakfast, the custom house officer came over to visit his friend, my guide. Soon a neighbour brought in a large brass dish, and from the liquor in it the three quaffed and quaffed again, till they became very chatty and good humoured. I had finished my breakfast and the cart drivers were waiting for their master. But he was too pleasantly engaged to leave the jovial company he was in. In vain I called on him to eat his breakfast that we might be off, for the sun was high, and still three days remained of our journey and we had already lost much time on his account. "Not yet, not yet," he answered, and kept on sipping from the bowl of arrack.

"Time passed. At 10:30 they were still at their cups. My patience was now clear gone. To go on I was resolved and no longer to be defrauded of my time by a knave. I told him 'go he must' or I should go on without him and he should not receive a penny of the half-hire to be paid at the journey's end, and I should report him to the governor of Korat, who had put me in his care. 'And how will you go on without the buffalo



carts?' he impudently asked. 'Do as I did when I went on to Korat; I will hire carriers here in the village and walk on.' 'Not a man shall leave this place to help you'—put in the custom house officer, 'he would forbid their going.'

"I had said nothing to him before, but now I spoke: 'Mr. Officer, last night you heard my passport read and the peremptory order of the viceroy of Korat that I be not detained a single day on my mission'—and I took him by the arm as I spoke and looked him in the face—'You dare not stop me. Is his excellency the governor of Korat nobody? I have the royal seal, too—do you not dread that? Keep me here one half day more and you will repent of it.'

"His anger that was written on every line of his knavish face sobered him. The villagers around looked on astonished at my audacity, bearding this great man in his den, and he did not know what to make of it. Just then, my guide seeing that I was resolute in the matter, gave in, ordered the buffalos to be yoked and told his servants to drive ahead, he would follow. I took a formal but civil leave of the worthy; we were off, and my guide, running after, soon overtook us. Would you believe it, we proceeded but three quarters of an hour, when he drove off the highway to the shelter of some trees by the side of a swamp and there came to a halt, pretending it was necessary to feed the buffalos and that there was no suitable place beyond. So there two or more hours were lost—and this while one of my servants was very ill, our stock of provisions all low, and already seventeen days on a journey that should have taken but seven."

The river was finally reached; the buffalo caravan dismissed and boats engaged to carry the party to Bangkok, where they arrived after nineteen days' travel from Korat.

Two lesser trips were made in 1854, which were of

some interest. In June, he accompanied the Baptist missionaries on a trip to Bangplasoi on the gulf:

"I had long been promising myself a visit to my old patient, Chek Chong, the Chinese fisherman whose arm I amputated five or six years ago to save his life, threatened by mortification resulting from an alligator bite that had nearly severed the poor man's wrist. The loss of his arm seems to have been under Providence the means of saving his soul, for the religious impression he received while in the hospital never left him; he then expressed himself willing to make our God his God. Being unable to read and not being able to speak Siamese at all . . . we referred him to our brethren of the Baptist mission with some of whose church members he was already acquainted. . . . After a due season of instruction and probation they received him to church membership about a year ago.

"Living some sixty to seventy miles from Bangkok he cannot often see his spiritual teachers, and would be quite shut out from religious privilege, were it not that Bangplasoi has been made a kind of an outstation by the Baptist mission. . . . So when I was invited to accompany Mr. Ashmore to that mission, I readily accepted. . . .

"While there, Chek Chong told me that ever since he had lived with us at the hospital he had observed the Sabbath, refraining from labour. Looking around at the evidence of thrift about him, I replied: 'I do not believe you are the poorer for losing one day's work in seven.' 'Yes,' he said, 'while the fish business has turned out poorly this season, out of thirty engaged in it of my neighbours, only four have succeeded at all, and I am one.'

"We attended morning and evening worship with the family and such of their neighbours as chose to come in and listen. . . . Chek Chong being called on to lead in prayer, offered up thanks most devoutly that 'the red-

headed (*i. e.*, not black like Chinese) foreign teachers had come to visit him.' He seems to have much influence for Christ; he is not ashamed of our Christ; two of his nephews are inquirers; the wife puts no hindrance in his way."

The other trip was made in November, when the doctor explored the Meinam "farthest north" up to that date, reaching Pitsanuloke and Pichit and occupying thirty-three days. Some sixty to seventy villages were visited along the way and more than thirteen hundred tracts given only to those who could read.

#### CLOUDED FRIENDSHIPS

The favour of the king was for a time withdrawn by reason of an incident the character of which was vague to the missionaries at the time. Later the cause of the estrangement was discovered to be a letter which appeared in an English journal at Straits Settlement in October, 1854. The offending letter not only misrepresented some acts of the government but calumniated the character of the king, and insinuated that he was held in low esteem by the missionaries as well as by other foreigners. For some reason the king ascribed the authorship of this letter to a missionary who had recently passed through Singapore; and among his officials, as learned later, he threatened to expel the missionaries except Dr. Bradley and Dr. House.

The first warning of royal displeasure was the arrest of the Siamese teachers on the fictitious charge of teaching the sacred language to foreigners. Then the missionary ladies, presenting themselves at the



palace gate as usual for admission to teach their classes, were ignored. The missionaries, essaying to go out to the sea coast for recuperation learned that a decree had been issued to limit their movements; but inquiry received only evasive explanations. Finally the king sent a demand that the missionaries collectively should sign a paper disclaiming authorship of the letter and denying in toto its imputation; this demand was made before they had seen the letter, but it gave them an understanding of the trouble.

After consultation they declined to assent to this demand, partly because it might be construed as an acknowledgment of responsibility, and partly because they considered it impolitic to make a general defense of the government, some of whose affairs they did not fully approve. However, they drew up a paper denying their complicity in the publication and reaffirming their friendship towards the king. After several months the teachers were allowed to return to the mission, but with an admonition against giving out "false information lest the missionaries put it in their letters and send it out of the country"; the decree of restriction, however, continued in force for some time. The servants, returning to the mission compound, reported the nature of the examination to which they had been subjected by the king, and Dr. House records the following: "Being asked which missionaries he visited in his work, one replied 'Maw House.' 'Well,' said the king, 'Maw House is good hearted, affable and good humoured,' and thus was evidently satisfied that the unfavourable reports could not be laid to the teachers."

Dr. House quietly pursued an inquiry into this mat-

ter, and after some months came to the conclusion that the instigator, if not the actual writer of the letter, was a certain Captain Trail, commander of one of the king's trading vessels. It seems that while in Singapore port, one night at eleven o'clock the captain fired a salute in honour of a ball on shore given by a friend. The British consul complained to his superior against the alarm caused by the firing, and his government forwarded the complaint to Bangkok. The captain was arrested and cast into a native gaol, which was crowded with low class prisoners, and was there for several days before his friends learned of the case. Some of the missionaries interceded for him and secured his release. When he left Bangkok he threatened to get even with the government for his treatment, and there was good reason to suppose that the letter was the means of revenge he took.

This entry in Dr. House's journal was annotated in pencil several years afterwards, adding "the letter was doubtless gotten up between Josephs (the Armenian merchant) and Capt. Eames, a friend of Captain Trail, with the knowledge of the prime minister, who was piqued at the king, and whose knowledge of the state affairs had given the insinuations in the letter which aroused the king's hostility." Fortunately, time convinced the king of the total innocence of all the missionaries and in due time the cloud of disfavour vanished.

## VIII

### SIAM OPENS HER DOORS—MORE WORKERS ENTER

**T**HE accession of King Mongkut so completely changed the attitude of the government towards foreign nations that the danger of a clash with England disappeared over night. In due course of time Queen Victoria sent a note of congratulations to the new Siamese sovereign and expressed her desire to send an envoy for the purpose of revising the existing treaty. Upon receipt of this letter the king despatched it to Dr. House with the request to "transcribe it in a plain, legible hand"; for though the king could read and write English fairly, he preferred to have letters from abroad transcribed in a handwriting with which he was familiar, to avoid misunderstanding. In this connection, Mrs. Leonowens, who acted as his English secretary some years later, says that at times the king would insist upon his own diction in English in spite of warning of its turgidity, and when his communications of this character were misinterpreted he would lay the blame on his amanuensis.

In March, 1855, the English embassy arrived. The special envoy was Sir John Bowring, Vice-Admiral and Governor of the English colony at Hong Kong. Dr. House had, some years before, received a friendly letter from Sir John through his son John C. Bow-



ring, for whom Dr. House was collecting specimens of Siamese insects; and he looked forward with great pleasure to a personal meeting with the noted English diplomat. Again the king sent to the doctor a succession of notes received from Sir John announcing his arrival, requesting a private audience, etc., desiring these notes to be transcribed; by which means Dr. House was kept informed of the progress of affairs.

The reception of this embassy was in marked contrast with the treatment of Sir James Brookes. The ceremonies were aglow with friendliness, and the negotiations were undertaken with the least possible delay contingent upon the courtesies of the occasion. The prince who was chief commissioner for the Siamese sent for Dr. House for an interview; he said that the Siamese had proposed the missionaries as interpreters on their side, but this had been declined by the ambassador on the ground that the missionaries were Americans.

“Soon after [the prince] sent for me, to accompany him to the conference of the commissioners with Sir John to discuss the treaty. Found the prime minister there, who joined in urging me. But I felt constrained to decline the honour they would do me, feeling my incompetence to do justice in interpreting such important matters as might come up; then—‘Mr. Mattoon must go’—so the prince himself went over for him and carried him off as a ‘kind of companion,’ he said, not as translator;—as he did not trust in \*\* but in the missionary he did trust. ‘He must be as ears for him’—I understood him that the king said this last night.”

While negotiations were under way both Mr. Mattoon

and Dr. House were frequently summoned to assist the Siamese in the official translation of their counter proposals into English, even working all night on the final draft.

#### DR. HOUSE AND SIR JOHN BOWRING

The confidences were not all from the Siamese side. Sir John Bowring told Dr. House privately that he had "come with an olive branch in my hand, but behind me—!" and that he had been reluctant to undertake the mission but had received letters from the king urging him to come. The Siamese officials were so ready for negotiations that they readily acquiesced in the English proposals; and, apart from the preliminary ceremonies, the complete negotiations were accomplished within a week.

In his book, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, which gives a detailed account of his mission, Sir John includes several lengthy memoranda which he attributes to a "certain foreign gentleman long resident in Siam." Many of these are to be found recorded in Dr. House's private journal at various dates preceding the arrival of the British envoy. His narrative of the scenes attendant upon the choice of Mongkut is almost verbatim from the doctor's account. He highly praises the progressive spirit and the keen mind of the prime minister, contrasting him with the usual Oriental diplomat, and adds:

"I learned that on one occasion he sent for a foreign gentleman whose opinion he greatly valued, and in the presence of many persons entered upon a dialogue in which the foreign gentleman was to impersonate J. Bowring in a discussion of the expected proposals."

Thereupon follows the dialogue in full. The original of this unique rehearsal in diplomatic combat is found in the doctor's journal as a record of his interview with the prime minister after it was learned that England was to send a mission. Sir John also accredits the minister with a confession of belief in one supreme Divine Being, ascribing his information to a "certain gentleman"; this confession, Dr. House says, was made to him personally and acknowledges in a letter that he had reported it to the British envoy. The number and extent of these and still other quotations shows that Sir John Bowring had gleaned much of his knowledge of the Siamese from Dr. House.

During his sojourn in Bangkok Sir John Bowring attended service at the mission one Sunday. Dr. House records the visit, noting that in alphabetical order it was his turn to preach, and confesses that he felt a little secret trembling in the presence of the august visitor. Sir John, in his account of the visit, adds that the "congregation very sweetly sang one of my hymns"—for he is the same Sir John Bowring whose name ranks high in hymnology, being the author of these hymns, among others: "*God is Love, His Mercy Brightens*," "*Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*," and "*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*."

As a broad and deep student of human affairs and one obviously sympathetic with missions, Sir John's estimate of the work in Siam at that period and of the peculiarly obstinate nature of Buddhism is noteworthy. Concerning Buddhism he says:

"Buddhism by habit and education is become almost a



part of Siamese nature; and that nature will not bend to foreign influence. The Siamese, whether or not they have religious convictions, have habits which the teaching of strangers will not easily change."

Concerning the influence of the missionaries he says:

"Much influence is really possessed by the missionaries. They have rendered eminent services in the medical and chirurgical fields; they have lent great assistance to the spirit of philosophical inquiry; many of them have been councillors and favourites of king and nobles, admitted to intimate intercourse and treated with a deference which could not but elevate them in the eyes of a prostrate, reverential and despotically governed people."

But concerning the prospects of success for the Gospel the diplomat is not so optimistic:

"I know not what is to impede religious teachings in Siam, but at the same time I fear there is little ground to expect a change in the national faith. Neither Catholic nor Protestant speaks hopefully on the subject."

The significance of that statement, written for the year 1855, lies chiefly in its contrast with the fact of the certain if slow growth of Christianity in Siam and the record of attainment to date. Even the keenest human observer cannot forecast the fruits of the Spirit's work.

#### TREATIES WITH OTHER NATIONS

In 1856 a diplomatic mission from the United States reached Bangkok, seeking a revision of the existing treaty. The mission was headed by Hon.

Townsend Harris, who, it is interesting to note, came from Sandy Hill, New York, the home of Mr. Mattoon and Mr. Bush. The Siamese government was quite ready to negotiate, for they had the recent experience to guide them and the English treaty for a model; and a new treaty was speedily effected. Had Dr. House been in Bangkok at this time, the Foreign Minister assured him later that the Siamese government would have asked to have had him appointed first consul under the new treaty.

In the same year a French embassy negotiated a treaty similar to that of the English and American. In one point, however, the French advanced a step. Sir John Bowring could secure the right for the English to own lands or build houses only within twenty-four hours of Bangkok (a very extensible limit, as time has shown), and Mr. Harris accepted the same provision. The French, however, demanded and secured the provision that "French missionaries may travel to any part of the kingdom and build houses, churches, schools, hospitals, etc."; a privilege which immediately accrued to the Americans by reason of the "favoured nation" clause in their treaty.

When the ratifications of the American treaty were exchanged, a year later, King Mongkut issued the following memorandum:

"We now have embraced the best opportunity to have made and exchanged the treaty of friendship and commerce with the United States of America, and we shall be very glad to esteem the President of the United States at present and in the future as our respected friend, and esteem the United States as united in close friendship, as we know that the government of the

United States must ever act with justice, and is not often embroiled in difficulties with other nations.

“And if the treaty of friendship between the United States and Siam has been (shall be?) long preserved in harmony and peaceful manner it will ever be the occasion of the highest praise among the Siamese people.

“ (Signed) SUPREMUS REX SIAMENSIUM,  
“ S. P. P. MONGKUT.”

The influence of the missionaries in bringing about the treaty relation of Siam with the Western world has been testified by several. The king himself sanctioned the following statement of esteem towards the missionaries for their influence on the country:

“Many years ago the American missionaries came here. They came before any Europeans, and they taught the Siamese to speak and read the English language. The American missionaries have always been just and upright men. They have never meddled in the affairs of government, nor created any difficulties with the Siamese. They have lived with the Siamese just as if they belonged to the nation. The government of Siam has great love and respect for them and has no fear whatever concerning them. When there has been a difficulty of any kind, the missionaries have many times rendered valuable assistance. For this reason the Siamese have loved and respected them for a long time. The Americans have also taught the Siamese many things.”

In the same line spoke the Regent, during the regency over Chulalonkorn, to United States Consul General Hon. George F. Seward:

“Siam has not been disciplined by English and French guns as China has, but the country has been opened by missionaries.”



The recognition of the indirect influence of the missionaries in facilitating the treaties was acknowledged by Dr. Wm. M. Wood, late surgeon-general in the United States Navy, who accompanied Mr. Harris on his diplomatic mission; stating in his book, *Fankwei*, that the

“unselfish kindness of the American missionaries, their patience, sincerity and truthfulness, have won the confidence and esteem of the natives, and in some degree transferred those sentiments to the nation represented by the missions, and prepared the way for the free intercourse now commencing. It was very evident that much of the apprehension they felt in taking upon themselves the responsibilities of a treaty with us would be diminished if they could have the Rev. Mr. Mattoon as the first United States Consul to set the treaty in motion.”

#### A VISIT HOME

The first decade of Dr. House's service was drawing to a close without any apparent need for a furlough, as need was then understood. He had become acclimated, accustomed to conditions of Siamese life and was apparently contented with his bachelor state. That the tropics had proved to be more friendly than he had expected, is implied in his frequent expressions of surprise at continued good health, even assuring his friends at home that his physical condition was better than before he left America. But this was not the common lot of missionaries in the early days. On the tenth anniversary of his departure from New York he wrote:

“Of the company of the *Grafton* two already are dead

and three compelled to return home from broken health. Mr. Mattoon and I alone are left on the field—besides Mrs. Mattoon, the eighth of the party.”

The enervating conditions of life in Siam are described with good understanding by Mr. George B. Bacon in his volume on *Siam*:

“It is when we remember the enervating influence of the drowsy tropics upon character that we learn fitly to honour the men and women by whom the inauguration of this new era in Siamese history has been brought about. To live for a little while among these sensuous influences without any very serious intellectual work to do or any grave moral responsibility to bear is one thing; but to live a life among them with such a constant strain upon the mind and heart as the laying of the Christian foundations among heathen must necessitate is quite another thing.

“This is what the missionaries of Siam have to do. The battle is not with the prejudice of heathenism only, nor with the vices and ignorance of bad men only; it is a battle with nature itself. . . . The fierce sun wilts the vigour of his mind and scorches up the fresh enthusiasm of his heart. . . . Therefore I give the greater honour to the earnest men and to the patient women who are labouring and praying for the coming of the Christian day to this people.”

When Dr. House parted with his parents in the New York harbour, it was with the mutual expectation of never seeing each other again. The separation was intensified in its realism by the slowness of communication. His message announcing safe arrival in Siam did not reach his parents until thirteen months after his departure. Their response to this message was one which stirred his emotions to the depths and

made him oblivious of all around him; it told of his father and mother and cousins kneeling together upon receipt of the news and offering thanksgiving for the beginning of his missionary work. The many friends who wrote letters to him doubtless never understood what joy they gave him by their messages. After receiving a consignment of mail he writes: "Their letters do cheer, do strengthen, do inspire new resolves, and make me ashamed of my unworthy service." He records with expressions of esteem the names of those from whom he receives communications by each mail; and to one who knows something of the home church these names stand as a roster of zealous workers, names of families that continue to the present day.

The affectionate interest of the people was more than individual; it came to be almost a community interest. The "monthly concert of missions" saw the old session house filled with people eager to hear the latest letter from their own foreign missionary. On his part he kept in mind the day of these church gatherings and, allowing for the difference of time, he estimated that his Monday morning hour of devotions corresponded with the Sunday evening at home, and surmised "in our little session room at Waterford many a fervent prayer was going up for me and my fellow labourers from those whose prayers will prevail at the throne of grace."

It is not surprising that the home church grew mightily in the grace of giving and developed a generosity which, long before forward movements, attained a standard of giving more to beneficence than to their own work and led the Presbytery in their gifts to the



foreign work. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D., who served the church as pastor 1863-9 and later became one of the most powerful public advocates of missions, bore this testimony to their zeal, on the occasion of the church's centennial in 1904:

"I owe much of my own enthusiasm for missions to my six years in this church. It was most active and aggressive in this department of service. It had its own missionary in the field, and kept in living contact with him by correspondence, gifts and prayer. This missionary atmosphere I breathed with immense profit, and I was compelled either to lead my people in missionary work or to resign my pastorate. My real missionary education began here in a church far ahead of me in intelligence and enthusiasm for God's work."

No mention of home-going appears in Dr. House's journal or correspondence till a letter from his mother, in 1852, shows her sternly-repressed desire to see her son:

"The Lord has a work for you to do in Siam, and much as I long to see you I would not call you home from it. But if health or benefit of mission require it, I would say 'Come at once—come home that we may embrace you once more; and then return with new vigour to help forward that glorious work which is yet to be accomplished in Siam.'"

More than a year later a joint letter from the parents enlarges upon the subject. First the father writes:

"When your health should make necessary that you should have the invigourating influence of a sea voyage and our climate, you may tax me for the expense, if I should be spared. If not, I hope to leave sufficient at

your disposal to relieve your mind from any anxiety on the subject. I am anxious only for you to be wise and to adopt the course most likely to prolong your life and to serve your Master as a missionary. Whether we shall be permitted to meet again on earth is a small matter (although there is nothing here that would offer me more happiness) when compared with the magnitude of the work in which you are engaged. Therefore I can say with your dear mother that I cheerfully submit to the disposal of Him who has crowned our lives with lovingkindness and who will order all that concerns our children and ourselves for His own glory."

His mother then adds:

"I hope that you will not think because I do not ask you to come home that we do not desire to see you—we do indeed long for your return that we may see you in the flesh. But we cannot, dare not ask you to desert your post which we feel is one of great honour and responsibility; and we trust you may be made an instrument in the hand of God for doing much for the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom."

Just at this juncture occurred the beclouding of friendship on the part of King Mongkut. As the mission work came to a standstill, the missionaries held a conference to determine their course of procedure. Dr. House was ready to carry out his long-cherished plan to transfer his labours to Lao, but the decree forbidding travel rendered this impossible. The letter of his parents had insinuated into his mind the alternative of a visit to America. When he casually mentioned this to his fellow missionaries they gave cordial and earnest approval. The expectation of the early arrival of a recruit to their force removed

the objection of leaving the Mattoons alone. Then came the visit of Sir John Bowring, with his eventual offer of a free passage to Singapore. Availing himself of this offer, Dr. House left Siam in April, 1855, and sailed for America *via* England, reaching home in midsummer.

#### WELCOME HOME

It was indeed a joyous homecoming. The son had come again to the embrace of loving parents after an absence of nine years. He had returned to his native land after many adventures in a strange country, little known to the Western world. He had returned to a church that keenly felt the solemnity of her commission to preach the Gospel and had high reverence for her servants that carried the banner. He had brought back first hand knowledge of pagan lands and vivid memories of personal experiences and observations. Then a returned missionary was more rare than even a departing missionary. The Church at large was eager to see through the missionary's eyes the strange peoples to whom they were sending the Gospel message.

Numerous opportunities came to Dr. House to tell his story. Large audiences greeted him wherever he appeared. These opportunities he used especially to awaken the Church to the importance of the work in Siam. The periods of obstruction were past. The treaty with England had just been completed, and the American government was about to send an envoy to ask for a treaty. The glowing promise of the sunrise inspired the hearts of people at home to listen with a ready mind to his appeal. With great joy he secured



two ready recruits to go back with him, Rev. and Mrs. A. B. Morse. Following this visitation to the churches a new interest in Siam is manifest through the reports, and there began a series of reinforcements checked only by the Civil War.

#### BELATED MARRIAGE

During this sojourn in America Dr. House was married on November 27, 1855, to Miss Harriet Maria Pettit, formerly of Waterford. The marriage came as a surprise to most of his friends. He had so frequently declared that he would never marry that his change of mind came without warning. His missionary friends had frequently twitted him on this subject, but in good part he defended his position. Usually after these banterings he would enter in his journal the reason why he chose to go out single and why he thought best to remain unmarried.

His argument was that it would have been an imposition upon a woman to have led her into a strange world, into a primitive state of civilisation, afar from kin and friends. He persuaded himself that the care of a wife, the anxiety for her safety and the responsibility of rearing children would seriously interfere with his one great purpose, an undivided attention to the propagation of the Gospel. The Siamese, among whom polygamy was practised, could not understand why this one missionary had no wife. Several of the princes suggested that he take a Siamese woman in marriage, and one nobleman even offered to provide a wife for him.

However, there are indications that his arguments were as much to repress his own idea as to confute

the bantering. During those years he was a permanent guest at the family of the Mattoons. He frequently expresses generous appreciation of sharing the home comforts of his friends, and confesses that he did not know how he could have gotten along without this domestic care of Mrs. Mattoon. Thus while stoically denying the need of a wife he gratefully accepts the ministrations of the wife of his colleague.

Then, after having married and having fully settled in a home of his own, his real feelings assert themselves, for he writes, upon return to Siam:

“And mine, too, is a pleasant home, the one to which four weary months voyaging have brought me, a pleasanter home than once—for it has a new inmate. Taking such a partner into the concern is indeed a great addition to a bachelor establishment.”

And a year later:

“You don't know how nicely we are jogging on in the good old road of domestic felicity. And when you hear me say at the end of fourteen months that I am more fully than ever of the opinion that I have as my companion in my journey the most suitable one for me that could have been found had I tarried seven months or seven years longer in the States, you will allow that, at least, I am contented with my choice.”

He shows the reversal of mind on this subject complete when, in 1871, he writes:

“I must confess that I feel this wholesale sending out of unmarried women into the field just now so in vogue in our church is an experiment. . . . And I do not think

much better of the sending unmarried young men to some fields. 'Tis a pity the secretaries of our Board who ought to know the wisest way do not guide opinion on this subject and more strongly impress upon candidates who apply to them the desirableness of making their arrangements before they leave home—not but what Providence may bless some favoured mortals more than they deserve."

#### ORDINATION AND RETURN

Another event of personal moment to the doctor was his ordination to the Christian ministry. Before his first departure for Siam he had been licensed to preach, a Presbyterian authorisation necessary to give the seal of approval to the preaching which it was expected would be incidental to the medical profession. But now, having given himself exclusively to the Gospel work he sought full ordination with its authority to administer the sacraments and perform the rites of the church. In January, 1856, he was duly ordained by the Presbytery of Troy.

Accompanied by the new recruits, Rev. and Mrs. A. B. Morse, Dr. House and his bride sailed in March, 1856, by way of England and Singapore, and arrived at Bangkok in July. The reception accorded Dr. and Mrs. House was an evidence of the position which the missionary had attained in the esteem of the Siamese. He was the recipient of many gifts from the Chinese and Siamese servants and attendants at the mission; while a period of two weeks was largely occupied with calls from the prime minister, the minister of foreign affairs, several of the princes, many of the old friends among the nobles, the old teachers and a multitude of native friends at large.



The welcome was so spontaneous that it gave evidence of a genuine honour, and of an appreciation of the years of service rendered by the doctor higher than he had imagined the people felt.

But perhaps the most signal token of esteem on this occasion was shown by King Mongkut. No advance notice of the arrival of Dr. House and party having been received, their appearance at the customs house some miles below the city was a surprise, which in some manner was quickly heralded to the king, so that when the party approached the city, officials were waiting to receive them:

“Before we got to our own landing our friendly neighbour, H. R. H. Prince Kromma Luang Wongsa, hailed us, and we must needs land at his place. Shaking of hands was not enough, but his arm was offered in English fashion . . . and thus escorted by the leading prince of the kingdom was Harriette conducted to her future mission home, Mr. Mattoon and I following. . . . And soon our native church members and teachers and the school children came flocking around.

“But the king had heard of my arrival and the prince had a message from him for me that he was waiting to see me at the palace. So, thither I must go—the prince took me in his own boat. Some public ceremony was going on, and the whole court was assembled at the river house in front of the palace. The king, on a lofty platform handsomely roofed over, by the water edge; while yet at a distance he saw me and called out my name, inviting me to ascend the steps that led to his pavilioned seat, when he shook hands cordially. His Majesty spoke of the letter he had received from me while away. Then he said, ‘Your wife has come with you!’—and then turning to his courtiers added, ‘Formerly Maw House declared he would not have a wife, and now he has taken one.’ ‘Oh, your majesty,’ I replied, ‘wisdom has

come to me and I have changed my heart in that matter,' which made them all smile.

"He then said my wife must come and visit the royal palace. He had missed me very much. I must come and live near him. Turning to one of his ministers he said, 'He guessed they must build a house over there' (pointing out a spot near the palace). I must take an office under the government. The prime minister told me I must become a Siamese nobleman."

Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon were sent for again by the king a few days later, and availed themselves of this occasion to present to His Majesty several useful presents sent out by American admirers.

#### TOURS WITH MRS. HOUSE

While in America, in 1855, the Sunday school of his home church provided funds for the purchase and outfitting of a boat for touring. The result was a boat equipped for the work, affording more comfort than possible in the native boats. Along the side of the small cabin, lockers were fitted, serving both as seats and place for storage. A removable table between afforded space for writing or eating. For the night an extension bridged the space between the lockers, and this, covered with cushions, made a comfortable double bed. In December of 1856 Dr. House made the first tour with Mrs. House. Customs, and scenes in Siam had by this time grown so familiar to him that his letters home do not contain details as did his earlier letters. Their first tour together, in company with some of the other missionaries, was up the Meklong River in western Siam as far as the town of Kanburi amidst some fine

mountain scenery. Several other trips occurred; one of them to Petruì:

“A fortnight or more,” he writes, “exploring some of the totally unvisited districts of the eastern portion of the plain which constitutes central Siam—you know my passion for penetrating into remote and unexplored regions and out of the way places.”

If perchance this enthusiasm conveys the impression that these journeys were of unmingled pleasure and simple romance it is well to have that fancy checked by some material facts; for, continuing the narrative of this trip, the doctor writes:

“Upon review of the tour I can recall but few that I remember with more satisfaction. But for pleasure—I cannot say much for a tour. Our confined quarters (cabin five by seven), the rocking of the boat with every movement of ours or of the boatmen, the hot sun upon the roof and sides by day and the myriads of mosquitos as the evening comes on (and such ravenous merciless mosquitos, too), the monotony of the scenery on the lower stream and absence of all that is pretty or picturesque in the villages and houses of the natives, and last but not least the universal uproar among all the dogs whenever one steps ashore anywhere in their villages—all detract largely from the romance and not a little from the comfort of a mission tour in this country.”

#### MARKS OF GROWTH

Dr. House continued to be superintendent of the mission school after his return in 1856, and although he makes very few references to this work in his journal from now on, yet there are occasional items



which mark the growth. From this period Mrs. House appears as a factor in the educational work, but her achievements will occupy a separate chapter. In August after the return the doctor writes :

“Our school is much enlarged—many applicants to learn English. The eldest child of the son of the Prime Minister now comes regularly to Mrs. Mattoon, a very bright lad of seven. At the request of the king I am teaching two princes; one of sixteen, his grandson, the other a grandson of the late king, a boy of eleven. And by order of H. M. a dozen of the sons of his servants are now learning English in our school as day scholars. . . . There is a spacious bamboo school house going up in the back part of our lot.”

This growth, however, was in the educational work. While the workers did not belittle the importance of the school, they were well-nigh sick of heart with deferred hopes, a feeling that is reflected in their report to the Board for the year 1856:

“It requires no little faith to conduct, day after day and year after year, these patient labours; especially as they have not resulted in the conversion of those on whom time, talents and prayers of the missionaries are spent.”

This increase in school was so rapid that shortly after they had established themselves on the site granted by the king it became evident that this lot in the city would not allow for the expansion commensurate with the growth. With the awakening of a desire for education and of an interest in the foreign religion the earlier necessity of having a location within the city itself had passed, for what the mission

had to offer was being sought after. Accordingly, a parcel of ground, the gift of Mr. D. O. King, was obtained on the west bank of the river in the lower suburbs known as Sumray. There new buildings were erected, and in November, 1857, the transfer of the mission was effected to that site, which became the scene of the most notable achievements of the mission in Bangkok and continues to the present day the center of a pervasive Christian influence.

At the end of the first year in the new location, Dr. House wrote home: "School occupies me much of the time. We have a new Siamese teacher, a most respectable old gentleman; may he get good from us, saving good." This teacher was Nai Chune, who, a year later, became the first Siamese convert. The significance of this addition to the teaching force is that the pupils are no longer predominantly Chinese lads, but that the demand for teaching the Siamese language requires a native teacher.

The winter season, being free from rains, was the time best suited for touring in the country. In February of 1858 Dr. and Mrs. House started up the Meinam to revisit the scenes of their former tour. Finding the river alive with pilgrims going to Prabat for the annual veneration of Buddha's footprint, they decided to join the pilgrimage as affording an excellent opportunity for distributing tracts. On this visit to the shrine the visitors did not experience the same opposition to entering the sanctum as Dr. House had on his first visit.

#### A PRESBYTERY ORGANISED

The recruits to the mission force so far had been

temporary additions only. Owing to the death of his wife, followed by the failure of his own health, Mr. Bush was compelled to resign after four years. Mr. Morse, who went out upon Dr. House's return, was forced to give up within two years by reason of health. At the end of ten years there had been only one net increase in the mission force, Mrs. House. In 1858 two men arrived who became important factors in the work, Rev. Daniel McGilvary and Rev. Jonathan Wilson, with his wife. When the announcement was received that these two men had been commissioned, Dr. House wrote home:

"These two friends became interested in Siam mission at the time of my visit to Princeton. If they reach us, I shall have new reason to bless the heavenly Guide who led me almost unwillingly back to my native land."

The doctor's estimate of the reflex benefit to Siam from that trip to America was all too modest; for that visit was the beginning of an ever increasing interest in that country on the part of the church and of a constantly enlarging supply of men and money. Concerning this visit to Princeton, Dr. McGilvary says in his Autobiography:

"I was entering upon my senior year when it was announced that Dr. S. R. House, of Siam, would address the students. Expectation was on tip-toe to hear from this new kingdom of Siam. The address was a revelation to me. . . . My hesitation was ended. . . .

"The call found Jonathan Wilson and myself in much the same state of expectancy, awaiting for a clear revelation of duty. After anxious consultation and prayer together and with Dr. House, we promised him that we



would give the matter our serious thought; and that if the Lord should lead us thither we would go."

With the increase of ordained men on the field, the time seemed ripe to associate themselves together in the official relationship of a Presbytery. At an informal meeting in the summer of 1858 the following call was issued:

"Whereas, in the providence of God there are now in the mission a sufficient number of ordained ministers to constitute a Presbytery and as it seems expedient that we, cut off as we are from the privileges and oversight of our respective Presbyteries, should meet together from time to time in a formal public capacity as a judicatory of the Church of Christ to consult for her best interests in this our field of labour; and hoping that it may be beneficial to ourselves and the Church at large,

"Therefore, Resolved, That in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly held in Baltimore in May, 1848, making provision for 'the formation of Presbyteries by the action of missionaries in foreign fields' a Presbytery be constituted at Bangkok on the first day of September next, to be called the Presbytery of Siam and to be composed of the following persons, viz.: Rev. Stephen Mattoon and Rev. S. R. House, of the Presbytery of Troy, New York; Rev. J. Wilson, of the Presbytery of Beaver, Pennsylvania, and Rev. Daniel McGilvary, of the Presbytery of Orange, North Carolina; and that said Presbytery be opened by a sermon by Rev. S. Mattoon, the oldest of the ministers of the mission; and

"Resolved, second, That the day of the opening of the Presbytery be observed by the members of the mission as a day of special prayer for the blessing of the Spirit of God upon us, and that a special meeting for prayer be held at 9 A. M."

At the appointed time the Presbytery of Siam was formally organised, Rev. Samuel R. House being chosen first Moderator and Rev. Daniel McGilvary being elected Stated Clerk. Mr. Mattoon, who was about to take a furlough in America, was appointed the first commissioner to the General Assembly, to meet in Indianapolis the following spring. Here, again, as in the organisation of the first church, the missionaries were taking a step in anticipation of the fruit of faith more than in actual need. Two of the very important functions of a Presbytery are to oversee the churches and to ordain candidates for the ministry. But there was only one church in Siam at the time and there were only two "native" members on the roll; and a Presbytery could add little to the fellowship of the missionaries except the formalities. However, the workers in the field were certain of the harvest and in simple faith they went about setting up the organisation for the proper care and nurture of the native churches that were yet to be established.

In December of 1858, when the dry season had returned, Dr. House, accompanied by Mr. McGilvary, made a twelve-day tour up the Meinam, commencing labours at Angtong and continuing as far as Bansaket. The results of the tour were unusually hopeful:

"In two or three instances it did seem as if the Spirit had prepared their hearts to welcome the doctrine of Christianity. . . . I could not but say to my good Brother McGilvary, who as well as myself was struck with the deep interest manifested, 'Surely there must be much prayer going up for us here in Siam.' Tears would come in my eyes as I solemnly urged them to

leave their refuge of lies and trust in a living Saviour, ready and mighty to save. And on their part they desired to know, not how they might make merit (the usual question of Siamese), but what they were to do to secure the salvation, the news of which then for the first time reached their ears. It seemed like the dawning of a better day."



## IX

### FIRST THE DAWN, THEN THE DAYLIGHT

**I**N the annals of missions much has been made of the long years of patient labour before a first convert was gained in other lands. It is written of Judson that he preached the Gospel six years in Burma before a native made confession of the Christian faith. Morrison patiently taught the Gospel seven years in China before he was rewarded with one disciple. The Telegu mission in India is described as one of the most remarkable in the history of missions in the contrast between the first long fruitless period and then the rapid growth; and in confirmation it is cited that "at the end of two decades only one native assistant could be reported, one church with nine members and two schools with sixty-three pupils."

But in Siam, from the time Dr. Gutzlaff arrived until the first enduring convert from among the Siamese was gained, thirty-one years elapsed. It is true that during those years much of the energy of the other missions had been directed toward the conversion of the ex-patriate Chinese, from whom there had been an encouraging response; none the less, the Siamese were also the object of constant prayer and faithful wooing. From the time that Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon reached Siam to devote themselves particularly to the winning of the Siamese, twelve years

and six months passed before one lone Siamese renounced the faith of his fathers and acknowledged the Christian religion to be the truth. These wearisome years of waiting were lengthened in their tediousness by the chagrin of having impostors simulate conversion for iniquitous ends.

The story of this remarkable first native convert is best given by Dr. House in his own way. First under date of March 6, 1859, he writes home of the promise of the firstfruit:

"I have had a long talk with Nai Chune. Since the fourth month of last year he has been convinced of the truth of Christianity. He has broken the necks of his household gods and melted them. 'If I think he venerates the gods still he will go into the temple and do the same.' Those stories in their sacred books about its raining diamonds and gold he regards not like the beneficent miracles of Christ which I told him.

"I was going to give him some idea of the historical evidences when he cut me short by saying, 'I have *tried* Buddhism—and what benefit has it been to me? I have thrown away a large part of my life in studying it. But I was a child then—God must forgive me.' He has ceased to gamble and to drink spirits, to both of which he formerly was addicted. He says that he sometimes weeps with joy when he thinks of God's goodness to him. He prays to Jehovah, keeps the Sabbath, and for months has been a faithful attendant on preaching, to which he often invites his acquaintances, bringing them with him.

"He is an educated man of about forty years, has a wife but no living children. He was once a priest, in the king's own watt for some eight years. At one time he used to call upon me often and learned several chemical experiments. Since the mission moved to its new location in his neighbourhood (where he has a small

property) he called to renew acquaintance. I had much conversation with him formerly about religion; but he seemed almost too willing to believe. I mistrusted his motives, past experience having made me too cautious perhaps. When he called subsequently I had no confidence in his sincerity. Mr. Mattoon, however, thought somewhat better of him.

"He is now the Siamese teacher of our school, and is very faithful to his duties. The most interesting feature of his case and what, with other things, has removed my doubts, is the true moral courage with which he avows his change of his belief to his countrymen and relatives. I do not think anything but the grace of God could make a Siamese brave enough to do this."

Five months later, the doctor records the reception of the convert into the Mission Church on Aug. 7, 1859:

"My eyes have at length been permitted to see what has long been my heart's desire and prayer to God, the baptism of a Siamese. Nay, to my unworthy hands has this privilege fallen, to receive into the visible fold of Christ by the ordinance of His appointing this new member of the flock.

"For over twelve years of hope deferred has this great blessing been sought and prayed for, but 'sought and never found' till now. Blessed be the name of Him who in His mercy and sovereign grace has been pleased to visit us with His favour and make the teaching and preaching of His servants here the means at last of bringing one heathen soul out of nature's darkness into the light and peace of His kingdom.

"Nai Chune, a Siamese, an educated man of nearly forty years of age, after a satisfactory examination on his views and experience was today received to our fellowship by baptism in the sacred name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. May he walk worthily of



the name he has named today, and be a witness for Christ his God and Saviour among his countrymen. He appears remarkably well. He is courteous and intelligent, a true Siamese gentleman in manners; is serious-minded, sedate, seems to realise the goodness of his Heavenly Father to him."

The joy of this conversion was soon followed by a shadow of sorrow. For a little more than three months later occurred the death of faithful Quakieng. Fortunately the work among the Siamese had developed so favourably that less emphasis was being placed on the instruction in Chinese; and in a sense Nai Chune took the place of Quakieng, but with a transfer of the major effort to the teaching of the Siamese language.

During this year King Mongkut had finished a new grand audience hall in connection with the palace, fashioned partly in European style. At the opening of the hall the king gave a feast to which many of the European and American sojourners were invited, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. House. In a letter to his father the doctor tells privately of a proffer of honour and service made to him by the king: "H. M. said, 'You with your wife must come and live here [at the palace] and have the young princes, my children, for your pupils.' I excused myself, my hands being already full." With the cessation of teaching by the missionary ladies in the palace, the king had engaged an English lady, Mrs. Leonowens, as a tutor for some of the inmates of the palace, including his sons. Apparently, however, her teaching duties diminished after a time and she was occupied chiefly as an amanuensis for the king, and she was still con-

nected with the palace at the time the king made this request of Dr. House.

Whether the king had serious intent in this proposition it is difficult to judge; but the suggestion does indicate that he still held Dr. House in high regard and that his estimation for Western education had not waned. The mission school by this time had become a well-established, well-organised institution, the management of which required the full attention of the doctor. His original term of service as Superintendent continued until 1861, when relinquishment of the office was apparently due to the fact that he was appointed to open a new mission station at Petchaburi.

#### NEW STATION AT PETCHABURI

Although the work at Bangkok had been steadily growing, no extension of the field was undertaken until 1861, when a station was opened at Petchaburi, where Dr. House and Mr. Mattoon had made several visits. In that year two new missionaries with their wives had come out in company with Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon on their return from furlough in America; these were Rev. S. G. McFarland and Rev. N. A. McDonald. Of the many places where the missionaries had visited with the hopes of one day establishing a local work, Petchaburi then seemed the most favourable because the acting governor had personally solicited the missionaries to provide teaching of English; and had offered, on condition that they would teach his son the language, to provide a place for their school.

The Mission had voted to assign Dr. and Mrs. House to establish the new station. The doctor visited the field, procured a lot and made ready for the

work, and then returned to bring his wife. But the day before their departure, the doctor had the misfortune to fall from a horse, sustaining injuries which, at the time, it was feared would prove to be permanent. Under these circumstances the mission changed the appointment, and sent instead Revs. Daniel McGilvary and S. G. McFarland with their wives, who thus became the first occupants of the new mission.

At this point it will be interesting to note that in his journal, in 1861, Dr. House records that the missionaries had felt constrained to ask the Board for an increase in salary from the prevailing six hundred dollars to seven hundred dollars, giving as a reason that the cost of living had greatly increased since the country had been opened to Western commerce, so that articles of provisions had in some cases increased as much as one hundred per cent. Dr. House himself had received a patrimony at the death of his father, which he used not only to supplement his salary for living expenses, but very generously for assisting in the work of the mission. Entries in the journal indicate that he had undertaken, at his own expense, repairs and enlargement of the mission house in which he lived.

#### THE REMARKABLE STORY OF NAI KAWN

Within a month after the new station at Petchaburi was opened, the missionaries reported the extraordinary case of a Siamese who had come to believe upon God and Christ through portions of the Scripture that had come into his hands, although he had never seen a missionary and had never met a Christian. The name of this man was Nai Kawn. Writing to



his family in America under date of July 17, 1861, Dr. House quotes in part from a letter which Mrs. McFarland had written to Mrs. House giving the story; and in part from Mr. McGilvary:

“I wish Dr. H. could be here to examine a ‘diamond’ we have found here (*i. e.*, a native of Petchaburi, which name means ‘city of diamonds’). We do believe it a true, genuine diamond, and though it needs to be polished it will one day shine in our Saviour’s diadem in glory. It seems an extraordinary case in many respects. The man is a middle aged Siamese, resides about five miles from Petchaburi capital; had never seen a missionary, but some of our Christian tracts and portions of the Scripture—which he had got from his neighbours—appears to have been the means of enlightening his mind and converting his heart. He had taught his little boy the Lord’s prayer and the ten commandments.”

“Mr. McG. writes: He certainly has the clearest idea of the Scripture of any heathen convert I have met with. He literally knows John, Acts, Romans (all the Bible he has yet seen) by heart; can repeat whole chapters without missing a word. He evidently studied for months and years. . . . Seems delighted to find us, as if his highest wish had been realised. Wishes to come and live with us at once to learn more perfectly the Gospel, and to assist to teach and distribute books. To try his sincerity, no encouragement was offered him, fearing he might wish support from the missionary. ‘Oh, no,—he wished no compensation, as he had enough to live on.’ He has a few hundred ticals and wants no more. He has settled one son with three hundred ticals, and the other son he has just left with us where he can be taught the Christian religion. Says he would not give up the new religion for the offer of being king of Siam. Comes to worship, walking five miles over muddy roads. Longs to see another Siamese Christian—has hunted all over to find one.”

In the fall of that year Dr. and Mrs. House were obliged to spend several months in Petchaburi to relieve the McFarlands, who went to Bangkok for medical attendance. During that sojourn the doctor had several conversations with Nai Kawn; and in letters to his brother in America narrates the confession of that remarkable convert:

"Doctor, the Siamese think only of getting a living. That they must have nor always are they very scrupulous as to the means they resort to. Before—in the days of my sinfulness—I was so too. Then I had not reflected upon, was not attentive to my condition. I saw myself a sinner; when I became conscious of this, the Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to forgive me.

"My wife formerly—when I began to talk in the house with those that came to see me about the religion of Jesus—would go away, stop her ears, would say 'I won't hear it,' and off she would go. Now she says nothing, listens, sometimes says there is good in it; will hear me when I pray in the room at night.

"I remonstrated with my neighbours but, Doctor, they are wilfully set in their wickedness. But, Doctor, we cannot make them repent. It is only those whom God pleases to choose.

"They tell me that when the king hears that I have become a disciple of Jesus I shall be whipped. I tell them, if he kills me I care not. If the Lord gives me to die, I must die as the Lord willeth. But while I live, I must bring forth fruits—to offer Him."

Nai Kawn was never formally enrolled in the Church. He had found the acme of joy and of liberty in the Gospel before he knew of the church as an organisation. The witness of his conduct, the testimony of his lips and the evidence of his fellowship with Christians was more vital and compelling than a

formal profession of ecclesiastical relationship. The honour of having been the first native at Petchaburi to become a member of the Church was gained two years later by Nai Kao.

Another honour of primacy in the profession of religion was attained at Bangkok in 1861, when Maa Esther became the first Siamese woman to unite with the Church of Christ. She had been given, a poor sick child, to Mrs. Mattoon by her father at an early age; and had been adopted and reared by Mrs. Mattoon. She had accompanied her foster mother to America in this same year. Maa Esther has continued a faithful, consistent Christian all these remaining years, and has been a zealous worker for the cause of Christ.

What was the final evangelising tour by Dr. House was taken in 1862, when, accompanied by Rev. N. A. McDonald, who had lately joined the mission, and Rev. Robert Telford, who was maintaining the Baptist work among the Chinese in Siam, he made a trip along the eastern coast of the gulf as far as Chantaboon. The responsibility for the school, together with the condition of Mrs. House's health, made it inconvenient for him to continue this phase of the work which he greatly enjoyed.

#### PERIOD OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War in the United States the mission was not very seriously affected by the conditions of the home church. Except for the first injunction from the Board against enlargement of the work and for the exceeding high rate of bank exchange, Dr. House gives no indications of adverse results on the



field. Although the missionaries then in Siam were from both sections of the divided fatherland, they continued to live in cordial relations. During this period several reinforcements reached Siam, showing that the church at home had not allowed the war to curtail their work entirely. These additions were: Rev. and Mrs. C. S. George (1862), Mrs. F. F. Odell (1863), Rev. and Mrs. P. L. Carden (1866). On the other hand, the mission suffered the serious loss of Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Mattoon, who were constrained to resign in 1865 on account of Mrs. Mattoon's continued ill-health.

#### SECOND FURLOUGH

Dr. House left Siam only twice during his twenty-nine years of service. After a second period of seven-and-a-half years of labour, he sailed for America on a furlough in February, 1864. Even then the leave was taken not so much on his own account as because of Mrs. House's urgent need of recuperation. Since they left America, both of Dr. House's parents had died. He made the second journey at his own expense. At this time the Civil War in America caused the rates of exchange to be very high; to avoid this high rate, Dr. House accepted a loan of one thousand dollars from the king's private treasury, giving only his personal note as security; and of this sum the king authorised Dr. House to pay over to the widow of Rev. Jesse Caswell, in America, five hundred dollars as a further token of appreciation of his former tutor.

The journey home was made by way of the Red Sea, Palestine, Egypt, Paris and England. Inclu-

sive of the travel, their absence from Siam covered two years and ten months. The return trip was made by way of the Pacific, leaving San Francisco Sept. 9, 1866, thus for the first time completing for these two the circumnavigation of the globe. On the way out a stop was made at the Hawaiian Islands. The travelers reached Hong Kong Nov. 4, and while waiting for a vessel to continue their voyage they went up to Canton, where they were most friendly received and hospitably entertained by the family of Mr. S. E. Burrows, the head of a great commercial and shipping firm of that place. The Burrows extended to Dr. and Mrs. House a free passage in one of their own vessels which was sailing direct for Bangkok, and there they arrived Dec. 16, 1866.

Again the returning missionaries received a warm welcome on the part of their many native friends.

“We were warmly welcomed by the missionary circle and old friends out of it, native and foreign. Wish you could have seen the congratulatory presents our native friends and neighbours brought to shew their gladness at our return.

“The king (being ill at the time) said ‘He was glad the old missionaries had returned; he had been very sorry that Maw House and Maw Mattoon were gone.’”

A few weeks later, when the king was able, he sent for Dr. House and gave a private audience.

“On presenting myself at the palace gate when my name was announced the king said (so I was told by some around him) ‘Dr. H. is not like other foreigners; let him come to me at once.’ I was ushered into the royal palace ere he had left the grand audience hall—

his courtiers and pages waiting upon him. I was received with the cordiality and familiarity of an old acquaintance.

"He asked me how I came? Did Mrs. H. come with me; what countries I had seen? Mentioning Egypt, he asked me if the canal across the isthmus of Suez would succeed. Saying I had now gone around the world, returning to Siam by crossing the Pacific Ocean to China, he quickly interrupted, 'Then you lost a day!' and explained to his attendants how it was. . . .

"It was time for him now to make his evening visit to the vast and lofty structure they were rearing for the funeral solemnities of the late second king. Inviting me to follow, he went down to his sedan and, preceded by soldiers and followed by a crowd of attendants, was borne away. Following, I found him seated in a temporary pavilion erected where he could overlook the work. He soon called me to his side—I, alone, of the hundreds around him, stood upright. He made inquiries concerning Mrs. Caswell, and as he looked again at her picture, turning to the princess royal acting as his sword bearer, said, 'This was the wife of the teacher that I revered.' It was gratifying and interesting to see these pleasant memories of persons and events passed away eighteen years before, stealing over him.

"Having intimated to the king my wish to take up my note for one thousand dollars in his treasurer's hands and saying that I should, of course, expect to pay interest on the balance of five hundred dollars—after deducting five hundred dollars paid to Mrs. C. on his majesty's behalf—in a few days his majesty's private treasurer paid me a visit, having had the king's instruction to receive from me simply five hundred dollars, and to surrender to me the note on which was endorsed these words in the king's own handwriting:

"'S. P. P. M. Mongkut, the King, does not wish to have interest from the loan to his good friend Doctor Samuel R. House—wishing but some useful books, etc., according to the pleasure of said doctor, with stating of



price of article. This testimony given 1st January, 1867, the seventeenth year of our reign.'"

#### THE AWAKENING OF 1866-7

Doubtless the greatest joy upon return to Siam was to find that a great spiritual awakening had taken place in the mission school. If the fruits of labour seem sparse so far it must be considered that the most favourable soil had scarcely time to produce its harvest. The boys and girls who had been under the intimate influence of Dr. and Mrs. House in the school were just approaching the adolescent age when, in 1866, a spiritual awakening manifested itself. News of this work of grace had reached Dr. House at Hong Kong, and upon arrival at Bangkok he rejoiced to learn that the facts more than confirmed the report.

"Found all well and the very best of good news awaiting us, confirming the hopes I have felt all along that a better day was about to dawn on us in Siam. Two of our oldest and most promising pupils (Hee, the writer of that interesting letter to me, published in the *Foreign Missionary* last year, being one of them), and a native teacher in our employ (a man of some education) were baptised a few weeks ago as converts from heathenism; and another native teacher, Naah (Esther's husband), with others of the pupils in the mission school are desirous of Christian baptism. These new converts with the older church members sustain semi-weekly prayer-meetings among themselves with warm interest."

The convert named in this letter was Tien Hee, who, a few years later, went to America to seek a higher education. Graduating in medicine at the New York University in 1871, he returned to Siam, where

he became the first native physician practising the Western system of medicine. He became eminently successful in his practise, amassed considerable wealth, received the title of Phra Montri and lately has been elevated to a higher rank of nobility, as Phya Sarasin. In grateful recognition of what Christianity has done for him he has made generous contributions toward the work of the mission.

Two months later Dr. House reported further confessions :

“It was my privilege and joy last Sabbath to receive to our little mission church in the ordinance of baptism three Christian converts, all connected or once connected with our mission boarding school; and one of these my dear old pupil Naah (Esther’s husband), the boy especially given me by his Chinese father on his dying bed. The others were Dik and Ting. . . . You do not know how many fold I felt repaid by the privilege I enjoyed that Sabbath.”

In August of that year (1867) he writes further :

“We are permitted to report the admission by baptism to our native church at this station at our last communion of five new members. Two of them girls that have been long under instruction in the missionary families; two others, elder pupils in the mission school for boys; and the fifth, one more advanced in years.

“Among the four young persons who kneeled one after another to receive the solemn ordinance which made them church members was our dear Ooey, who has long in her heart been persuaded of the truth of our religion and the importance of attendance to it, and who a few weeks before came out bright and clear and decided, in her determination to serve the Saviour. Again it fell to my lot to administer the ordinance; and a privi-

lege unspeakable it was to stand up and in the name of the Lord to apply the seal of the covenant to the dusky brow of that child of many prayers, and to others I had helped teach the way to heaven.

"That Sabbath evening Ooey told me with beaming eyes that her heart was full of happiness. And yet only the day before the poor child had been told by her heathen father—who was angry with her for forsaking the old religion—that she 'must never call him father, nor her mother, mother again.' . . .

"The fifth is Ah Keo, for over twenty years a servant in the different mission families. I recollect talking and praying with him the first year I was in Siam. But his besetting sin, intemperance, made all exhortation lost on him till this spring—a miracle of grace has been wrought."

This religious interest increased with the days, so that the semi-weekly meeting for prayer gave way to a daily meeting, in which the young Christians exhorted their fellow students and friends to believe on Christ, and their hearts were poured out in intercession for the conversion of their families and of Siam. Then, in September, Dr. House records another confession from among the student group:

"Delia made our hearts very glad the other day by coming to us and saying her mind was made up to become a Christian, and wished to be baptised. Her mother and brother would be very angry with her, but she felt she must take up her cross. She is a girl of a great deal of decision and energy of character."

The fall meeting of the Presbytery of Siam for 1867 was marked by items of unusual interest. Dr. House was installed pastor of the church, as a successor to Mr. Mattoon. The formal call for his pas-



toral services (signed by thirteen members), the charge to the pastor and people, the prayers and the sermon were all in the Siamese language—an index of the development of self-government in the native church. At the same meeting A. Klai, of Petchaburi, was licensed as a native local preacher, apparently the first to be fitted for that rank. Dr. House jocularly refers to him as a “graduate of the McFarland Theological Seminary of Petchaburi,” as he had been under the instruction of Mr. McFarland. At the communion in the Bangkok church this same autumn occurred the ordination of the first native elder of the local church, the congregation having elected the young man Naah already mentioned.

#### THE NOTABLE TRIP TO LAO

One notable trip of Dr. House remains to be narrated, a journey into the land of the Lao—notable because of the accident which nearly closed the career of the doctor. The trip occurred in 1868. The previous year was signalised in the annals of missions in Siam by the establishment of a station at Chiangmai among the Lao people in what is now known as North Siam. It is curious to note that while Dr. House himself had been among the first to become interested in these people as he came into contact with the Lao boatmen at Bangkok and although he once seriously contemplated leaving the Mattoons alone at Bangkok while he should carry the Gospel into the unexplored northland, yet when the proposition was being discussed by the mission to open a station there the doctor enters a record of his judgment that the time is premature.

However, additions to the corps of workers having made it possible to establish another station, the mission decided to send Messrs. McGilvary and Wilson, who had made an exploratory trip the previous season, to open work among the Lao tribes. In January of 1867 the McGilvary family set out in small boats, making the journey all the way up the Meinam. In the next December the Wilsons followed along the same route. It was a three-months' journey up Siam's great river, whose name means "mother of waters." Above Raheng the stream forces its way through a narrow gap in the mountain chain, forming a long series of perilous rapids and affording scenery which is described by voyagers as of surpassing beauty.

Dr. House wrote concerning the reason for his own trip:

"And here I must let you into a little secret. Mrs. Wilson, it seems, will require the attendance of a physician about the first of March, and so also will Mrs. McGilvary. So much the worse for both of them, you will say—seeing they are five hundred miles from medical aid. Must they, then, be abandoned to their fate? You must not, then, dear brother, be much surprised to learn that this double call of Providence has proved too strong for me. Much as I dislike the practise of my profession, much as I dread the long, tedious journey, much as I desire just now to stay with my interesting and most dearly loved flock [the church over which the doctor had just been made pastor] I have felt it would be wrong for me to decline the invitation I have received to visit Chiengmai at the critical time.

"But I cannot afford to waste three months on the journey there, when by boat to Raheng in twenty-three days Chiengmai from there can be reached by elephant in eight to ten days more."

Accordingly, the doctor determined to take the quicker route, and by February 13, he had reached Raheng. There he was delayed five days waiting for elephants to be provided for him. The company then set out over the mountains, expecting to reach their destination nearly on schedule time. Then came the accident, the story of which is most vividly set forth in the letter written by Dr. House himself on that same day.

" Ban Hong North Laos,  
" Monday, March 2, 1868.

" REV. MR. AND MRS. MCGILVARY.

" Dear Brother and Sister:

" So near and yet unable to get farther. Is it not a strange Providence? When I started this morning strong and well, refreshed by a Sabbath's day rest at the little hamlet of Wong Luang I was rejoicing in the thought that I was almost at the end of this tedious and almost endless journey through the sultry wilderness and would soon receive the welcome which such friends as you will give, when about eight or nine A. M. my elephant by whose side I was walking, suddenly and without provocation turned upon me and pushed me over with his trunk and, when lying on the ground, thrust one of those huge tusks at me and into my poor body—how deep I know not, but ripping up my abdomen two and one-half inches just below the umbilicus. It was a strange sensation I assure you. I was expecting another thrust which I could not escape, for I was jammed in by the side of a tree. By this time, however, his driver had got his head turned into the road again.

" And there I was in the far woods with very probably a fatal wound and none but servants and Laos elephant drivers. As my men came up poor Beo, who is most faithful and much attached, burst into tears. And now thoughts of Harriette and home rushed over me. But God my Saviour, God to whom only yesterday I had



renewed my consecration of myself as His servant in a sweet retired spot on the beautiful mountain stream where we were camped, has permitted—nay ordered—this unlooked-for calamity; and in God I trust, blessed be His Name for sustaining me through the hours of this sad day.

“Such wound, of course, must be sewed up, and at once, and I must do it, for I could trust none of those with me, new men all but good Beo. It was curious business, this sewing up one’s own abdomen; but it must be done, and it was done—four stitches. By this time my men had contrived a very comfortable litter with an awning from the bamboos growing near at hand. Of course climbing upon an elephant and enduring the merciless rocking motion was out of the question. So borne by four men on the litter we slowly journeyed on through the dry, parched woods, over mountains and across the dry water brooks from eleven or twelve to five P. M., when we reached this village on the Maa Li River, on the route from Muang Tern and Muang Li to Lampon. And I am writing this by candlelight in the Sala Klang of the place lying on my back. It is wearisome work to write and I must stop soon. The people here seem kind. I have engaged a messenger to take this announcement of my misfortune to Chiangmai.

“And now, my dear brother and dear sister (and if Brother Wilson and his dear wife have arrived, I include them also), I need not say to you how serious is the injury I have received. The first thought was that the omentum or caul had protruded; it may have been lacerated fat under the skin. It was replaced, of course. But whether the cavity of the peritoneum was pierced or not, (and my symptoms would have been more severe if it had been, I think), still there must have been much contusion of the bowels, and of course great danger of peritonitis, the gravest of all diseases. I must lie perfectly still for days and days to have a chance of getting well. Another day of such jolting as today would be fatal. My only hope is in absolute rest. My bowels are

very sore, of course; but God will not forsake His child and I will try to bear all that is appointed me. I write to notify you that you, too, may trust your dear Sophia, and brother W. his dear Kate, in the same ever gracious hands. His angel has laid his hands upon me and stopped me here.

"I write also to say that neither of you must think of coming over (from Chiengmai it is three days on elephant) to visit me. You can do me no manner of good and your wives absolutely require you both at home just now. It would be positively wrong for you to leave them. I have good, kind servants, medicines, books, and best of all my Saviour's presence, and I am resigned to His will. But, Oh, poor Harriette—pray for her. We will pray for each other, and God bless you and yours till we meet.

" Affectionately,

" S. R. HOUSE.

" P. S. If I get well, I—or if not, my four men—will proceed to Chiengmai and deliver to you there six hundred ticals I am bringing to your mission."

This letter records a story of nerve and fortitude seldom equalled in the annals of travel and exploration. One must pause after reading it to take in the whole situation. The note itself was written at the close of the day of shock and pain and suffering. It was written while the sufferer was lying flat on his back, scarcely able to move without agitating the wound; and written then lest a night's delay might find him unable to write. But as you read the letter you are conscious that he writes not because he is thinking of his own need, but because he knows that his friends will be greatly alarmed by his failure to appear. The trip itself had been undertaken in a spirit of self-abnegation solely for the welfare of his

fellow missionaries. And the necessity of the trip casts a vivid light upon the deprivations and hardships of those pioneer missionaries. There are those who will exclaim, "Fools! why did they go so far from contact with civilisation and under such circumstances, —five hundred miles from the nearest physician!" Yes, fools! but fools for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, "of whom the world was not worthy."

Further details of this marvellous adventure are given in a letter written two weeks later from the same place, the original of which is still preserved.

"I wonder if any surgeon was ever before called upon to sew up his own abdomen! Somehow nerve was given me to put in the four stitches without shrinking, though it was a work of no little difficulty, as I had to be guided by the reflection in a looking-glass—the wound not being in direct line of vision—as I lay on my back too weak to sit up. All the water I had was in a small porous drinking vessel—not over a pint, and no other supply for miles. . . .

"That evening I arranged for a messenger to carry the tidings of my injury to the mission at Chiengmai. On the evening of the third day they returned, and with them a servant of Mr. McGilvary came along, and also our faithful Christian Siamese brother, Nai Chune, who had gone up in charge of Mr. Wilson's household goods to Chiengmai. . . . Had my letter reached Chiengmai a few hours later it would have found Nai Chune gone, for his passage was taken and his things aboard the boat to start that day for Bangkok. . . .

"I am lost in wonder when I think of the Providence by which I escaped seemingly inevitable death. Who ever heard of one being impaled on an elephant's tusk and yet living to tell the tale. God's merciful Providence ordered that when I was unexpectedly felled to the ground I was thrown—not flat on my back, in which



case I had been pierced through and through; but on my right side, hence his tusk which was aimed at the middle line of my body glanced and so did not enter deep enough to inflict a mortal wound. Had it pierced but the thickness of this paper deeper than it did, peritoneal inflammation would have ensued and speedy death. . . .

(Later.) "The afternoon of the day I wrote the foregoing letter a loaded elephant came to the sala where I am lying, and the one riding it began to hand down various baskets and bundles as if they had reached their destination. It proved to have been sent by my good brethren of Chiengmai, who had forwarded supplies of everything that could be thought of to make a sick man comfortable. . . .

"With wise forethought they had arranged that a boat should be awaiting me at the nearest landing place on the river to take me to Chiengmai. I was too weak then and the wound was not in a state to allow of my leaving the sala; but the next Monday (just two weeks from the date of the injury) I ventured to try the litter again. So with a new set of elephants for my luggage and bearers for myself hired in the village, that afternoon at 3 o'clock we started, but found no camping place till 11 P. M.—a weary journey! But all forgotten next morning when my eyes rested again on the Meinam River and I was transferred to the boat. Two days of vigorous poling up the river brought me to my friends' landing about five P. M. Wednesday, March 18."

By Nai Chune the doctor was able to send to his wife the news of the misfortune, though it was two months after the accident before she received the message. Trusty servants were then sent up to meet him at Raheng, where his boats were awaiting his return. The complete healing of the wound and recuperation of strength required more time than he had anticipated so that he was compelled to remain at Chieng-

mai six weeks. During this enforced delay he had the privilege of assisting in organising the first church at Chiangmai, a little gratification to his old and ardent desire for the evangelisation of the Lao. The return was made all the way by water. From Chiangmai to Raheng the voyage required eighteen days, and thence his own boats carried him the remainder of the way to Bangkok in twelve days.

It is probable that Dr. House accomplished more touring in Siam than any other missionary. During the first ten years, within which most of the exploring was done, he was more free than Mr. Mattoon to be absent for long periods and distant journeys. While the other missions were restricting their work Dr. House had visions of enlarging the range of Presbyterian activities. All the fields of present mission stations in central Siam had been explored by Dr. House and seed sown long before permanent work was undertaken. Love of pioneering and zeal for the Gospel united to impel him to search out the land with a view to ultimate conquest for Christ.

## X

### NEW KING, NEW CUSTOMS, NEW FAVOURS

**I**T is a noteworthy testimony to the influence of the American missionaries that through their instruction in modern science the most enlightened monarch of the Orient should have come to his death as a result of his zeal in behalf of astronomy. Although since he had ascended the throne King Mongkut had not been able to devote time to pursuit of the sciences as he had done while a priest in the watt, yet he maintained a real interest. His requests to Dr. House for translations from foreign journals included items of scientific interest. His patronage of the mission school in favour of the sons of nobles was not merely to have them taught English, but that through that language they might obtain instruction in the sciences.

When circumstances brought it within his power to lend assistance to the scientific world he seized the opportunity with a royal will. Astronomers had predicted a total eclipse of the sun for the year 1868, and indicated that the southern peninsula of Siam would be the sole place on the globe where the eclipse would appear in totality. In his great enthusiasm, desiring to be a patron of science, the king determined to lead an expedition to witness the phenomena. Dr. House describes the preparations in a letter (Aug., 1868):



“The gulf of Siam lay in the greatest duration of the solar eclipse since the sun began to shine, as some say; attracting to these realms astronomers from Western Europe. Great preparations were made to receive them with all honor and to join them in witnessing the solar phenomena, on the part of our science-loving king and his government. Large levies of men were made to put up at the spot fixed by the French astronomical expedition suitable buildings for all who were present. No expense was spared in the way of entertaining the numerous guests. It is said that two thousand catties of silver (\$96,000.) were expended upon the affair by our public spirited king. A free ticket on a beautiful ship of war, and entertainment while there, to all us foreign residents. But as Mr. McDonald (now acting consul) desires to go and both could not well be absent so long from the station, I did not go down; and then, too, we were sure of a very respectable eclipse here in Bangkok, which I wished to improve for the benefit of the pupils in our school and our native friends. . . . Here we saw stars distinctly in the day time during the greatest obscuration.”

The site chosen by the astronomers was in the jungle, in which the king caused a clearing to be made and temporary huts to be constructed. During the brief sojourn in this unhealthy spot, the king contracted a fever. The disease proved fatal, death occurring shortly after the king returned to the royal palace.

The death of the king was a sore loss to the world. Dr. House wrote:

“The missionaries lost, some of them a kind personal friend and a ‘well-wisher’ as he used to sign himself, and all a friendly-disposed liberal minded sovereign, who put no obstacle in the way of their evangelising his people.”

Western nations lost a royal friend who had opened the gates of his kingdom for intercourse. But Siam herself, while mourning the death of an enlightened sovereign, had gained so much through the seventeen years of his felicitous reign that his death could not stop her progress in the paths he had opened for her. The light which had found its way into the jungle of human notions through the clearing Mongkut had made was never again to pass into eclipse.

## KING CHULALONGKORN

With the death of King Mongkut the personal relations of the pioneer missionaries with the reigning monarch were terminated. Concerning the successor, Chulalongkorn, Dr. House wrote:

"I have not seen much of the young prince in childhood; he had been under the tutorship of the English governess Mrs. Leonowens and, later, of Mr. Chandler (formerly a lay Baptist missionary). . . . He had grown to maturity during the nearly three years of my absence in America."

As second or vice-king there had been chosen Prince George Washington, with whom Dr. House was better acquainted.

The missionaries were eager to learn whether the new government was to be as progressive as the old, and especially to know the attitude to be assumed towards their work. Signs that progression was to be the order of the reign were not long wanting. Custom hitherto required that the coronation should be in the presence of the princes only. At the coronation of Chulalongkorn an innovation was intro-

duced by invitations to the official representatives of other nations resident in Bangkok to attend. Shortly after the coronation the missionaries arranged, through the United States consul, to pay their respects to the new king. They were graciously received, and although the young king was suffering from effects of a fever contracted on the ill-fated astronomical expedition, he gave them an audience and conversed with them a few minutes. When the consul was arranging for his official visit of congratulations upon the vice-king, that personage requested as a personal favour that the consul be accompanied by Dr. House. The king was but fifteen years of age when he came to the throne, and during his minority the government was under the regency of Somdetch Chao Phya Boromaha Sri Suriwongse, an able and upright statesman.

With rapid succession came decrees changing age-long customs and bringing Siamese social and civil institutions into line with Western civilisation. The most radical and noteworthy of these changes were: the abolition of the practice of prostration by which everyone, of whatsoever rank, had been obliged to prostrate himself on the ground, face downwards, in the presence of any who had a superior rank in the social scale; the introduction at court and in the army of a modified European dress to cover the near-nudity which formerly prevailed; the prohibition of enslavement for debt, a pernicious custom by which parents could sell their children, husbands their wives, and anyone himself into servitude to discharge a ruinous debt, resulting in a state of peonage from which the hopeless victim could scarce escape; reformation



of unjust political practises; and the initiation of a state system of schools, telegraphs and posts.

Concerning two of these reforms interesting sidelights have been cast by writers. Mrs. Leonowens, by whom the prince had been tutored in English, relates that when he heard of the death of Abraham Lincoln he declared that "if he ever lived to reign over Siam he would reign over a free and not an enslaved nation, and that he would restore the ancient constitutional government and make Siam a kingdom of the free." Mr. J. G. D. Campbell, in his volume *Siam in the Twentieth Century*, sketches the court-scene when the ancient custom of prostration was abolished:

"In 1874," he writes, "King Chulalongkorn assembled his ministers and nobles and, having ascended the throne, promulgated a decree emancipating them and all subjects from the degrading custom of crawling on their knees in the presence of a superior; after which, at his command the whole assembly arose from their prostrate position on their hands and knees and stood erect for the first time in the presence of their sovereign."

Though his personal relation with the occupant of the throne was terminated, Dr. House found that the new government included many of his old-time friends from the days of his lectures on science. Among these were the regent himself, the minister of foreign affairs, the master of the new mint and the commander-in-chief of the army. A new office also had been established, and the doctor found his friend Godata, formerly a priest in Chao Fah Yai's watt, appointed as court preacher with the duty of preach-

ing on the Christian Sabbath a moral lecture to the soldiers and cadets, by the king's orders.

#### NEW FAVOURS

The mission workers hoped that a change in sovereigns would mean no reaction; they scarcely expected more. But while King Mongkut had "put no obstacle in the way," King Chulalongkorn soon removed the remaining obstacles by making effective the treaty provisions even in the dependency of Lao. For it was the rapid development of the work in that new station that precipitated a condition in which the good offices of the new government alone saved the day. Within two years of the beginning of work at Chiengmai the first convert made a confession of faith, Nan Inta; and in seven months more six others had received baptism. Then suddenly the virulence of the king of Lao was manifested by the martyrdom of two of these converts, put to death on his orders.

As the Lao state was subject to the king of Siam, and as the government had given permission for the missionaries to work in that dependency, appeal was taken promptly to the regent for protection of the Lao missionaries whose lives were in danger. The regent sent a commissioner with all dispatch to Chiengmai with stringent orders to the Lao ruler that the missionaries must receive the full protection guaranteed by the treaty between Siam and the United States. Enraged by this invocation of a higher authority, the Lao king declared that while the missionaries might remain as the Siamese government had ordered, yet they must not teach religion or make Christians; and openly vowed his purpose to kill any

of his people who should become converts to the new religion. The situation had apparently become impossible; and to gain time while deciding what course was best under the circumstances, the work was suspended, and the workers had virtually decided to leave in the spring. About that time, however, the tyrant with a large suite left for Bangkok to attend the cremation ceremonies of his late suzerain. While there he fell sick, and before he could reach his Chiangmai capital he died. Upon his death the supreme power within the province passed to the hands of one kindly disposed to the missionaries.

In the same year as the death of the Lao king, 1870, a royal proclamation was issued which appeared in part in the Bangkok Calendar for the next year. This proclamation was a decree of religious liberty. Apparently, although not of a certainty, it had some connection with the recent affair among the Lao. A paragraph from this proclamation shows the broad-mindedness of the government at that period:

“In regard to the concern of seeking and holding a religion that shall be a refuge to yourself in this life, it is a good concern and exceedingly appropriate and suitable that you all—every individual of you—should investigate and judge for himself according to his own wisdom. And when you see any religion whatever, or any company of religionists whatever, likely to be of advantage to yourself, a refuge in accord with your own wisdom, hold to that religion with all your heart. Hold it not with a shallow mind, with mere guess work or merely because of its general popularity or from mere traditional saying that it is the custom held from time immemorial. And do not hold a religion that you have not good evidence is true and then frighten men’s fears and



flatter their hopes thereby. Do not be frightened and astonished at diverse fictitious events and hold to and follow them. When you shall have obtained a refuge, a religious faith that is good and beautiful and suitable, hold to it with great joy and follow its teachings, and it will be a cause of prosperity to each one of you. . . . It is our will that our subjects of whatever race, nation or creed live freely and happily in the kingdom, no man despising or molesting another on account of religious difference, or any other difference of opinion, custom or manners."

Oddly enough, Dr. House, who seemed always to make mention of the innovations of the progressive government under the new king, makes no reference to this proclamation in his letters, nor does he mention it in his chapter on the history of missions in *Siam and Laos*. In this last named work, however, he states that on Sept. 29, 1878, the king of Siam issued "a proclamation establishing religious toleration in Laos and by implication throughout all his dominions."

Early in 1871 an incident occurred which was fraught with great consequence for native Christians, and one in which Dr. House's friendly intimacy with the high officials enabled him to render a service of far-reaching consequence to the young native church. One of the girls of the school, Ooey, shortly after she had made a confession of faith, was called as a witness in court upon a suit in behalf of another member of the church. It was then the custom to allow the Chinese to take oath according to their religion; but there was no provision in the law for the Christian oath. When this young girl was asked to take the native oath, she told the court boldly that she was a

Christian and that she could not take an oath based on the native religion; and she demanded to be sworn upon her Christian faith. The court tried to induce her to accede to custom, assuring her that it was but a harmless formula. But she steadily refused, although she was an important witness, the lack of whose testimony was greatly to the disadvantage of a fellow-Christian. In consequence the case was suspended, in hopes that she would change her attitude.

The matter was at once brought to the attention of Dr. House, who recognised that the situation involved elements which were of serious consequence to the religious rights of native Christians. If compelled to take oath, it would infringe upon their conscience. If not permitted to substitute the Christian oath, they would have to forfeit their standing in the court in all cases. The doctor at once sought an interview with the minister of foreign affairs, his old friend and former Lieutenant Governor of Petchaburi, and also with the regent, an old-time friend. After laying before them the nature of the case, an order was issued directing that a witness be sworn by the faith to which he claimed allegiance. This action, so far as appears, was the first step in the legal recognition of the Christian faith on the part of the government.

#### PROGRESS

During the last decade of Dr. House's services there were many recruits to the force of workers. But these additions were not a net gain, for in the meantime there were numerous withdrawals on account of health. In 1869 came Revs. J. W. Van

Dyke and John Carrington with their wives. Two years later were added Rev. and Mrs. R. Arthur, Rev. J. N. Culbertson and Miss E. S. Dickey. Miss Arabella Anderson came in 1872 to assist in the new boarding school for girls. The year 1874 saw the arrival of an unusual number of unmarried women missionaries. They were Misses S. M. Coffman, M. L. Cort and E. D. Grimshaw. Then, in 1875, Rev. and Mrs. Eugene P. Dunlop reached Bangkok and began a very long period of valuable service.

Increase of workers meant not diminution but rather increase of work. This is typified in the case of Dr. House himself, who jocularly wrote to his brother that "Satan will not likely find mischief for my hands to do," and then recounts the duties that devolve upon him. The varied activities that he mentions not only show the versatility required of a missionary but indicate the manifold duties that each missionary has to perform. He writes:

"I have recently become a theological professor, four evenings of the week gathering around me in my study the more advanced and promising of the native church members . . . and try to pilot them through the leading principles of a system of divinity."

One of these men, Ooan Si Tieng, was ordained in 1872. He had been the first Chinese convert in the mission and now became the first to receive this full authority from the Presbytery. As pastor of the native church Dr. House had a full measure of sorrows as well as joys, for there is a tide in spiritual affairs that has its ebb as well as its flow, and the years of spir-



itual awaking were followed by periods of depression. Thus at the beginning of 1869 he writes:

“Our spiritual prospects at the opening of the year are not as bright as last new year—one or two sad and unexpected fallings away from the faith have greatly tried and pained our hearts.”

But this reaction was transient, for two years later, in telling of the week of prayer in January, he writes:

“Our native Christians are quite interested, sustaining the meetings nobly. Indeed I have thrown the meetings upon them altogether and they take turns in leading them. You do not know what comfort it is to have in my little flock enough able and willing to carry on these meetings. . . . It would do you good to witness the spirit of faithfulness on their part to the souls of their impenitent friends and neighbours.”

In addition to his duties as pastor of the mission church, Dr. House was appointed superintendent of the mission press in 1870, and for that year also was elected secretary of the mission in charge of the records and correspondence. At the same time he was offered a royal appointment:

“Projects are now on foot in both kings’ palaces for schools for the instruction of the young nobility of Siam in English and the sciences. I have been earnestly solicited by the Second King George to aid in establishing the one he is planning. Happy would I be to lend a helping hand if other duties would allow.”

After two years the doctor was relieved of the charge of the Press and appointed again to the more con-

genial task of supervising the mission school, a position which he continued to fill until his final withdrawal from the field.

In the midst of these incidents the actual growth of the Mission must not be overlooked. It has to be recorded that in spite of arduous and faithful labours of the increasing corps of workers and in the face of all the encouraging marks of advance in Western civilisation, Siam responded very slowly to the spiritual appeal of the Gospel. While she gladly recognised and sought after the material benefits of Christianity she continued to manifest her characteristic indifference to its more vital message. Mr. McDonald, in his book on *Siam, Its Government, Manners and Customs*, says that when he arrived in Siam in 1861 there was but one native convert in connection with the mission, whereas ten years later there was a church in Bangkok with only twenty members and another in Petchaburi with a like number. He then adds:

“It is just to state that there is scarcely any other field in which modern missions have been established where the introduction of the gospel has met with so little opposition as in Siam proper. . . . It is equally just to say that there is scarcely any other field which has been so barren of results. Pure Buddhism seems to yield more slowly to the power of the gospel than any other false system.”

The reason for this unyielding nature of Buddhism seems to lie in its ethical theories which are the result of its philosophy of life. In some measure, too, this indifference of Buddhism to a spiritual interpretation

of life accounts for its non-resistance towards the preaching of an antagonistic religion. The primary fallacies of Buddhism from the Christian point of view are:

"1. No Creator and no Creating: Things just happened. This conception leads to indifference to nature and to a belief that the body is vile, to be despised and disregarded.

"2. No idea of a Spiritual Personality, whether human or divine. Emphasis is placed on mind and intellect to the exclusion of will and feeling. Hence Buddhism is a philosophy rather than a religion, a theory of existence rather than a motive force.

"3. No true sense of relationship of man to man or of man to God, in the absence of spiritual personality. Everything is ego-centric, each for himself. Hence incomplete ideas of love, faith, sin, holiness, suffering; in the absence of hope fear dominates life.

"4. The greatest fundamental error is the assertion of the Karma law as the sole principle that explains all (the law of ethical causation, by which the merit or demerit of every act in this life effects the future life). This leads to a denial of personality and to fatalism, formality, trust in the individual's merit, denial of forgiveness and self-satisfaction."

But if the work at that stage had few numerical results to display, yet a keen discernment would show that other larger results were being accomplished. Mr. George B. Bacon, in his volume on Siam, shows a true appreciation of what missions had accomplished up to that time:

"At first sight their efforts, if measured by count of converts, might seem to have resulted in failure. . . . But really the success of these efforts has been extraor-



dinary, although the history of them exhibits an order of results almost without precedent. Ordinarily the religious enlightenment of a people comes first and the civilization follows as a thing of course. But here the Christianisation of the nation has scarcely begun, but its civilisation has made much more than a beginning. For it is to the labours of the Christian missionaries in Siam that the remarkable advancement of the kings and nobles, and even of the common people in general is owing. . . .

“When Sir John Bowring came in 1855 to negotiate his treaty . . . he found the fruit was ripe before he plucked it. And it was by the patient and persistent labours of the missionaries for twenty years that the results which he achieved were made not only possible but easy.”

But there is evidence of even more subtle effect of the gospel. No one who reads of the notable changes in the social customs and political institutions introduced by the young King Chulalongkorn can resist the conclusion that it was the religious support of these ancient practises that had given way under the disintegrating light of the Christian Gospel. Even that earlier attempt of Chao Fah Yai to modernise the religious teachings among his followers shows that the religious philosophy of Buddhism could not stand before the truth of Jesus.

#### LITERARY WORK

In the literary field Dr. House was receptive rather than creative. He was a lover of books but not of writing:

“How irksome and difficult the labour of composition has been to me,” he says, “I’d rather be a ditch digger

and shovel mud. The getting of a certain amount of writing done by a given time is out of the question in my case."

He was appointed the first "librarian" of the Mission back in the early days when the library consisted of two shelves of books and some unbound magazines, besides "some Malay, Tamul, Bengali, Portuguese and Indo-Portuguese books for a long time handed down in the mission." His reluctance at the pen partly accounts for the sparsity of matter published under his name in the missionary magazines. But the refusal on his part to appear in print in this fashion was due perhaps more to his fear that journals or newspapers containing articles on missions would find their way into the hands of the Siamese government, which might be displeased with any frank narrative of observations. For this reason he frequently admonished the recipients of his letters that they should not take advantage of his absence to publish his comments.

When it came to the needs of the mission, however, he lent his hand and brain to supply the requirements. The following tracts are ascribed to him:

*Scripture Facts*, 1848.

*Watt's Catechism*, bound with *The Speller*, 1853.

*Child's Catechism with Commandments and Lord's Prayer*, 1854.

*Questions in Gospel History*, 1864.

*Stand by the Truth*, 1869.

These last two in conjunction with Mrs. House.

After return to America he wrote a pamphlet, *Notes on Obstetric Practises in Siam*, (Putnam, 1897). In

the volume, *Siam and Laos* (Presbyterian Board, 1884), several chapters were contributed by Dr. House, including the very comprehensive and accurate chapter on *History of Missions in Siam*; but so impersonally did he write the record that it would be almost impossible for the reader to detect that a good part of the story had been created in action as well as recounted by the writer.

The school for boys which Dr. House fostered almost continuously from its beginning was merged into the Boys' Christian High School in 1889. This institution in turn developed in scope until it was enlarged into the "Bangkok Christian College," which was organised in 1915.



## XI

### HARRIET PETTIT HOUSE

**I**N former years a missionary's wife was not under commission of the Board. Her status was similar to that of the pastor's wife at home. It is not infrequent that the work of the wife is just as vital to the development of the church as that of her husband, but she receives no recognition in the official records of the church. Her honour is emblazoned where the eye cannot see it—in the hearts of the people. The wife of the pioneer missionary went out, not at the call of the Church, but at the call of the husband, with no promise of remuneration aside from the fabulous bridal endowment which the groom made at marriage "with all his worldly goods" and with no official rank to assure the preservation of her name on the roll of honour.

So it happens that the scanty reports from the early Siam mission seldom mentioned the name of Mrs. House. Yet one cannot read the letters of her husband without perceiving that she supplemented his educational work in a manner and to a degree that is worthy of special recognition. But apart from that, she succeeded finally in so organising and establishing female education in Siam that she has come to be regarded as the founder of permanent educational work for women in that country.

## HER FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Harriet Pettit House was born in Waterford, New York, Dec. 23, 1820. Her ancestry was Scotch and English. On the mother's side the line goes back to William Mitchell and his wife, Agnes Buchanan, who emigrated from Glasgow to New England in 1755. The male line in America began with the Englishman Abraham Waterhouse, who came to New England, 1729, and "who sleeps with the pilgrim settlers at Saybrook, Conn." Her paternal grandfather, John Pettit, one of the original settlers of Waterford and a member of the first board of village trustees, came from Chester, Conn., whence a few years later he brought his bride, Rebecca Waterhouse.

Their son, John, is said to have been the first child born in the new settlement. He became a cabinet maker. Following his father's example, he sought a wife in Chester and married Sarah Parmelee Mitchell, who was his "second cousin, once removed." Of this ancestry and marriage was born the future woman missionary. The family comprised Mary Jane (dying in infancy), Eliza Ann, Mary Jane, Harriet Maria, John Mitchell, William Frederic and Sarah Frances, all of whom were born at Waterford except the last. The mother was a member of the Waterford Presbyterian Church, and the two older daughters united at an early age. In 1832 the family moved to Sandy Hill, New York, where resided an uncle, General Micajah Pettit. While living there Harriet made a profession of her faith at the age of seventeen. During residence in that village she became acquainted with Stephen Mattoon and the young woman who later became his wife, with both of whom she was



HARRIET PETTIT HOUSE





destined to be associated in Siam. The first appearance of her name in the journal of Dr. House is a casual entry that Mrs. Mattoon had received (1851) a letter from her friend Harriet Pettit. After nine years the family returned to Waterford in 1841.

Harriet's elementary education was the best afforded by the private school system of the period. In 1840 she entered the Emma Willard Female Seminary at Troy, New York. There she studied for a year, and then entered upon what proved to be her life work of female education. Her first year of teaching was in a young ladies' school in New York City. For two years she served as governess for a family in Charleston, South Carolina. It was while there that she wrote to her youngest sister a most remarkable letter of religious importunity. In the winter of 1843 a great revival had aroused the little church at Waterford under the pastor, Rev. Reuben Smith, in which sixty-nine were converted. Among these were her father and two brothers, all of whom united with the church. Having received news of this awakening, Harriet sent to her sister, the only member of the family not yet in the Church, a letter carefully printed so as to be legible to the girl of ten years. It was a letter with a purpose. It was an affectionate entreaty for the sister to become a Christian. Concisely but clearly she explained what it meant to be a Christian, and then gently and with fervour urged a prompt decision for Christ. That letter was not void of its purpose, and all these eighty years since it has been treasured by the recipient as a memento of a loving, consecrated sister.

The Pettit family did not remain long in Water-

ford after their return. In 1844 they moved to Newark, New Jersey, and there became identified with the Second Presbyterian Church, of which at the time the pastor was a relative, the Rev. Ebenezer Cheever, who had formerly been their pastor also at Waterford. Thereupon, Harriet came to Newark and set up a small school for girls in her home. In 1848 she was called to be assistant in the female seminary at Steubenville, Ohio. In the fall of 1851 she returned to Newark and opened, under her own management, a "Select School for Young Ladies," which she continued up to the time of her marriage. During these later years she was active in the work of the Second Church, serving as joint superintendent of the Sunday school. On Oct. 24, 1855, her father died, leaving Harriet alone with their mother and her youngest sister.

#### MARRIAGE

It was at this juncture of the family affairs, two days after the father's death, that Harriet received an unexpected call from her friend of former years, Dr. S. R. House, then home on a furlough from Siam. Writing later to a friend she comments:

"It is but two years this morning since my good husband called at 373 Broad Street, Newark, to see a lady on very particular business. Only two years,—and fifteen months of that time I have been in the city of Bangkok. Does not this speak well for Samuel's despatch of business sometimes? (Then quoting a bit of doggerel which he had once written:)

'I haven't the slightest notion  
Of launching on the stormy ocean  
Where family cares and troubles rise



Heaping their billows to the skies  
A wife's complaint, the young one's cries  
Wont suit me.'

"How entirely we sometimes change our minds! On the morning of the 26th, the 'batch' who once thus sung had not the slightest, but the strongest notion—and launching forth soon followed."

Having changed his mind the suitor allowed little time to slip by till he had won the object of his heart's desire. A month and a day after the engagement, on Nov. 27, 1855, the marriage occurred.

The bridal couple sailed for Siam in the spring of 1856, arriving at Bangkok in July. On the part of the natives connected with the mission the bride was received with a quiet curiosity, for these people were slow to receive newcomers into their affections. But King Mongkut, having first given a private audience to Dr. House, requested particularly that the bride might come to the palace to receive his congratulations. Mrs. House describes the call:

"A few weeks afterwards a note came from him inviting the ladies who, as he expressed it, 'had not yet been to pay their personal interview to H. M.,' and saying he would send a boat for us. About 2 p.m., the boat came with one of the ladies of the king's household and a train of servants; and Mrs. Morse and I went. . . . Passing through a gate in the wall of the palace we were conducted through paved streets on each side of which are the brick dwellings of the various inmates. As we passed along we attracted the attention of the residents who crowded about the doors, curious to see the foreign ladies.

"At length we arrived at a large building on the portico of which were chairs, and here we were invited

to sit to await summons into the royal presence. . . . After an hour or more a message came from H. M. announcing his readiness to receive us. We entered a door guarded by several female soldiers; and here stood the king to meet us; dressed in a mouse colored, figured silk sacque, over a white garment—a large diamond on his breast, a number of very brilliant rings and a gold watch, and sandals on feet. He extended his right hand very graciously to us and led the way to a spacious hall, hung round with mirrors, where we were seated.

“He sent for his favorite wife whom he introduced as his queen consort, and afterwards sent for her two children; the eldest a boy of about four years, was loaded with chains of gold; the youngest a daughter. Both very handsome. His Majesty was exceedingly affable, speaking English so that with strict attention we could understand. He conversed on various subjects intelligently. Refreshments were served, during which H. M. left us. When he returned he presented to us each, as a memento of our visit, a very heavy gold ring of Siamese manufacture, set with five sapphires. After being shown through some of the apartments, at sundown we took our leave.”

A belated sequence of this royal welcome was an invitation to Mrs. House and Mrs. Jonathan Wilson (newly arrived) to dine with the queen and some of her ladies in the palace the following year.

#### AN INDUSTRIOUS WOMAN

We catch glimpses of the indefatigable industry of this woman slightly from her few letters but chiefly from those of Dr. House. Within a month after landing, before the house was fairly settled, she began where the first opportunity presented:

“My good wife has already begun her true missionary

work, for she has a Bible class of nine of our young folks, whom she instructs Sabbath mornings through the English tongue which they have partially acquired."

Promptly she took up the important task of learning the language:

"I love the Siamese language very much indeed. The first month I was here I took no lesson and I have lost two months since by sickness and absence, but I have read and nearly translated the gospel of Matthew; and I begin to make myself understood."

During the dry season for the first several years Mrs. House made tours with her husband. One of these was to Prabat, the scene of the "footstep of Buddha," where the doctor had experienced rough treatment on his previous visit; on this occasion, however, no attention was paid to the presence of foreigners. Mrs. House took pains to write vivid accounts of many of these tours for the home Sunday school; these and parts of her letters found their way into the missionary magazines of the day and afterwards were incorporated as a part of the volume, *Siam and Laos*.

In the summer of the second year we find her teaching an hour-and-a-half daily in the mission school and giving two hours daily to the study of the language beside the domestic cares. She had already taken under her maternal oversight the native girl Delia, and also accepted charge of Nancy, whom Mrs. Mattoon had raised; and while in some ways these wards were an assistance, yet their care and direction was a great responsibility. Comments upon her zeal



appear frequently in the doctor's letters, and ten years after her arrival he continues to mention her diligence:

"Harriette is as industriously engaged as ever. She will teach three full hours a day, besides what she does for her girls at home, reading and translating with the Siamese teacher. Nor can she be persuaded to spare herself. Has just started under superintendance of Delia and Ooey, alternately, an infant sewing and singing class."

Thus by assistance of the girls whom she had already taught she undertook to extend her reach, training these girls in teaching under her own direction. After she had fairly mastered the language she sought further to enlarge her influence by preparing tracts and translating pamphlets. She is credited with these productions:

*Questions in Gospel History*, 1864; *Stand by the Truth*, 1869 (these two in conjunction with Dr. House); *Catechism in Bible Truth*, 1870; several juvenile story books.

Concerning the *Catechism*, Dr. House wrote to Mrs. House while she was in America (1871): "I take great satisfaction in the circulation of that little tract *Bible Truth* you toiled on so faithfully, and I like it better each day. Our whole school recite their 'verse a day' from that now."

#### PRECARIOUS HEALTH

While admiring her industry, Dr. House expressed foreboding very early, writing six months after her arrival: "H. is really very well now, but is far too

industrious. I am curious to know the effect a Siamese sun will have on such habits of diligence as she has brought from the United States."

That the tropical rays were not to be ignored, even by consecrated diligence, early became manifested by a strange "burning sensation in the top of the head," from which Mrs. House began to suffer within a year and which continued, sometimes with alarming discomfort, throughout her residence in Siam. As the pain increased rather than abated after seven years in the tropics, her physician recommended a sojourn in her native climate in hopes of gaining permanent relief. Accordingly Dr. and Mrs. House left Bangkok in February, 1864, and spent two full years in America. The change brought relief which at the time it was hoped would be permanent.

#### BEGINNINGS OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN SIAM

It is not possible to ascribe to Mrs. House the beginnings of education of women in Siam. Even apart from the efforts of the women of the other missions to teach the Chinese women, Mrs. Mattoon had at the outset of her career taken native girls into her home with a view to educating them. Later she succeeded in gathering a class of little girls in the Peguan village across the river from the capital. When Mrs. House came, in 1856, Mrs. Mattoon was conducting a class of six or seven married women whom she taught to read while at the same time giving religious instruction. Shortly after the coming of Mrs. House, Mrs. Mattoon seems to have withdrawn from such work in her favour, as her own time was then largely occupied with her domestic duties.

Modern female education in Siam may be said to have begun when the newly crowned King Mongkut, in August, 1851, requested the ladies of the several missions to come to the palace in turns for the purpose of instructing some of the royal ladies. This was five years before Mrs. House reached Siam. The intention of the king, as he expressed it, was to qualify the ladies of the palace to converse with him in English. The effect of this royal patronage of female education was not only to break the bondage of custom which held women in perpetual ignorance but to quicken popular interest in the mission school.

Though Mrs. House promptly enlisted in assisting her husband in the school for boys, her greatest sympathy was with the girls of Siam. From the first she sought to reach out toward them, making her first point of contact by a class in English Bible. As she came to perceive the age-long inheritance of ignorance that impoverished the successive generations of Siamese women she was kindled with a desire to share with them the heritage of Christian women. This lack of education she pictures:

“When we first went to Siam not one woman or little girl in ten could read, although all the boys are taught by the priests in the temples to read and write. One day a very bright interesting little girl, twelve years old perhaps, came to our boat to see the strangers. When asked if she could read, she did not answer yes or no, but with surprise exclaimed, ‘Why, I am a girl’—as if we ought to have known better than to ask a girl such a question.”

The chief obstacle to education was the notion that



education had no value for them. Woman's place was to serve and please man. So long as she could cook rice, take care of the children and do necessary work without knowing books, why learn? Perhaps Mrs. House did not have a vision of making education an established factor in the customs of Siam; that possibility was too vast and too remote to conceive under the circumstances. But she did have a clear vision that education was indispensable to the amelioration of womankind.

Her first step was taken in 1858, concerning which the doctor wrote: "Daily now Harriette has four female pupils about her, and the first day they were present, she came to me looking so happy, saying: 'O, I have been in my element today—teaching girls again.'" This step was of importance chiefly as the beginning of her definite work in female education. Otherwise it was rather commonplace. These girls were just the girls whom the missionaries had taken into their homes primarily to influence for Christ. All the missionary families have done this and are doing so today. Mrs. House gathered them into a class in order that they might have more regular school training, and as other families came and other girls were taken into the homes the number in her class increased. This class was partly industrial, for besides instruction in reading the Bible and other elementary subjects, the girls were taught to sew. With the aid of an American sewing-machine their skill was utilised to make garments for the boys of the boarding school; showing their work could be of value. About this time Mrs. House also succeeded in winning the confidence of a group of older women whom

she instructed in an informal manner in domestic economy.

Along with indifference there was a more concrete obstacle to progress in education of girls—the economic factor. Time spent in class was time lost from labour in the house or in the field; and this was a serious matter. While Mrs. House had demonstrated the economic value of domestic training for girls by the saving in expense for the boys' school through their sewing, it remained for Mrs. S. G. McFarland, at Petchaburi, in 1865, to apply this fact in such a manner as to draw women into her classes. She offered prospective pupils employment at a wage equal to that they could earn elsewhere. So long as they brought in earnings their fathers, or husbands in some cases, were not particular how they worked; and if foreigners were foolish enough to pay them to learn, the returns were a little more certain than in other markets. One of the conditions of the school was that each pupil would devote a part of the time to learning to read. The skill of hands which they acquired by training enabled them to earn their wage and still leave a good margin of time for this instruction. The result was a demonstration that trained hands could do more and better work, and that trained minds made those hands more thrifty. Here was the answer to the economic objection to female education.

When Mrs. House returned from America, in 1866, she took up her work with women again. Reporting home, the doctor wrote: "Harriette is greatly engaged in her labours of teaching etc., going out to the school room and calling to her at home the women about us of whom she has a class now morning and afternoon,

learning to read." This is only a glimpse, but it shows that she returns with her purpose steady in mind. While Dr. House was on his ill-fated trip to Chiangmai Mrs. House assumed full charge of the boys' school and boarding department, and at the same time continued her classes for women. Perhaps it should be explained that while the term women is most commonly used in the doctor's references to her work, the word really refers to the young married women for the most part, girls whom we would class as of the high school ages or just above.

At length Mrs. House introduced the plan which Mrs. McFarland had tested at Petchaburi, paying women for their work which in turn was disposed of to advantage, but on condition that part of their time should be devoted to general instruction in the rudiments of learning, always including the Bible. With this advance her work for women passed from the stage of voluntary classes to a recognised established school. Writing in 1868, Dr. House reported home :

"Harriette is greatly engaged in her new industrial school for women. A busy scene on our back verandah every morning,—eight sewers. . . . Harriette's class of women in her industrial school for women is a success and promises great good, though it keeps her busy in season and out of season."

Mrs. House was able to use in this work some of the older girls who had been under her motherly care for some years. When, in 1871, she spent a year in America, her industrial school was continued under the direction of Maa Kate and Maa Esther, who took full charge.



## FURLONGHS FOR HEALTH

The three years' absence from Siam proved to have only a temporary benefit for Mrs. House's health. The burning sensation in her head soon set in anew. She worked under constant pain; at times her head was swathed in wet cloths to mitigate the pain so that she could discharge her duties. Work and suffering together were exhausting, and after another three years period she was forced to seek a respite. To this end, in 1869, she gladly accepted the invitation of the Burrows, of Canton, that family of good friends to missionaries, who offered a free passage in one of their ships and kind hospitality in their home.

This voyage to China proved to be perilous and alarming reports of a foundered ship reached Dr. House at Bangkok. Fortunately the ship's encounter was not fatal.

"When twenty-eight days out the ship sprang a leak, made eleven inches of water an hour, eight feet a day. Men kept constantly at pumps; had to lighten the ship by throwing over some one thousand sacks of rice, one-tenth the cargo, and undergird the ship with a large sail—'thrumming' they call it. Spoke a ship which promised to keep company and to come and help if at night a certain lantern signal was hoisted. Lost sight of her however. Were indeed in great peril. But a gracious Providence brought them in safety."

A visit of three months away from the tropics gave renewed vigour and again Mrs. House returned to Bangkok with buoyant hopes of a measure of comfort for her work. But as soon as the dry season had passed the pain renewed its malign attack. At this

perspective of time the wonder is that she persisted in hope of being able even to remain, much less labour in the tropics. Her persistence is a silent testimony to her earnest desire to do something for the Siamese women. After another twelve month she was again compelled to seek relief. Desiring to see once more her mother, then eighty years of age, she sailed alone for America, arriving in the summer of 1871.

#### APPEAL TO THE WOMEN OF AMERICA

Return to the temperate climate promptly brought relief and restored her health. Her demonstrated success in the industrial school had enlarged her hopes and clarified her vision of the possibilities of female education; while the rapid modernisation of Siam under the young King Chulalongkorn quickened her sense of necessity to place that education upon a broader and more permanent foundation. Both success and the opportunity impelled her to lay the burden of responsibility upon the women of the Presbyterian Church in America. This year in America we find her accepting invitations to speak in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Albany, Troy and other places, telling her story and pleading for the womanhood of Siam.

Just here it is both interesting and amusing to look back to the attitude of mind towards women speaking in the Church. The doctor writes to his brother counseling concerning his wife's deportment in this matter:

“Keep her if possible out of the pulpit—where I understand the zeal of some returned missionary ladies

carries them in these days of women's movement in mission work."

This would almost be interpreted as a bit of jocular admonition to a brother's responsibility, were it not that we find these cautions direct to the wife:

"Don't step out of your sphere into the pulpit. If you unsex yourself, I am not sure you will be welcome back as warmly. . . . O don't let anything tempt you to go beyond your proper sphere as a woman; you cannot count upon a blessing there and you will certainly grieve many that you love."

Nor is the doctor quite as sanguine as his wife over this project for a general advance in work for women even in Siam where he knows the situation intimately:

"I sympathise with you heartily in your wish to accomplish much for Siam before our stay here . . . is over. And it may be that the privilege will be given you of working more for the women of the land. But there are great difficulties in the way of this and there will be great trials and disappointments awaiting you. I fear your distance from Siam lends 'enchantment to the view,' and makes you forget what the people are—heathen in heart and custom of life. You ought to know that not a few here are opposed to the principle of female industrial schools. . . . It is a very serious question you propose with reference to bringing a young lady out with you to reside in your family."

#### THE "TROY BRANCH" INSTITUTES THE PROJECT

Mrs. House's plea for the women of Siam found a response very near home. It so happened that in the spring of 1872 Secretaries Irving and Ellinwood, of



the Foreign Board, addressed a meeting of the Synod of Albany, held at Troy, New York. The Woman's Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions of the Synod of Albany met at the same place, and united with the Synod to hear the addresses. The result was the organisation of a branch of the Women's Board to cover the Troy Presbytery, whence the name "Troy Branch." The organising group not only undertook to establish auxiliaries in their respective churches but resolved as a Branch to assume as their first and special object a boarding school for girls in Bangkok; and to inaugurate this project they commissioned Mrs. House, who was known personally to many of the women of the new organisation. To begin the work the Branch agreed to provide three thousand dollars; and for the next four years they raised some one thousand four hundred and forty dollars. So it happened that Mrs. House became the official head of the projected boarding school for girls.

The enterprise which was now committed to her was much larger in scope than the work she already had under way; and even with small beginnings there was need of an assistant to share the burden, lighten the responsibility and aid in council. While Mrs. House was in correspondence with several young women whose interests had been turned towards Siam by her addresses a young woman of her own church at Waterford, Arabella Anderson, offered herself.

#### ARABELLA ANDERSON-NOYES

Arabella Anderson was the daughter of James McL. and Arabella Moreland Anderson, who emigrated from Belfast about 1847. They settled at

Waterford, New York, and promptly identified themselves with the Presbyterian Church. They brought an infant son with them; another son and three daughters were born to them in their new home. Arabella was the eldest daughter, having been born Nov. 26, 1848. After elementary instruction in the local school she spent a year in a nearby academy. At the age of twelve she united with the Church. Her desire to become a foreign missionary was largely the fruit of home influence. Both parents were devoted to the cause of missions. Her father never forgot to intercede for the work at family prayers. Her mother had been quickened in zeal for the work in youth by hearing a missionary to Russia; and it was her hope that her first born son might become a missionary, though circumstances prevented this.

In the summer of 1872 Mrs. S. R. House was at her old home in Waterford planning to return to Siam for the new enterprise which had been entrusted to her by the "Troy Branch." The pastor of the local church, Rev. R. P. H. Vail, preached a missionary sermon making a strong appeal for a volunteer to accompany Mrs. House as a missionary-teacher. This came to the heart of Miss Anderson as the Master's call for enlistment in the work she had long contemplated. After counsel with her mother she offered her services to Mrs. House and was accepted. Two months later, in September, the two sailed for Siam, reaching Bangkok late in the autumn. It was two years before the new boarding school for girls could be housed. In the meantime Miss Anderson took charge of the younger children in the day school of the mission.

After the girls' school was under way, by a happy inspiration Miss Anderson hit upon an idea that brought the new school to the attention of the young King Chulalongkorn. The sewing class was sewing patches to make a quilt cover. It occurred to her that a specimen of their product brought to the attention of the king might demonstrate to him the practical character of their school. Accordingly she had the girls make a quilt from pieces of silk she had brought from China, with the intention of presenting this to the king on his birthday. Arrangements having been made through the Foreign Office, Dr. and Mrs. House, Miss Anderson and Miss Grimstead (another assistant) were received by the king. After an address of congratulations they presented the silk quilt to him. His Majesty expressed his pleasure at the compliment, and his gratification at having such a specimen of the work being done by the girls of the school. Droll as this incident may seem now—the formal reception at royal court and the presentation, to such an august personage, of a patch-work quilt made by girls of a sewing class—yet the demonstration made a favourable impression upon the progressive ruler and won his sympathetic interest in the educational work for girls newly undertaken by the mission.

After learning the language Miss Anderson translated several of Dr. Richard Newton's addresses for the young, under the title *Bible Blessings*. Mrs. House and Miss Anderson went to Canton in 1875 for recuperation. There Miss Anderson met Rev. Henry V. Noyes, a missionary under the Presbyterian Board. The acquaintance led to an engagement, and



the two were married at Bangkok, Jan. 29, 1876. Two years were spent in America in work for the Chinese on the Pacific Coast, and then the couple returned to China, where Mrs. Noyes co-operated with her husband, especially conducting Bible schools for women.

After the death of her husband, in 1914, she continued to labour in China in a non-official capacity until 1922, when she returned to America, having served in the foreign mission work fifty years. One son, Richard V. Noyes, died as he was about to enter upon a missionary career; the other son, Rev. Wm. D. Noyes, was for some years a missionary in China under the Presbyterian Board. A sister of Mrs. Noyes, Sarah Jean (1854-1902), graduated in 1875 from the Women's Medical College of New York and in 1877 sailed for China as a medical missionary under the Presbyterian Board. Ill health compelled her to resign two years later. Afterwards she married Mr. Richard C. Brown and resided in England, where she rendered valuable services for the cause of temperance.

#### BOARDING SCHOOL ESTABLISHED AT WANG LANG

The first step necessary to establish the new boarding school was to procure a suitable building. Space at the mission compound did not permit of a new building with room for future expansion. It so happened that the mission had already purchased a piece of land with the intention of opening a second station. A residence had been begun but remained unfinished for lack of funds. It was decided to turn this property over to the school and complete the

building with funds provided by the Troy Branch. The locality was known as Wang Lang, a name which attached itself to the school for several years. Concerning this site Dr. House wrote :

“ The location of the school is a fine one. It is central, healthy and breezy; on the west bank of the noble river Meinam, which rolls through the great city; opposite to, but a quarter of a mile above, the Royal Palace, where its buildings such as they are cannot but testify to prince, noble and peasant as they pass by in their boats of state or barges what Western Christian nations think of female education. They also testify to the generosity and friendship of the American church people.”

As soon as the building could be made ready Dr. and Mrs. House and Miss Anderson moved to the new location. On May 13, 1874, this first boarding school for girls in Siam was opened with six boarders and one day pupil. The building, originally intended only for a residence, was none too commodious. The basement contained kitchen, dining room and servants' quarters; the first floor had a suite of three rooms for Dr. and Mrs. House and one common living room; on the second floor was one small sleeping room for Miss Anderson and two large rooms which served as school rooms by day and as dormitories for the girls by night. Within a year a second helper was added in the person of Miss Susie D. Grimstead. By the second year twenty girls had enrolled, living in these two rooms, rather small quarters by American standards but ample according to native custom.

In one regard Mrs. House was disappointed in her

expectation. It had been her confident hope to attract to this school daughters of some of the nobles and princes. A few of this class came at first but soon the school was left to the girls of the common class. The value of an education was not yet as highly valued among the higher classes as among the lowly; for the women of the upper grades not only had no need to read but no need to work; while on the other hand the practical nature of the training given in the school did not meet the requirements of their social position. In later years, however, there was a decided change, and with the growing popularity of education nearly half of the pupils in the school were from the noble families.

#### LEAVING SIAM

It was the lot of Mrs. House to do little more than to inaugurate the new school, for her health rendered a long period of service impossible. But in even initiating the movement she did far more than she realised at the time, for she was investing in the enterprise an accumulation of experience and a wealth of influence among the women of Bangkok such as no one else possessed, and which gave the institution a capital from which it began to draw immediate returns. Such a school could not have been organised by a new leader, however skilled in educational matters, without long years of cultivation of personal relations with the mothers and girls. One can see now that Mrs. House's return to Siam for another trial of health had a higher wisdom than even she could perceive; for while it seemed a daring of Providence, it was in fact the wisdom of the great Teacher



for her to expend the final momentum of her personal prestige and thereby buy up a decade of time or more at the expenditure of her last four years of effort.

The return to Siam in 1872 found the climate less kindly to her. Then came a new development, an attack of asthma which lasted for nearly eight months, so debilitating her as to render it necessary for her to relinquish the cherished work into other hands. In March, 1876, after twenty years of faithful, zealous and labourious work for the Kingdom of God among the women of Siam, she bade farewell to her friends there and returned to America with her husband.

“Need I tell you that I left Siam with a sad, sad heart? At the monthly concert this month my feelings overcame me so that I felt as if I could not attend another till I became more reconciled to the thought that I can never again labour among the heathen. I think many of the Siamese truly regretted our leaving. The dear school girls followed us weeping to the landing, and we could hear their sobs as long as we could see them waving goodbye.

“Had I not felt it a case of life and death, I could not have torn myself away. It was plain duty but it seemed to me a dark providence that I should so soon be obliged to leave this dear school, the result of so much labour and prayer and of so many trials.”

#### AN ESTIMATE OF HER WORK

Mrs. House was so modest in the estimate of her own work for women that she failed to appraise fully what she had done. No doubt the meagerness of results up to the time of her resignation and the

smallness of the achievement in comparison with her hopes caused the whole to appear insignificant. None of her letters give expression to the feeling of accomplishment but dwell largely upon the great need and the unappropriated opportunity. However, a careful review of the development of education for women in Siam gives to Mrs. House a very high place among all the consecrated women who contributed the labours of hand and head and heart to that object. Without detracting one iota from the praise that belongs to others, but rather reflecting light upon their measure of honour, it may be said that to Mrs. House belongs the credit for certain important steps which marked the development and contributed to the permanent establishment of female education in Siam.

In the early attempts at educating girls in the homes of the missionaries the aim in view was the conversion of the girls, to which the education in reading was incidental. Without minimising the value of education as an agency for religion Mrs. House viewed education as an object greatly to be desired in itself with manifold advantages issuing from it, but especially having an influence upon the whole social status of womankind. A second factor utilised by her for the development of her object was domestic and manual training as a part of the broad policy of education. Previously the few girls in the homes of the missionaries had been trained in ways of work to make them more efficient servants for the earning of their keep, but there was no attempt to give instruction of this character to others. Mrs. House included domestic training in the scope of education. More-

over, she showed herself ready to appropriate valuable ideas wherever she found them, and when she saw that Mrs. McFarland later utilised this economic factor to draw girls into her school at Petchaburi, she readily adopted the same method.

But if the efforts of several missionary women to teach small groups of girls may be likened to the foundations of female education in Siam, then the boarding school which Mrs. House established must be likened to the corner-stone of the structure which has since grown into a beautiful and impressive temple of learning. Hitherto classes had been the voluntary undertaking of individuals in their eagerness to help their sisters out of darkness; but in each case the undertaking was not a permanent project but subject to termination with the removal of the particular teacher. Mrs. House's achievement at Wang Lang was the establishment of an institution with a support and a directorate that insured permanency.

In the voluntary classes the girls were in contact with the teachers for a few hours at the most and then returned to native environment to which they were subject for the greater part of the time. It was like taking one step forward and then stepping back. The influence of the home and of the city largely obstructed the good impulses received by the girls while with their teachers. The advance feature of the Wang Lang school was that the girls were to remain under constant Christian influence, in frequent contact with the teachers and subject to the daily discipline of an ideal Christian home. While the girls were devoting their full mental energy to study, the Christian religion had the fairest chance to bear its



fruit in ennobled character, free from the blighting influence of pagan customs and morals.

As indicative of what this school meant for the future educational program in Siam it is worthy of note that twenty-five years after the establishment of the Wang Lang school, the entire female teaching force in the government public schools in Bangkok were graduates of this school, thirteen in number, all but one of whom were professing Christians. It is no wonder, then, that the Minister of Education in Siam, at a commencement of the school, said:

“The Siamese formerly had a proverb which was in every man’s mouth: ‘Woman is a buffalo; only man is human.’ Through the influence of your school and the teaching of the American Missionary women, we have thrown that old proverb away, and our own government is founding schools for the education of girls.”

As a mark of honour to the founder this school was named “The Harriet House School for Girls,” a name which it retained until successful growth made it necessary to divide the school and seek new quarters; the higher grades of which are now known as “Wattana Wittaya Academy,” while the older name still clings to the old school in its old location.

## XII

### HOME AGAIN, AND "HOME AT LAST"

**T**HE living pageant, "The Big Mountain and the Little Chisel," had not ended, but some of the actors had to retire. Dr. House, who had been in the leading rôle for twenty-nine years, and Mrs. House, who had been his loyal understudy for twenty, handed their lines to other willing players and took their seats on the dais of time to watch the Divine plot unfold. Repeated efforts on the part of Mrs. House to recuperate her health only confirmed the physician's surmise that the immediate cause of her suffering was the tropical climate. There was no alternative of wisdom but to return to her native clime. So it came about that Dr. and Mrs. House resigned.

Their leave-taking was almost like laying down life itself, for their hearts had become intimately entwined with the lives of the Siamese people. In March, 1876, the two sailed for "home again." But to return to America was not to abandon their zeal for Siam; they made themselves ambassadors at large to the Church in the United States in behalf of the Kingdom of Christ in that land.

#### REARING TWO SIAMESE LADS

Most notable and doubtless most valuable of their services for Siam after their retirement was the rear-

ing and educating of two lads whom they had brought from that country, Boon Itt and Nai Kawn. These lads are still remembered by the people of Waterford who were associated with them in their earlier years in America. The story is told of the two boys having their first experience with snow. One autumn morning, finding that a light snow had fallen during the night, the two went out into the back yard, dropped down on their knees and began to feel the snow; and then getting down on all fours touched it with their tongues again and again. Among Mrs. House's letters was a copy of a letter which Kawn wrote to a boy friend in Siam, in which he labours to explain how the water of the river had become hard so that he could walk on it with skates.

Boon Itt was the son of Maa Tuan, the matron of the girls' boarding school under Mrs. House. Dr. and Mrs. House chose him to be the subject of a Western education partly because he had shown himself to be a bright pupil in the boys' school, and partly because he was one of the few children of second generation Christian Siamese. After the completion of his elementary education at Waterford, Boon was sent to Williston Academy, Williams College, and Auburn Theological Seminary. This long course of education occupied seventeen years. In 1893 he returned to Siam as a Christian missionary to his own people. His life and work, worthy of an extended account, will occupy a separate chapter.

The other lad, known familiarly as Nai Kawn in America, was Kawn Amatyakul, born 1865, the son of a nobleman Pra Pre Chah; and the grandson of Kuhn Mote, one of the progressive nobles who early



formed a lasting friendship with Dr. House because of their mutual interest in science. Before the boys' boarding school had been fairly established, Kuhn Mote placed his son under the tutorship of Dr. House to learn English and chemistry. It was this son who, as Pra Pre Chah, learning that his former tutor was retiring to America, solicited Dr. House to take his son Nai Kawn along and supervise his education in Western science. To this Dr. House consented, with the understanding that the son of the nobleman was to be reared in a democratic fashion as a companion with the son of a plebeian, and that he would be subject to intensive religious training according to the Christian faith.

After his preparatory education, Kawn entered Lafayette College for a four years' course in mining engineering, though not as a candidate for a degree. Finishing there in 1888, he returned to Siam early the next year. His life work was devoted to the educational program of the government, his professorial labours being chiefly in chemistry and physics in various schools and colleges of the government. At length he became chief of the examination division of the department of education. He was given the title of Luang Vinich Vidyakarn in 1902; and some years later was elevated to a higher rank with the title Phya Vinich Vidyakarn.

Kawn united with the Presbyterian Church of Waterford upon profession of faith in 1879. Although he gave evidence of sincerity in making this profession and in other ways manifested an earnest purpose to live according to the teaching of Jesus, yet it must be acknowledged that upon return to his native

land he did not identify himself with the native church and eventually held himself altogether aloof from fellowship with the Christians. No doubt one cause for this course was the barrier of social rank. His education and culture led him to prefer his own class. On the other hand, it must be recorded that he never made open repudiation of his profession, at least in any formal manner, neither did he manifest any antipathy to the Christian faith. His death occurred April, 1922.

#### ABUNDANT IN LABOURS TO THE END

After her return to the United States, Mrs. House became the center of a strong influence in behalf of Siam among the women of the Church at home, especially as an advocate for female education. In 1878 she was elected president of the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions of the Synod of Albany and served five years in that capacity. When the several small synods within New York were united into the present Synod of New York, in 1883, Mrs. House was a member of the committee that planned for the consolidation of the several women's societies into the Woman's Presbyterian Foreign Missionary Society of New York Synod, and became the first president of the consolidated organization. As a motto for the united society she proposed the ideal "Every Woman in Every Church Working for Jesus"—a motto that reads quite fresh to date. To Mrs. House is due the credit of originating the series of "Questions and Answers in Mission Fields," beginning with a catechism on the work in Siam for children's mission bands. This method of dissemi-

nating missionary information may possibly be the germ from which has developed the current system of mission study.

In the church at Waterford Mrs. House was accepted as the natural leader in the foreign missionary society of the women. She so developed interest in the work that the society maintained a very high standard of giving and of activities for many years. She was particularly interested in cultivating an interest in missions among the children and it was for her own mission band that the series of questions and answers were originally devised. Mrs. House had the joyous satisfaction of seeing Boon Itt ready for work in Siam. But before the time came for his departure she was called upon to take leave of him for eternity. On July 12, 1893, she passed to her rich reward in Heaven.

With return to America, Dr. House continued his activities in behalf of the Gospel at home and of missions abroad. He embraced frequent opportunities to preach, and especially responded with pleasure to invitations for addresses on Siam. He had accumulated a large collection of curios from Siam, China and Japan, which he used with good effect to illustrate his talks and interest his hearers. This collection he left to the people of Waterford, and it is in custody of the Presbyterian Church. In the home church he took an active part, serving for many years as trustee, and also as clerk and treasurer of the board of trustees. He was honoured by the community with election as President of the village, an office which he held at the time of his death.



## "ALL THINGS RICHLY TO ENJOY"

When the two missionaries returned from their long period of heavy labours in Siam with impaired health it was with the expectation that the estate which the doctor had received from his father would provide sufficient income for a comfortable living. The salary while on the field had been so small that instead of being able to save from that income, the doctor had to supplement it from his private purse. But with economy, he expected that his patrimony would be ample for the needs of himself and wife. Not long after his return, however, it developed that the investment of his funds was unsound, and he suddenly found his reserves swept away. The two were left largely dependent, though still having their home.

Without a word of complaint they accepted the situation as one of the inexplicable dispensations of God. The many years of sublime but real trust in the care of Providence which they had cultivated in the mission field and which they had often proven to be an unfailing means of blessing, now stood them in good stead. Those who knew them intimately relate instances in which what seemed to be spontaneous gifts of friends and neighbours reached them at the moment when they knew not whence a supply for immediate needs was to come. In a letter to a friend telling of the timely provision of the Lord for his needs, Dr. House wrote that his old friend Kuhn Mote, having learned of his straitened circumstances, had sent him a gift of five hundred dollars. If the record of those later years could be written it would be a continuous testimony to the simple reliance upon

the goodness and mercy of God, and to the marvellous justification of the faith of this godly couple.

#### THE JUBILEE YEAR

When, in 1897, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of permanent work in Siam, the doctor was the only survivor of the group who met together in Bangkok half-a-century before. None of the workers in the field doubtless had greater rejoicing at that jubilee than Dr. House. The following letter of felicitation he wrote on that occasion to the daughter of his fellow missionary, herself born in Siam and from childhood knowing him as "Uncle Samuel"; it was a delicate tribute to the memory of his companions in labours.

"WATERFORD, NEW YORK, March 18, 1897.

*"To Miss Mary L. Mattoon:*

"MY DEAR MARY:

"You will excuse the familiarity of my address when you learn why my heart just now goes out to you with affectionate interest. You are the child, the Siam-born child of the honoured, now sainted missionary couple who with my unworthy self just fifty years ago, March 22, 1847, after eight months of weary voyage, landed in Bangkok and founded the present prosperous mission of the Presbyterian Board in the Kingdom of Siam. Yes, the coming Monday, the 22nd, will be the fiftieth birthday of that mission, and 1897 is its jubilee year.

"How vivid are the memories of that never-to-be-forgotten day of our arrival, our welcome from the old missionaries of the other Boards, our first impressions of our strange yet interesting surroundings; and of the busy week and month and years that followed; and of

work for the Master, with our full share of the peculiar joys and sorrows, trials and disappointments of mission life! How all the mercies come thronging into my mind.

“And what cause for gratitude that God has so honoured the humble beginning with such glorious results in these later days. ‘The little one has indeed become a thousand’; yes, thousands now of baptised converts from heathenism are rejoicing in Siam and Laos in the knowledge and the love of Christ who, had that mission not been begun and watched over and prayed over by those godly devoted parents of yours and their associate (would he had been a wiser and better man), would have lived and died without God and without hope, in the darkness of Buddhistic idolatry and atheism.

“To God be all glory given! Well may a jubilee be kept by all who know of the contrast between that day in Siam and the present. What wonders God hath wrought.

“Sincerely yours,  
“S. R. HOUSE.”

Perhaps it was the celebration of this jubilee in Siam that reminded former pupils of the Bangkok boys' school of how much they were indebted to Dr. House for the immeasurable difference between their Christian enlightenment and the paganism around them. At any rate in the following summer Dr. House received from a group of his former pupils a gift of one hundred and twenty-five dollars, accompanied by this letter:

“SUMRAY, BANGKOK, June 15, 1898.

“*The Rev. S. R. House, M.D.:*

“SIR: We have learned that your old age coming to eighty-one on the 16th of October next. On the occasion we are glad to subscribe among your oriental scholars of



Siam to offer you a small present, which we obtained for your birthday.

"We herewith request you to accept this small sum for your birthday present for the recognition of your Siamese scholars, and we beg to thank you for the knowledgment which we obtained from you when you were with us in our lovely country. And we noted you were the foundation of our knowledgment, and we will place your name on the stone of our hearts as long as we live.

"We pray God to bless you, to comfort and to help you in all circumstances; and we hope to meet you again in the Kingdom of our Father.

"We have the honour to remain, Sir, your affectionate scholars."

(Signed by twenty-eight former pupils.)

But that birthday never arrived. Only a few days after the receipt of this affectionate token and grateful testimonial, Dr. House took leave forever from his friends of Siam and from his friends of all the world. On the thirteenth day of October, 1898, he reached *Home At Last*.

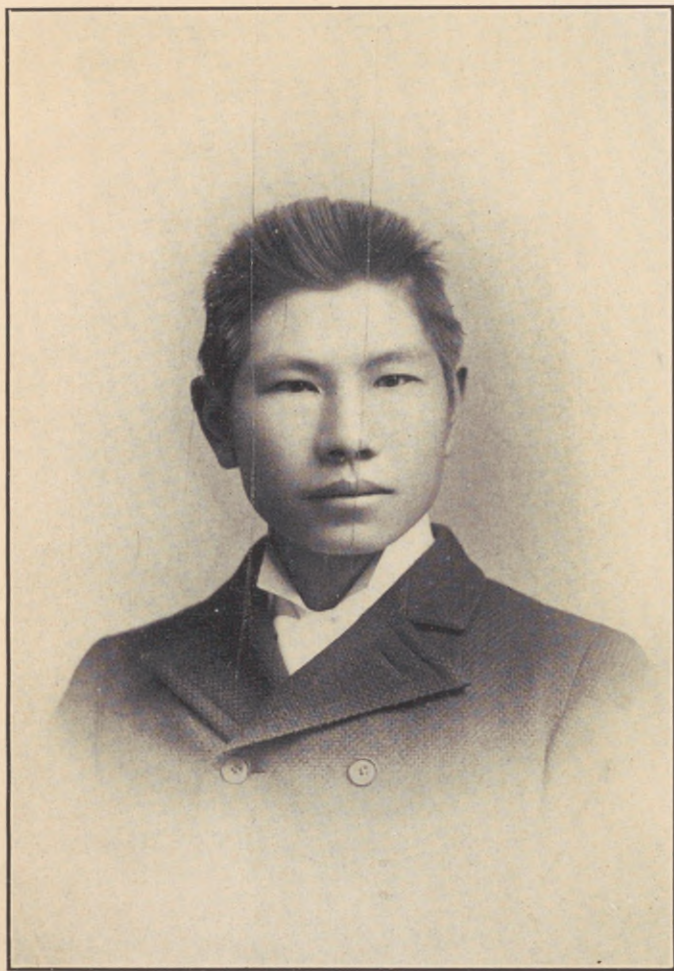
His affection for Siam outlived his days; for he had provided a small bequest for the Harriet House school in memory of his wife. Dr. House and his wife lie buried in the Waterford Rural Cemetery.

### XIII

#### BOON TUAN BOON ITT

“ONE of the most remarkable men I have met in Asia.” Such was the characterisation of Boon Itt given by Dr. Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, after a visit to the Far East. Only when one considers the high quality of the well-educated native leaders in the Christian church in Japan or China will this estimate suggest its full measure. Nor does this evaluation exceed the common esteem in which Boon Itt was held by those who knew him while in America. By all his fellow students and by his teachers he was regarded as a man of exceptionally fine personality, of high moral ideals, and of rare Christian attainments.

In physique he was of medium stature, well proportioned, lithe of limb and agile in action. He was fond of athletics, and showed a preference for the more active sports. He loved games for the sake of sport rather than for the winning chance. His features were distinctly Asiatic. Yet there was a total absence of that mysteriousness in countenance which we usually associate with the Oriental. Americans quickly lost sight of the difference of race, and received him as one of their own. His voice was low, mellow and gently modulated, imparting a feeling of confidence by its quiet yet positive strength.



REV. BOON TUAN BOON ITT



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The most casual acquaintance discovered in him a winsomeness of manners. Simple, courteous, modest, responsive, he had all the marks of a Christian gentleman. He was friendly but free from effusiveness; hospitable yet without aggressiveness in urging attentions. He had a warm sympathy but never bestowed the pity of superiority nor the flattery of patronage. His love of companions made him a leader among young men. In his nature the æsthetic had its proper balance. He possessed a love of the beautiful both in art and in nature, and in this love he found a constant inspiration to purity and nobleness. The best in literature and in art and in music found a response in his heart. Without doubt, however, to those who knew Boon Itt best, it was the spiritual quality that gave richness to his character. He was deeply religious; he had a religiousness of soul rather than of mind, free from the sentimental, the spectacular or the trivial. Faith with him was not a matter of creed but of simple, profound trust in a God whose goodness he had proven.

“THE FAITH THAT DWELT IN THY GRANDFATHER”

Boon Itt was one of the earliest of the second generation Christians of Siam. His maternal grandfather was Kee-Eng Sinsay Quasien. This name appears in various abbreviations and spellings in Dr. House's journal, but here it is given in the form approved by one of his grandsons, who explains that the first two syllables constitute the name, while the remainder is the title. It will not lessen the honour to correct several traditions that have attached themselves to his story in America. Kee-Eng was not the

first Protestant Christian in Siam, nor the first convert of the Presbyterian Mission; his wife did not make a profession of Christian faith; his daughter Maa Tuan was not the first Siamese woman to unite with the Christian church. His primacy was only that he was the first "native" to be received into the Presbyterian Church of Bangkok after its organisation.

Kee-Eng was baptised Jan. 7, 1844, by Rev. Stephen Johnston, of the A. B. C. F. M., having been the Chinese tutor to Mr. Johnston for several years; but there had been other converts previously. When the A. B. C. F. M. abandoned Siam and turned their work over to the Presbyterians, Kee-Eng was the only one of their converts still in Siam in good standing; and he was transferred to the Presbyterian Church. On this occasion Dr. House reported:

"Kwa Kieng is a native of middle age (about forty-five), good education, was formerly Mr. Johnston's teacher, of respectable appearance, amiable character and appears for five years back to have led a faithful and exemplary life as a disciple of Christ. He has a wife (a Cambodian woman) and three children—two sons and a daughter [another son and daughter were born later]—now living at Rapri, one hundred miles west of Bangkok. Though he speaks Siamese imperfectly, we can communicate tolerably well with him, and we feel that Providence may make him the instrument of great good to many of his countrymen. He would be well equipped in many respects for a native assistant, and we have confidence in him."

In his *Journal* at this time Dr. House states that Kee-Eng was a Hakien Chinaman from Amoy. The



reference to Cambodia in connection with his wife must be taken to indicate only that she came from there. Her name was Maa Hey and, according to her son Kru Tien Soo, she was the daughter of a Chinese, born in Cambodia. Although, according to her son, Maa Hey never made a profession of the Christian faith; yet she did manifest a sympathy with the work of the mission. All the children of the family were baptised at the request of the father.

As early as 1848 Dr. House mentions that Kee-Eng conducted a school for Chinese boys at Ratburi, or Rapri, as he spells it. When the boys' boarding school was established in Bangkok he was chosen as the teacher of Chinese. For this reason he removed his family to Bangkok and came to live in the compound. Besides teaching he conducted weekly worship for his fellow countrymen, served as interpreter for Dr. House while he taught the Bible class of Chinese, and still later had charge of a mission chapel for the Chinese. Kee-Eng died Nov. 23, 1858, a victim of the cholera.

“ AND IN THY MOTHER TUAN ”

Maa Tuan was the elder daughter of Kee-Eng. At the time the family moved to Bangkok she was about five years old, according to Dr. House. She early became a member of the girls' class in the home of Mrs. Stephen Mattoon, and was intimately associated with the girls whom Mrs. Mattoon had adopted. After the father died the family returned to their former home at Bangpa near Ratburi, where they were separated from Christian influences except for an occasional visit of a missionary. Here Maa Tuan married Chin

Boon Sooie. To this marriage three children were born, Boon Itt, Boon Yee, and Prasert, a daughter who died in infancy. Concerning Chin Boon Sooie little is to be found recorded, aside from what Dr. House states in the letter quoted below. His nationality is there given as Siamo-Chinese, and this is confirmed by his son, who also is the authority that his father never made a profession of Christian faith. Chin Boon Sooie died in 1873.

Concerning Maa Tuan the first important mention by Dr. House was in a letter to Mrs. House in 1872, who was then in America :

“ Among those present [i.e., at the communion service] were some of your old pupils: one, speaks of you with much affection, Tuan the eldest daughter of Sinsay and Maa Hey, her mother. Tuan is now making her first visit to Bangkok since she left our command. She evidently has made an efficient and intelligent woman; reads English quite well yet; has rather a superior husband, a kind of a headman (man of property at least) at Bangpa—unfortunate in business of late but credit unimpaired.

“ Poor Tuan since her last babe was born has been running down and is poor and sallow just now—she always was short in stature. . . . Had not Tuan married a well-to-do trader her knowledge of books, arithmetic and sewing might be utilised to the good of the cause. She might be hired to get up in her native village a day school.”

In the following year, probably after the death of her husband, we find her moving with her children to Sumray, near Bangkok, where the mission school was located, in order that she might have educational advantages for her children, for at that period the mis-

sion school was the only means to a modern education. In November of 1873 she united with the Church upon profession of faith.

When Mrs. House opened the girls' boarding school at Wang Lang, Maa Tuan was engaged as matron and teacher. Concerning her work in this school Miss M. L. Cort writes in her book on Siam:

"This school has had the advantage of the faithful and constant services of Maa Tuan who is an exceptional Siamese woman and was educated and trained for her position by Mrs. House. . . . She has been the chief native teacher and matron for the school ever since it began, and the interpreter between the new missionaries and the old pupils, as she understands English very well. It is through her influence that many of the pupils have been secured and retained. She is dignified and kind; and each year adds to her wisdom and usefulness."

Maa Tuan spent the summer of 1880 teaching women in the royal palace by request. For some years she conducted a private school at Wang Lang, and so far as records show she was the first Siamese woman to conduct such a school.

While her son was in America, Maa Tuan wrote to Mrs. House that she often rose at midnight to pray that Boon might become a good Christian and become a preacher to his own people. When the news came to her that her son had been converted and had united with the church in far away America, her cup was overflowing with joy. She died in 1899.

#### THE BOY BOON ITT

Boon Tuan Boon Itt was born February 15, 1865, in the village of Bangpa, which was a Chinese settle-



ment near Ratburi. After his mother removed to Bangkok with her children, Boon Itt and his younger brother Boon Yee entered the mission school and there began their primary education. Only three years after that, Dr. and Mrs. House resigned. When they were about to return home they arranged to take Boon with them and undertook to have him educated in America. At the same time the retiring missionaries agreed to supervise the education of another Siamese boy, Nai Kawn, at the request of his father.

Rev. J. A. Eakin, D.D., in his sketch of Boon Itt, gives this touching picture of the night before his departure:

“The warm clothing, so different from anything that he had been accustomed to wear, was all made and packed in his little box. He had taken leave of his teacher and the school. On the morrow he was to leave his native land. On that last night his mother visited him, and sitting together in their favorite place by the riverside, they talked long of the future. Years afterward, when he was a student of Theology, in a letter to his mother he referred to that night, and said that her farewell words of counsel had always remained in his mind, and had been a great help to him.”

The home of Dr. and Mrs. House was to be in Waterford, New York, and thither they brought their young charges. Boon early became imbued with the American idea of self-dependence. He sought to learn to do as American boys do. In vacation time he looked for jobs to earn money towards his own support. When Dr. and Mrs. House assumed the responsibility for his education, they supposed that their income would be sufficient to bear the expense;

but with the failure of their investments a serious problem confronted them. Fortunately, Boon won his way into the hearts of the people, so that the Presbyterian Sunday school of Waterford undertook to make an annual contribution of seventy-five dollars, and continued this amount until his full course was finished. Individuals also assisted privately.

#### EDUCATION

The barrier of language of course had first to be removed. For this reason his studies were begun with private teaching. In the course of her visits to missionary societies, Mrs. House made an address at North Granville, New York, and there told of the boys they had brought to America to educate. This address, as will be observed in a letter of Boon's that follows later, prompted a generous offer on the part of Mr. Wallace C. Willcox, principal of the military academy at that place, to give free tuition to Boon Itt, provided friends would care for his needs. This offer was gladly accepted, and in January, 1880, Boon and Kawn entered the academy.

In the fall, Mr. Willcox transferred his relations to the military school at Mohegan Lake, New York, and his personal interest in the two boys carried them with him, so that for that academic year Boon was at Mohegan. In the fall of 1881, he was sent to Williston Seminary, Northampton, Massachusetts, to prepare for college. There he distinguished himself for brightness of mind and fondness of athletics, particularly swimming—in which art every normal boy of Bangkok is an adept from childhood. Graduating at Williston, in the fall of 1885 he matriculated at Wil-

liams College. There he spent four years, pursuing the classical course, and graduated with the degree A.B. in 1889.

The college course finished, there came to him one of those severe tests of his consecration and high sense of duty that marked his life at intervals. Between medicine and the ministry he hesitated, but only to weigh in his mind which of the two professions would be the one in which he could render the greatest good to his native land. Of the need of medicine there could be no doubt; even a young man could perceive the advantage of modern medical science for a land where ignorance of the body and superstition were the allies to cause suffering, contagion and pestilence. He could well appreciate also the value of the gentle art of healing as a means of winning the people's attention while others might preach the Gospel to them. It was no small tribute to the greater power of the ministry in his judgment, therefore, that he resolved to prepare himself for that profession because he deemed the Gospel itself the greatest need for his countrymen.

Having decided for the ministry he entered the Theological Seminary at Auburn, New York. There his grace of meekness, coupled with sterling worth, won for him a high place in the esteem of both his fellow students and the faculty. He had no ambition to be a popular leader, and yet in spite of his retiring disposition he was the center of a warm fellowship because of his high ideals. During the summer vacation of 1890 he served a parish at Bad Axe, Michigan, and in the next summer was the acting pastor at Bergen, New York. He graduated from the semi-



nary in May, 1892, and on the eleventh of the same month was ordained to the Gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Rochester. In that year also he acquired American citizenship. While awaiting the matter of appointment to the field, he took a post-graduate course at Auburn, at the same time supplying the Presbyterian Church at Manlius, N. Y.

#### HIS SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The spiritual development of Boon Itt, including both the obstacles surmounted and the high attainments, will not be rightly appreciated until one considers the environment of his early childhood. Maa Tuan left the mission compound at Bangkok upon the death of her father, and returned to Bangpa with the family. She was then about fifteen years old and had not yet taken a public stand for Christianity, although there is every evidence that the period of her Christian training at the mission more than counterbalanced the pagan influence of the years that immediately followed. None of the family were Christians, and the constraint of custom would involve them in religious practises in common with the neighbourhood. Then marrying an unbelieving husband, the young woman could not effectually exclude those influences from the life of her own children, even though her husband might have been tolerant of the Christian faith. Like children the world over, hers were susceptible to the subtle influences of the religion that prevailed in the village. So it happened that during the first eight years of his life, the most impressionable period of childhood, Boon observed the religious customs of Buddhism, the festivals, the

parades, the birthday celebrations, the funerals, and at the same time would unconsciously absorb the ideas of this religious environment. It will not be surprising, therefore, if we find later that some of these ideas had taken deep root in his mind.

Upon entering the mission school he came under a more exclusively Christian atmosphere. Concerning his reaction to this condition, Dr. Eakin writes :

“The religious side of his nature developed slowly. The seed sown by his mother’s teaching had not yet taken root in his heart. . . . He was regular in attendance in Sunday school and church. He went to the mid-week meeting as the boys of the school were expected to do. His lessons were well learned because he delighted in study and he would not disappoint his mother ; but his soul was still in the dark.”

At once upon reaching Waterford, Boon enrolled in the Sunday school and continued faithful in attendance until he left for boarding school. On his return home during vacations he resumed his accustomed place in the village church with Dr. and Mrs. House. During this earlier period he united with the Presbyterian Church Dec. 7, 1879, under the pastorate of Rev. A. B. Riggs, D.D. The following letter, written by Boon to his mother at that time, has recently come to light :

“WATERFORD, Jan. 5, 1880.

“DEAR MOTHER :

“It is a long time before we get letters from each other. I hope you are getting along nicely in the school. I am well and happy.

“I have something to tell you. I think God has an-

swered your prayers for my conversion. I have given my heart to Christ, and own Him to be my God and Redeemer forevermore. I have joined the Presbyterian Church. Pray for me to be obedient and faithful to what I have promised. At first I dreaded to join before so many people, but when I had done it I felt a great deal happier. When church was out some folks shook hands with me and said they were very glad to have me join. I hope I will see grandmother, uncles, aunts, my brother and all the folks become Christians; then if we do not meet each other here on earth we would meet in the other world. . . .

"A gentleman by the name of Willcox has a military school at Granville, about sixty miles north of Waterford, and the board and schooling is four hundred dollars a year. He made a great offer to Mrs. House to take me free, if she would provide my clothes and books and expenses in vacation from June to September. And now in about two days more Kawn and I are going up there.

"The folks in Dr. House's family say that they will miss us very much, and we are sorry to leave them. Is this not a wonderful thing that the Lord brought about for us to go to this school? It all came about in this way. Mrs. House went and talked to the ladies of Granville and told them about Siam, and told them about us. No other boys ever had such an offer as this. Then a few kind ladies of Waterford gave us sheets, pillow-cases, towels and other things that we will need.

"It all came of the Lord, so blessed be His name forever. Give my love to all.

"Your affectionate son,

"BOON ITT."

In spite of the devout expressions in this youthful letter, Boon privately intimated to friends that he had not altogether given up the religion of his native land. One who knew him well recalls that Boon said he still believed Buddhism in his heart and that he would



return to it when he went back to Siam. Upon being asked why he then had made a profession of Christianity he said it was because Dr. Houses' life was "so terrible"—by which he explained that the godly character of Dr. House overcame all his arguments against Christianity. He could not contemplate all that Dr. House was doing for him in the name of Christ and at the same time deny the Christian religion. His love for the doctor impelled him to declare for Christ.

Recalling now the influences of his early childhood, it will be evident that his private expression did not signify duplicity but rather indicated the presence of vague but unsolved problems. When a child who has been reared in a wholly Christian environment becomes converted, that process is chiefly a spiritual change. But for one brought up in the midst of pagan influences to change his religion means to change his entire character, ethical principles and even his theory of existence. Somewhere between these two extremes was the condition of Boon at the time of his joining the Church. His conviction concerning the Christian religion, encouraged by the influence of his dearest friends, enabled him to make a confession of faith. But his heart outran his head. In his mind there were still unexpressed but perplexing questions.

The nature of one of these questions is shown by an incident quoted by Dr. Eakins:

"At one time, in his sophomore year, if my memory serves me correctly, he went to call upon the minister who served as pastor to the students, and the minister

asked him to tell of any special difficulties he found in the way of becoming a professor of religion. After a thoughtful pause Mr. Boon Itt said that his chief difficulty was that he could not see that there was a personal God. The minister thought that he was caviling, and he reproved him for trifling with the truth. From that time on the minister had lost his opportunity to do the young student any good in a spiritual way. Sometime afterward, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart, he was brought to see that truth, to recognise the love of God in Christ, and to accept salvation through the Cross. It had been a long slow process, as it is usually with the Siamese, but it was complete. He was convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt, and he made a full surrender of himself to do his Master's will."

Perhaps the incident referred to occurred during the period of religious awakening among the students of Williams College, which took place while Boon was there. The common spiritual invigoration reacted with unusual power upon the individual whose mind was seeking light. That revival served to quicken his spiritual life and enabled him to make safely the transition from the youthful stage of habit and training, across the frail bridge of doubt that spanned the chasm of unbelief. By it he entered into a conscious experience of grace and assumed a volitioned course of life directed by personal devotion to Jesus Christ. The seed of the Gospel planted by maternal teaching and nurtured by the affectionate training of foster parents now, under the warmth of the Spirit and the dew of holy emotions, flowered into a full-blown religious character of rare beauty and fragrance. How real that conversion was is indicated by the reply which Boon gave to a fellow-

student in the seminary who, interested to know what might be the sense of sin for a man while still in paganism, inquired of him what his experience had been; to which he replied, "I did not know that I had sin until I became a Christian."

#### APPOINTMENT TO THE FIELD

Having made ready for return to Siam, Boon Itt met another severe test of his consecration in the question of appointment by the Foreign Board. Unfortunately the problem was made more difficult for him by the very kindly intentions of his friends in America who apparently did not recognise the fundamental principle involved. As the work in foreign lands had developed it had become the policy of mission Boards to magnify the native church, and to place upon it as rapidly as possible the increasing responsibility for managing its own affairs, as distinguished from the affairs of the missions. The development of a strong native church in each country necessitated that ordained natives should share, not the supposed advantages of foreign missionaries, but the actual conditions of their fellow native Christians. For this reason, along with others of a kindred nature, the Board had arrived at the policy not to commission as a missionary any native, however well qualified. Provision was made that the mission in the field might employ such workers according to their judgment.

While, therefore, the Board declined to issue a "commission" to Boon Itt they heartily recommended him to the mission in Siam for appointment on equality with his fellow Siamese Christian workers. That



the principle involved is wise finds testimony in the words of Boon Itt himself who, when he reached a position of leadership, said: "To make Siam completely Christian must be ultimately the work of the Siamese Christian Church, self-supporting, self-directing and responsible to God—not dependent always on foreign missions."

#### RETURN TO SIAM

The matter of appointment having been adjusted, Boon Itt returned to his native land in the summer of 1893. Upon return it was necessary for him first to qualify himself in his native language. Not only had it been seventeen years—the major part of his life—since he had withdrawn from the daily use of his mother tongue, but his training in that language had been arrested when he was a lad of eleven. His higher education had been in a foreign language so that his religious conceptions were framed in words that must find an equivalent in the Siamese. During this period of language study he was occupied in many ways in the work of the mission, assisting with the literary work of the mission press, accompanying others on mission tours, and temporarily having charge of stations while missionaries were on vacations. On September 20, 1897, he married his cousin, Maa Kim Hock, a graduate of the Harriet House School.

It was shortly after his engagement that a flattering offer came to him to turn aside from religious work and enter business. Dr. House, writing to a friend under date of Nov. 25, 1896, says: "A letter from Boon tells me of his having declined an engagement

of five hundred dollars a month (he now has only five hundred dollars a year from the mission), as he prefers his present work, which he loves and enjoys and has been blessed in."

The proffer of so large a salary might well have been sufficient inducement to a young man to abandon the less lucrative business of preaching. But upon consulting his fiancée she replied: "I think we would be far happier doing the Lord's work on a little money than to leave it for so large a sum." But that was not the only tempting offer that came to him. After Boon's death the Minister of the Interior disclosed that he himself had offered to Boon Itt "a position which would have led to high titles of nobility from the King of Siam, to the governorship of a province and to a large increase in income."

Compared with these offers, a salary of five hundred dollars was indeed a pittance for a college graduate, even with the extra allowances. The larger salary of eight hundred and fifty dollars which he was receiving at the time of his death was an economic injustice compared with commercial salaries. But it needs only be observed that all missionaries suffered the same injustice. An American missionary in the same country at the same time was receiving only one thousand one hundred and thirty dollars, although he had a family and had served more than twice as long as Boon Itt. Since then the scale of salaries has been raised, and graduated according to the length of service; but it is still true that a missionary receives barely enough for a living. But the marvel of this comparison is not the disparity of pay but the readiness of Boon Itt to renounce such dazzling offers and

to hold himself true to the work of preaching the Gospel to which he had devoted himself.

#### PITSANULOKE

Shortly after marriage the young couple were assigned with W. B. Toy, M.D., and family to open a new field at Pitsanuloke, some two hundred and fifty miles up the Meinam River. While Dr. Toy was to establish a hospital, funds for which were to be provided by the Board, Boon Itt was to open a school. Through the good offices of public officials he secured the temporary use of some government building.

Concerning this enterprise Dr. Eakin writes vividly:

"He began work in a small way, but he did it thoroughly. In a few months he had attracted attention of the government authorities. They began to send their sons to the school. . . . It was a slow process of growth but it was indigenous from the start. In this respect it was typical of all Boon Itt's work. He tried to work with the Siamese people from the inside out, instead of following the common method of applying something foreign largely on the outside.

"It required rare self-sacrifice in Mr. Boon Itt to labour on, teaching the rudiments of learning in that little school when he felt that he was capable of doing a work that would loom larger in the public view. . . . But there was a subtler temptation in the opportunity to do a work that would make a greater show before the world. He had warm friends at home [America] who were rising in business and professional life. An appeal to them would have enabled him to make his school a more immediate and manifest success. . . . He felt the cost in his very soul, when he turned his back upon that temptation; but he decided that the



slow indigenous work was the only way to secure permanence.

“The work has gone forward in Pitsanuloke since those days. A church has been organised there which promises well; but the present prosperity owes much to the patient digging and laying foundations out of sight, which was done by Mr. Boon Itt.”

After a time the government had use for the building and it became necessary to seek other quarters for the school. Boon Itt leased a new site of about ten acres on the west bank of the river adjacent to the barracks, at a nominal price. As the Board had no funds available for a building he personally secured subscriptions from local merchants and officials amounting to four thousand ticals (two thousand dollars), besides lumber and building materials. A plain but substantial two-story school building of teak wood was erected under his personal supervision and partly by the labour of his own hands.

The enrollment of the first year was forty boys, of whom twenty-six were boarders. The average attendance for that year was ninety-five per cent. In the competitive examinations later the boys of this school gained the highest standing over the boys of the government public school and the Royal Survey school. One of the notable features of his work was the influence he exerted over the young men personally. No doubt that influence in a measure was due to the manner of his religious teaching. He himself has described his method:

“As I have men who study Christianity I have to spend a good deal of time formulating what are the

fundamental doctrines of Christianity. We can use phrases in the States and be understood. . . . Here it is *de novo*. I use no text-book. I do not know of any. I endeavour to analyse as honestly as I know how myself and use my experience as a guide—not as an infallible guide, but only as a working basis.”

This plan which he adopted was essentially the apostolic method. In our emphasis on the inspiration of the letters written by the apostles we are likely to overlook the fact that they are discussing spiritual truths out of their own lives; their epistles are “text books” written out of experience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Boon Itt was following the same method so far as he could.

In addition to being superintendent of the school, he regularly conducted the Sabbath preaching service, worked in the Sunday school, and made a tour of exploration as far north as the Lao border. His wife had charge of a girls’ school which she had organised. Pitsanuloke was formally organised and recognised as a regular station in 1899.

#### TRANSFER TO BANGKOK

In 1901, Boon Itt was given a six-months leave of absence for recuperation. He had planned to spend his furlough in Japan; but yielding to family interests he got no farther than his old home in Bangkok. Just before returning to his field, in January, 1902, the Bangkok Christian community presented an earnest petition to have Mr. Boon Itt remain in Bangkok and take charge of a new work which it was proposed to open.

The demand for his services came about as a

culmination of circumstances. The work at Sumray had become too large for the plot of land laid out nearly forty years before. A new compound had been procured in the city proper, and the mission Press had already been moved thither. A campus for a boys' high school had also been secured in that locality and buildings were soon to be erected. On the part of a few there was a desire to establish a church near the school as a center for work among the students. This led to a movement among the Siamese Christians to have this church erected by the Siamese for the Siamese to the honour of Christ. A Christian nobleman of wealth and influence offered to give the major part of the cost, and the remainder was to be raised by the native Christians. This nobleman was Phra Montri, now Phya Sarasin. As he had a high admiration for Boon Itt and wished his help and leadership in the project, a conference was called at which it was unanimously decided to undertake the enterprise and to ask to have Boon Itt transferred from Pitsanuloke to take charge of the work; and a committee consisting of Phra Montri, Kru Yuan, pastor of the First Church of Bangkok, and Boon Itt was appointed to secure a lot near the proposed high school and to plan for the new structure.

Concerning this project and the peculiar fitness of Boon Itt for it, Dr. Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, who at that time was making a visit to the Siam mission, gave a very vivid survey in his report to the Board. After describing the respective locations of the three churches in the capital city and the circumstantial limitation of their reach, he says:



“Thus there is neither missionary nor church in Bangkok for the bulk of the population, for the intelligent, well-to-do classes who are becoming eagerly interested in foreign ideas, and for the thousands of bright young men who flock to the metropolis in Siam, as they do in England and America. In that main part of the city there are scores of young men and women who were educated at our boarding schools. Many of them are Christians. I met a big room full of them at a reception which they very kindly gave in my honour. They were as fine a looking company of young people as I have met anywhere on this tour. Properly led they might be a power for Christ.

“But there is absolutely no place in all Bangkok where they can attend church unless they divide up by sexes and travel several miles in a boat to Sumray and Wang Lang. This some of them do, but their parents and friends do not. Every year our schools are sending out more of these young people, but we are not following them up, and they are left to drift. . . . For this great work a man and a church are needed at once. No other need in Siam is more urgent. The man should be able to speak the Siamese like a native. He should be conversant with the intricacies of Siamese customs and etiquette; and so understand the native mind that he can enter into sympathy with it and be able to mould it for God.

“There is one man in Siam who meets all these conditions. I believe that he has ‘come into the kingdom for such a time as this.’ That man is Rev. Boon Boon Itt . . . one of the most remarkable men I have met in Asia. His station has been Pitsanuloke, where he has done a fine work in building up next to the largest boys’ boarding school in the mission. Another man can do the work at Pitsanuloke equally well, but no other man in Siam or out of it can reach the young men in Bangkok as he can. As the head of his ‘clan’ whose family home is in Bangkok, he is widely and favourably known in the capital. Young men like him and resort

to him for advice whenever he visits the city. . . . We can use this man to better advantage for the cause of Christ. So I proposed to the missionaries that Mr. Boon Itt be transferred to Bangkok, and the proposal was unanimously and enthusiastically agreed to."

So it came about that Boon Itt was unexpectedly but with great reluctance persuaded to accept the call to Bangkok. In a letter to a friend in America he wrote:

"Now there comes a call for me to come down to Bangkok and take up the work here with young men and for young men. This now seems to be my work. I am drawn to it now. I was not before; I looked at it from a sheer sense of duty. I want to put my best work in down here, for it is extremely important to build up homes if purity is ever to be indigenous. When I went up to Pitsanuloke I was in doubt about the school work, so I said to the Lord if He wanted me to start a school there, would He give the money wherewith to build it. He owns all the riches of the world and people's hearts are in his hands; so I asked Him to influence the people there to give the money and the materials—and He did, and the school has been built.

"Well, I learned one other lesson along with that, viz: that had I asked the Father to give me money for the work in His own way I would have been spared much unnecessary toil. I am certain that the Lord will give me the money to carry on this new work out here. My plan in general is to hire a building and start a reading room, play room, prayer meeting room, where we can have classes for Bible studies."

As the possibilities unfolded themselves to his mind it was not solely the undertaking to build up a congre-

gation that engaged his interests. He sketched plans for work in connection with the church which would make it a center of social activities for the cultivation of Christian ideals among the young men; and it was this phase of the work which appealed to him. He studied the needs both temporal and spiritual. Through his influence the young men organised an institution known as the Christian United Bank of Siam; this was the first banking house founded by the Siamese. It was organised after the manner of the savings banks and proved to be very helpful to the Christian community of Bangkok. He also persuaded a small group of Christian Siamese to organise a Steam Rice Milling Company on a Christian basis, no work to be done on the Sabbath and a fixed portion of the income to be devoted to Christian work.

Although Boon Itt had made himself felt among the native Christians during the few years he had spent in Bangkok directly after return to Siam, he now came to be recognised and accepted as the leader of the Siamese Christian Church. He did not aim to be a leader; his intention was just to put himself behind the work and help wherever he could. But this very helpfulness caused the people to look up to him with profound respect. They had appreciation of his understanding of their needs, of his sympathy with their aspirations, and of his ability to look at things from their personal point of view. In a few months his house had become the headquarters for Siamese Christians on the east side of the river, and little gatherings of friends were of frequent occurrence. This gave him a personal influence that he alone failed to perceive.



But scarcely had Boon Itt laid his hands to this great task when within a year his labours came to a sudden end. He fell a victim to cholera. After telling of the sudden attack of the disease, Dr. Eakin recounts the most impressive closing scenes:

"We were with him until late in Friday night, and left to return to the High School, telling them to call us if there should be any change. The weather had been hot and dry. No rain had fallen for about two months. All animate nature seemed to be suffering and longing for relief from the drought.

"About midnight we were called. As we went to the house, we noticed that there was a change coming in the weather. The wind was rising in fitful gusts, and dark clouds were scudding across the sky.

"We found that he had passed away without returning to consciousness. Soon after we entered the house, the monsoon broke in torrents of rain. The house shook under the fierce attacks of the raging tempest. . . . The bereaved wife calmly gathered the friends together in the little sitting room, passed around the hymn books among them and asked them all to sing. Through the long hours of that terrible storm, they sang those hymns of Christian faith and hope and comfort. In the interval between these songs of the night, they talked of the future. One expressed concern about the finishing of the new church. (A part of his ebbing strength Boon had spent in explaining the details of the drawings he had made for the roof of the church.) It would be difficult to find a contractor who would be willing to take up the work that had fallen from a dead hand, owing to a superstition that the building would be haunted. Then Kru Thien Pow, head teacher in the Boys' High School and a most devoted friend of the fallen chief, broke down and wept aloud: 'I am not thinking of the new church,' he said, 'some one will be found to complete that work. I am thinking of the

Kingdom of Christ in Siam. Who will take the vacant place in this service?'"

The death of Boon Itt occurred May 8, 1903. Besides his widow, he left three children, Samuel Buntoon, Eliza Brante and Phreida.

#### AN APPRECIATION

The death of Boon Itt caused inexpressible sorrow and dismay among all who knew him, both in Siam and America. It brought forth universal testimonies of esteem for the man; friends seemed to vie with each other in veneration of his memory. Almost spontaneously there arose the suggestion to erect as a memorial to him a building that would provide facilities for the social work among young men which he had inaugurated. Committees both in Siam and in the United States met with cordial response to the proposal. The Crown Prince esteemed it a pleasure to make the first contribution for Siam towards the proposed building, while members of the government gladly participated in the fund. The king of Siam, who was absent at the time, expressed his intention to assist when he learned of the project after his return.

Prince Damrong, Minister of the Interior, when invited to contribute to the fund, replied: "I am glad to help in a memorial to that splendid man. You may not know that I offered him a position which would have led to high titles of nobility from the king of Siam, to the governorship of a large province and to a large increase of income. Yet he declined these high honours and financial benefits that he might continue in the service of Jesus Christ. Boon Itt was a

true Christian." As a result of the movement, the "Boon Itt Memorial Building" now stands as a visible testimonial to all Bangkok in behalf of the noble character of this Christian Siamese, and perpetuates the heart's desire of this servant of Christ for the young men of Siam.

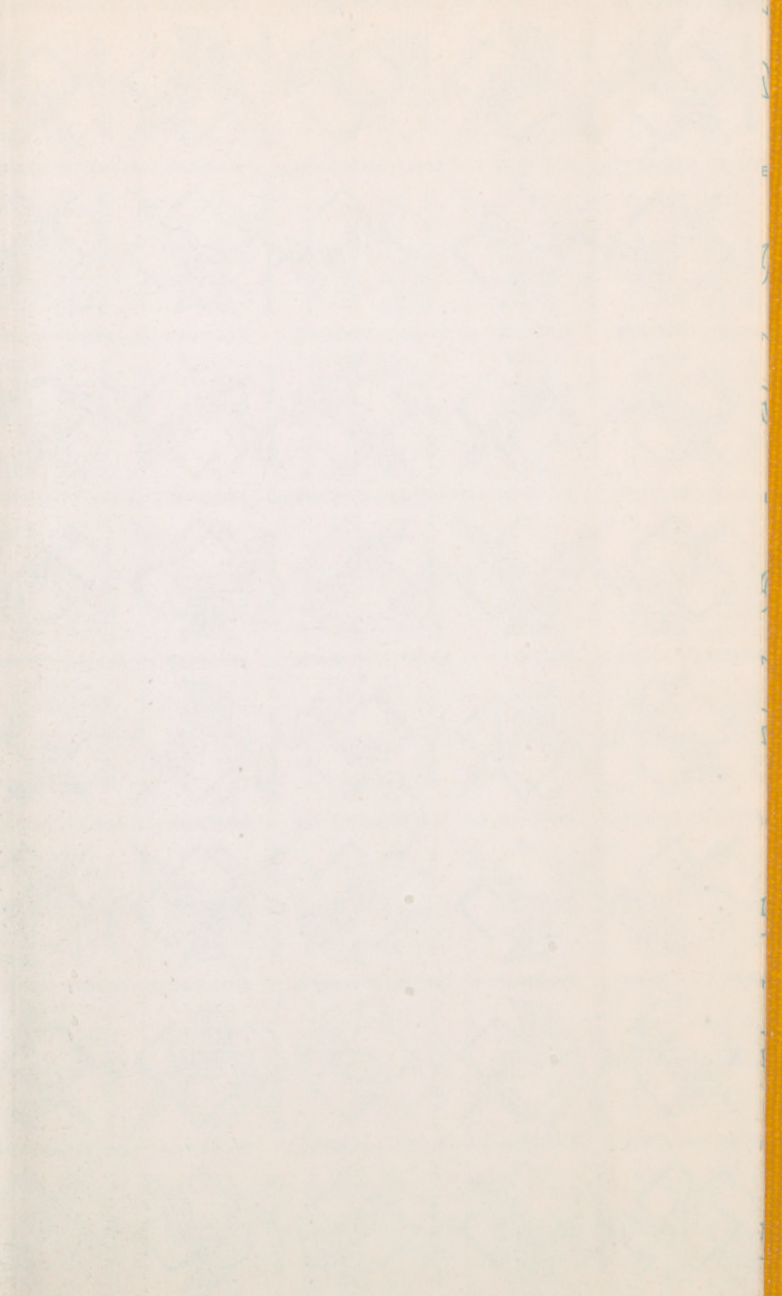
Boon Itt gave only ten rapid but full years to the Gospel ministry for his countrymen, but he set in motion spiritual influences that will persist many times that brief decade. The marvel is that he laid the foundations so deep in the hearts of the people and built so lofty in their aspirations in so short a time. Yet the higher achievement was not what he did but rather the Christian character which, by the grace of Jesus Christ, he developed in beautiful symmetry and completeness. In his life the Spirit manifestly bore its full fruition of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." But the unique significance of his life lies neither in what he did nor what he was; rather it lies in the notable demonstration that the religion of Jesus Christ can take a man of any race or religion, completely transform his mind and heart, engraft in him the Christian culture, and yet leave him true to his own people. His life is a testimony that the Christian religion is a universal religion, for all races, for all lands and for all ages.

THE END















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