

Original Communications.

THE LATE KING OF SIAM.

The death of the late King of Siam, which occurred but a few days ago, is an event of more than ordinary interest to the Christian world. One year since the writer spent three months at Bangkok, the capital of Siam, and enjoyed a number of interviews with the King, besides witnessing many religious and civic festivals in which his majesty took a conspicuous part.

The late King's proper title was Prabat Somdet Pra Paramendr-Maha Mongkut. He was born Oct. 18th, 1804; and ascended the throne in 1851. From the founding of Ayuthia, the former capital of Siam, in 1351, until the present time, there have been three distinct dynasties and thirty-nine kings.

In a dispute regarding the possession of a white elephant (supposed to hold the spirit of the departed king) the Burmese, in 1767, invaded Siam and sacked Ayuthia, when, under a new king, of Chinese extraction, the capital was removed to Bangkok—a city containing, at present, over four hundred thousand inhabitants.

On the death of the thirty-seventh king in 1824, the late sovereign, being heir apparent, should have ascended the throne, but was prevented by an ambitious brother who usurped his place.

Without contesting the matter, the late king, being of a quiet and scholarly turn of mind, retired to a Buddhist monastery and joined the priesthood. By virtue of his priestly office, he was not compelled to prostrate himself before the usurper (as is the universal practice, before royalty, outside the priesthood) or in any way to acknowledge his own inferiority.

During these long years this prospective king enjoyed the intercourse of Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries; and from them he obtained much of his knowledge of the sciences, the languages and the theologies of the West. At one time, this friendship for Christian teachers seemed to promise great things for missions in Siam; but while his mind was enlarged and liberalized, and Christianity freely tolerated on his accession to power, he had only resolved to become a great reformer of Buddhism.

For this purpose, though he studied astronomy, natural philosophy, political economy, the Latin, French, and English languages, he became familiar, not only with all the dialects of Siam and Indo-China, but also with the ancient Sanscrit and cognate tongues. On ascending the throne he inaugurated his reform of Buddhism by declaring the so-called footprint of Boodh at Prabat—a shrine on a mountain near Ayuthia, to be an imposition.

He reorganized the priesthood; purified the ritual, and in his reign Bangkok became the great center of Buddhism in Asia, with its lofty temples, its shaded cloisters, its gorgeous civic and religious festivals, and its thousand of shaven and yellow robed priests.

The king, however, with all his acknowledged attainments, never contributed much to the general store of Asiatic knowledge, though he did something to ameliorate the condition of his own people. While he maintained religious toleration, and was personally kind to missionaries, he was not at all favorable to Christianity.

A few years ago he discussed with Dr. Bradley, an American missionary, through the columns of a newspaper published at Bangkok, the relative merits of Buddhism and Christianity. His strong argument against the latter was, that it did not make men better; and he cited the Roman Catholic converts in Siam, in proof of this position.

If this discussion as a whole, however, were taken as a proof of his mental power and doctrinal views, it is to be feared he would not rank very high, either as a thinker, or a theologian. In this discussion, he constantly lost his temper, and could not bear to have polygamy, the priesthood, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and of idol-worship, overhauled, exposed and denounced.

The moral code of Buddhism is very pure; but to show you the mental degradation which the system exerted, even over the scholarly mind of Mongkut, let the following incident suffice. When, a few years ago, Sir Jno. Bowring was about to leave Siam for England, the king plucked a few hairs from the tail of a white elephant, then domiciled in apartments belonging to the Royal Palace; and supposed to hold the soul of some deceased king, and sent them to Queen Victoria as the highest mark of his esteem.

the Palace. It is a remarkable Asiatic document and gives us an insight into the king's mind and heart, and the state of things at the Siamese capital, not very unlike that formerly at Washington:

NOTICE.

When the general rumor was and is spread out from Siam, circulated among the foreigners to Siam, chiefly Europeans, Chinese &c., in three points:— 1. That Siam is under quite absolute Monarchy. Whatever her Supreme Sovereign commanded allowed &c., all cannot be resisted by any one of his subjects.

2. The Treasury of the Sovereign of Siam, was full of money, like a mountain of gold and silver; Her Sovereign most wealthy.

3. The present reigning Monarch of Siam is shallow minded and admirer of almost everything of curiosity, and most admirer of European usages, customs, sciences, arts and literature &c., without limit. He is fond of flattering term and ambitious of honor, so that there are now many opportunities and operations to be embraced for drawing great money from Royal Treasury of Siam, &c.

The most many foreigners being under belief of such general rumor, were endeavoring to draw money from him in various operations, as aluring him with valuable curiosities and expectations of interest, and flattering him, to be glad to them, and deceiving him in various ways; almost on every opportunity of Steamer coming to Siam, various foreigners partly known to him and acquainted with him, and generally unknown to him, boldly wrote to him in such the term of various application and treatment, so that he can conclude that the chief object of all letters written to him, is generally to draw money from him, even unreasonably.

Several instances and testimonies can be shown for being example on this subject—the foreigners letters addressed to him; come by every one steamer of Siam, and of foreign steamers visiting Siam; 10 and 12 at least and 40 at highest number, urging him in various ways; so he concluded that foreigners, must consider him only as a mad king of a wild land!

He now states that he cannot be so mad more, as he knows and observes the consideration of the foreigners towards him. Also he now became of old age, and was very sorry to lose principal members of his family namely, his two Queens, twice, and his younger brother the late Second King, and his late second son and beloved daughter, and moreover now he fear of sickness of his eldest son, he is now unhappy and must solicit his friends in correspondence and others who please to write for the foresaid purpose, that they should knock suitable reason in writing to him, and shall not urge him as they would urge a madman! And the general rumours forementioned are some exaggerated and some entirely false; they shall not believe such the rumours, deeply and ascertainedly.

N.B.—1. The usual price of everything always required for consumption spread always in the market, and the cost of work and usual employ in any country is strong testimony of the commonwealth of that country.

2. The Sovereign of that country cannot confine greater collection of money than that may be agreed to him by his Ministry, servants and people, and he cannot always keep such confinement of money concealed from knowledge of others in his country, from whom rebellion, insurgences and hating, he ought to fear, and from whose consent and agreement he has obtained, supremacy, and under whose combined or unanimous protection he lives happily with his family.

3. The King aims, if alone cannot manage a country quite well.

4. The Sovereign's power cannot be greater than the commonwealth of his country.

The King of Siam had, at the time of his death, thirty-two so called wives, and seventy-six children—many of them quite beautiful and intelligent. At his receptions and State festivals, many of these wives and children together with their Amazonian guard, constituted a very unique and gorgeous spectacle.

The death of the king will be of great benefit to Siam. He stood, at one time, confessedly at the head of Asiatic sovereigns in point of culture, liberality of ideas and force of character, but had outlived, in a great degree, his usefulness. In his old age, he had become petulant and whimsical; governed by caprice; the victim of foreign epidemy, and altogether too much occupied with the management of his extensive Harem and the ceremonies of Buddhism. In his old age he bore many indignities for the sake of peace, and was too feeble to inaugurate a vigorous foreign policy.

During the last years of his life, inspired by his Prime Minister, he made some feeble protests against the advance of the French in Cambodia; and even went so far as to send an ambassador last year to France, but he returned in disgrace to Siam. It is the general impression among well-informed foreigners at Bangkok, that unless something is done, the French will, by-and-by seize Siam itself.

The heir-apparent is but a youth, and at present, a Buddhist Priest; but the Prime Minister, Chow P'raya Kralahom, will probably be deposed King. This prince is a very superior man; and will, if possible, inaugurate a new and better policy.

V. D. COLLINS.

THE FREEDMEN'S CAUSE IN PITTSBURGH.

As our brethren in "thesmoky city" have taken the lead in the movement in behalf of the Freedmen in the New School Church, so they seem determined to keep it. On Sabbath evening, November 16, the Third church was filled to overflowing by a meeting in behalf of the Western Pennsylvania Freedmen's Aid Commission, now transferred to our Home Mission Committee.

After introductory exercises, conducted by Mr. Noble and Mr. Clark, the former introduced Maj. Gen. Howard to the audience. Gen. Howard's eloquent and forcible address fills three columns of *The Pittsburg Gazette*. We extract a few points:

There are among the Freedmen "Schools of all kinds 4,026; pupils 241,819; amounts contributed for the year by benevolent societies \$700,000." In the eagerness of the colored people for knowledge, they contributed last year some \$360,000. Newspapers from the North, that a few years ago could not penetrate into the Southern States, are now read night after night in rooms filled with colored men. Yet only about one-tenth of the colored population has been reached by the schools. Two millions, at least, of these people cannot to-day read

the word of God. . . Where there are no schools their religious meetings are apt to afford noisy exhibitions of mesmeric excitement instead of sound and joyful Christian demonstrations. Many ministers assume to preach who impart little or no information, but merely, by their manner, work themselves and their people into a sort of frenzy, difficult to describe, and very objectionable. . . In Washington in a population of upwards of 30,000 colored people, less than one thousand are indigent." Aid must come from the North, for it "is the people that make up the State. If they are impoverished, the State is impoverished." The political condition of these several States has been such as to prevent capital and capitalists from moving in that direction."

Rev. J. B. Bittenger, D.D., of Sewickley, followed in a short address. He said, among other things: "In this country the one-eighth of the population are negroes." In 1856 the Freedmen's Bureau was established. In the first report there was seven hundred and fifty schools, and now it reaches four thousand schools and four hundred and fifty thousand pupils, and in addition to this we have twenty-five normal schools, three or four colleges and a university. And if you were to cover the faces of the teachers and pupils, you would know not whether they were black or white. Five thousand of these scholars are in high schools, studying the same branches taught in the Pittsburgh high schools."

After an eloquent and we believe an effective appeal to the pockets of the audience by Mr. Noble, Rev. Prof. Henry Highland Garnet spoke in behalf of his race and kindred. "Any other race (he said) oppressed as we have been for two and a half centuries, would to day have been blotted out of existence. It is said of a certain pet domestic animal that it has nine lives. We black people have more than that; we do not intend to be crushed out; we do not intend to die beneath the oppressors' heel; we feel that we have God and all good men on our side."

Mr. S. L. Langston, of the Freedmen's Bureau presented a touching plea in behalf of the poor whites of the South. We regret that we have no room for touching incidents with which he illustrated his theme.

At a late hour the congregation was dismissed with doxology and benediction.

EXTRACT FROM DR. RIDDLE'S SERMON.

Preached at the Dedication of the Third Church, Pittsburg, Nov. 30th, 1868.

The 3d Church from its inception and from the previous training of its chief constituent membership under Dr. Herron, was in full sympathy with the men and measures, the spirit and peculiar principles of that portion of the Presbyterian Church which has come to be known as "New School." It was from the beginning strongly imbued with the element of "Liberty in prophesying," a freer and more genial interpretation and application of the great principles of orthodox Calvinism and the unshackled privilege of benevolent contribution in such channels as individual conscience approved, without the imposition of authority. With such principles and after such training, it was natural that both pastor and people should protest against the Acts of Secession and sympathy, not with the alleged errors, but with the sufferings and what we deemed the unrighteous oppression of the excommunicated portion.

In these respects we had previously stood on common ground with a large number of the ministers and members of the Presbytery [of Ohio.] After the division of the Church, however, it was thought best to adhere, for the present, with distinct protest against the measures which produced the division, to the Presbytery of Ohio. And so the church did, in good faith, from that time during the whole period when the first decision of Judge Rogers gave the funded property of the church to the other [N. S.] party. I here desire distinctly to state the fact, to the honor of this church and the truth of history, that it continued its connection with the Old School body, when they were stripped of the property by legal adjudication, and that the first movements towards identification with the New School were only made after the decision of the Court in Band virtually gave all the property to the Old School, and when the previously excommunicated became again the suffering party.

The question of the permanent position of the 3d church was one of great difficulty and perplexity. Various expedients for preserving the unbroken integrity of the church having failed, the pastor of the church took the responsibility of transferring his relations from the Presbytery of Ohio to the 3rd Presbytery of Philadelphia and thus to the other General Assembly. The reasons of this course were publicly announced shortly afterwards, and a large proportion of the church and congregation approved the decision and resolved to identify themselves with that body. They also honorably professed to those who were otherwise minded, to restore 75 per cent. of all the money contributed by them for the erection of the building, to secure its peaceful and legal possession to themselves.

This arrangement was ultimately ratified by both parties, and those who left the church, amounting in all to six families, were regularly dismissed, at their own request, to other congregations, Presbyterian and Methodist. Thus both the ecclesiastical and property relations of the church were satisfactorily and permanently adjusted.

Soon after the settlement of these perplexities, it pleased God to grant a precious season of refreshing to the church, which more than supplied the losses occasioned by the movements already stated. As the fruits of this gracious out-

pouring of the Spirit which then seemed to us all as an evident seal of His approbation, more than sixty persons were received by examination and twenty-three by certificate, and this prosperity continued more or less for several years afterward.

"We will not hide from the generation following the praises of the Lord. We will mention the loving kindness of the Lord, according to all the Lord bestowed on this people, according to his mercies and the multitude of his loving kindnesses that children's children may set their hope in God and not forget his works."

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS.—XXIII.

TREASURY CITY, Nevada, Nov., 1868.

Some time since I wrote briefly from the hearing of the ear about White Pine District, Nevada, a very far-out-of-the-way mountain region, where new and marvellous discoveries of silver had been made, and whither people were flocking as buzzards to the carcass. I am now able to communicate from sight, from presence and from feeling. From my last place of preaching and writing (Truckee, Cal.) to this is about four hundred miles,—nearly a hundred over the Western end of the Pacific Railroad; and over three hundred by stage. Pen could not easily furnish a just description of those three hundred miles of so-called staging,—not along the overland route, with good coaches, stations, drivers and horses, but by a new course over immense mountain ranges and wide valleys, and in rickety vehicles, drawn by mustang ponies or rat-like mules. By necessity we were compelled to walk up the mountains, and glad to walk down them to escape being dashed to pieces. Stopping places were few and far-between, and these of the most rugged and primitive character. Dust worked fine from granite, limestone, scoria and alkali was as all-pervading as that which Moses threw into the atmosphere of Egypt. No rain or dew had fallen to moisten it since June. This powder gets into your eyes, mouth and nostrils; it penetrates into every article of clothing, and permeates each pore of the skin,—you revel in dust. Wash your dusty hands and face at the far-between alkali springs or wells; then look at your palms and digits, and face (if there be a pocket glass,) and what spotted streaked curiosities you possess.

When you get into the new city, your condition with respect to dust becomes rather far the worse: There is no pavement or sidewalk. Dust has been worked several inches deep in the street by the constant passing of heavy wagons; there are frequent gusts of wind and no house as yet so close that it does not find pretty free passage; thus giving you, in-doors and out, the constant benefit of free dust. The inhabitants say it is healthy.

THE NEW CITY.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." Thus sang the son of Jesse concerning a locality in his royal city. But what was Jerusalem, with her hills and adjacent scenery, with respect to grandeur, compared to the location of this Treasury City. Few (if any) towns on the globe are positioned with such sublime surroundings. The range of mountains, near the summit of which the city is being built, is not the highest in middle and Eastern Nevada. The city is a mile and a half (9,000 feet) above the level of the sea. Standing upon an immense strata of bare limestone at the summit of the range, a few hundred feet above the town, turning and gazing towards every point of the compass, the hands are involuntarily lifted, the mouth opened and the tongue utters; "These are Thy works, O Lord." Several ranges of mountains both on the East and West are evidently a little higher than the one on which you stand and so seemingly warping into each other at long distances as to entirely encompass you. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem so the Lord is round about this people, from henceforth even forever." When the sun rises and shines through this transparent atmosphere upon the highest peaks on the summit ranges, down the sides and into the valleys of these mountains, and when the setting sun draws away its light from these same localities; the beholder for the first time, if possessed of any sensibility, is ready to exclaim; "Amid new scenes in another world!" As the moon, a few evenings after its full, begins to throw its weird light down, down these mountain heights into the deep gorges, the impressions of the night are; "There is dreamland, the home of song and mystery."

As to the appearance of the rising city, were all our Eastern City architects present in a body, the first business would be a general, hearty and long continued laugh. Then after due examination the united declaration would be; "We give it up; these diversified styles of architecture far surpass us." It is altogether democratic, viz: each man after his own notion and ability; from the frame house down to the clay hovel.

TREES.

A strange, interesting and very important fact to these city builders and almost a solitary exception to Nevada, is that there are on these mountain ranges and stretching up to their summits, various groves of white pine, balsam fir, red cedar, and mountain mahogany. Some of the white pine trees, though somewhat gnarly looking, measure three feet in diameter;—hence the name "White Pine District." Two steam saw-mills have been erected, and are furnishing

lumber for the new city at two hundred dollars, coin, per thousand. Vegetation ceases before reaching the top of Mount Washington, New Hampshire, though only a mile high. Here on a mountain a mile and a half high, are pine trees three feet through. Beautiful compensations are often found in the physiology of our globe. A. M. STEWART.

TRY IT.

I have an old-maidish way of sitting by my fire knitting and meditating with my old cat Downy by my side. I know it is very old-maidish, but I like it nevertheless. Downy is a tried friend, and she is a great comfort to me when I am lonely. She often gives me thoughts which are profitable and pleasant. I do not think she knows that she does this, but unconsciously she has taught me many a lesson of life and duty. Let me tell you how she gave me one the other day. I should say, perhaps, that Downy usually only starts the idea, which afterwards runs on far beyond her capabilities—but the credit of laying the first stone in the pile of meditations undoubtedly belongs to my faithful, sleepy pussy-cat.

Well—there we were the other evening—Downy asleep in a soft ball on the rug, and I at my old occupation of knitting and thinking. Suddenly Downy waked up, stretched herself, yawned, and looked around as if her felid mind were not altogether satisfied. I did not take much notice of her until she came close up to me and put one paw gently upon my dress. Then I looked down at her and saw her golden-green eyes gazing at me earnestly. I bethought me what she wanted, and put my hand down carelessly on her head, rubbing her neck, and saying, "Poor old Downy!" She bent her head to my caress, and lifted her paws up and down with delight. I soon returned to my work, and she went back to her warm place on the rug, and after turning round two or three times to get her body into exactly the right curve, down she laid herself for sleep again.

You understand that all this had been done precisely so, times without number in the experience of Downy and myself—possibly other cats and other possessors of them may have touching recollections of similar intercourse with each other: But on this particular occasion, Downy's little demonstration taught me something.

After she was again roaming in cat-dreamland, I thought about her action thus. How little the poor dumb thing needed to satisfy her! A motion of my hand, a kind touch, had brought her all the happiness she wanted. And would it take much more than this, in ordinary cases, to make human beings happy day by day? There are, to be sure, fretful, morose, miserable creatures who are fond of their misery, and refuse to part with it; or there may be those whose hearts are in truth too sad and weary, or whose tempers are too much soured to be able to take pleasure in trifles or comfort in caresses. But in our homes and our daily lives, with the friends whom God has given us—with the little ones who are alive to every influence—with our servants—how much deeds and words of kindness, trifling in themselves, will do towards cheering and strengthening the heart! Perhaps we have never fully realized *how* much.

For myself, I can remember how a gentle hand laid for an instant on my head with a caressing motion, has gone through my heart with sweetness inexpressible, and the touch has seemed to linger there with softening influence for hours. A kind word of sympathy with sorrows and vexations which do not really seem to us deserving of much notice in themselves, will often win the griever from the grief, and make way for a brighter and truer view of things.

It does not cost much to give a smile, or a gentle caress, or a kind word to any one—but it may be worth more than tongue can tell to some heart which is weary, or faint, or down for the moment in the battle of life. Try it, my friends, whenever you have a chance, and neither you nor those about you will regret that for once you followed the advice of DORCAS HICKS.

Romanist.—The Pope's address to Protestants has produced a considerable commotion in parts of Europe. By the order of the Central Consistory of Prussia a declaration was publicly read in all the churches and chapels of the country, declining his Holiness's invitation and repelling the arrogance with which it is accompanied.—At a meeting of French Bishops and Cardinals at Rome, several reformatory measures were proposed, which to the surprise of the Conservatives, were favorably received by a majority. One of these was to revise the Council of Trent decision concerning the celibacy of the Catholic clergy, and declaring that they could marry, and the other was to abolish the Latin liturgy and substitute for it the language of the nation in which the service is performed. These measures will be reported to the Ecumenical Council soon to be held.—The Jesuits who have been driven from many countries of Europe, Catholic as well as Protestant, are coming to this country in large numbers. The *Libertia Catholic* says that 3,429 Jesuits are now employed in missionary work, and it seems that of these there are no less than 759 in the United States—including fathers, scholars, and brother coadjutors.—At a recent English election John Bright was asked if he would vote for their expulsion from England, and answered with an emphatic "No!"—The Germans in the United States, according to *The Lutheran Observer*, are divided, into Catholics, Rationalists, Lutherans, German and Dutch Reformed, and a number of small denominations and sects. The Romanist number more than one-third of the Germans, and their relative strength has been steadily increasing. In 1776 there was one Catholic emigrant to one hundred Protestants. In 1850 one Catholic to five Protestants; at present there is probably one Catholic to twelve Protestants, and among the Germans three Catholics to two Protestants.