

SIAM
ON THE MEINAM
FROM
THE GULF TO AYUTHIA

TOGETHER WITH
THREE ROMANCES ILLUSTRATIVE OF
SIAMESE LIFE AND CUSTOMS

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WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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of embers of samay-wood, which, the reader will remember, has the quality of burning until every atom is consumed. Immediately on arriving at these heaps of fire, each man fell on his knees and hastened to blow up a flame with which to light his torch. As soon as that was accomplished, and not before, the man could continue his course. It required a great deal of management: if the man ran too rapidly, out would go the flame and he would have to return to the embers, without he was too far away and there remained no hope. Often he who went the most moderately came in at the goal first with the blazing brand.

The elephants in the scenes that day were not highly educated, so that all their antics were natural; they were raced at intervals throughout the day, and the various performers reappeared until by evening all were either exhausted or satiated.

A great beating of *khong-bongs* then announced the close, after which all present filed respectfully before the viceroy and the princess, whose *fête* it was, and then betook themselves anew to the ordinary occupations of life.

Phya-Rama-Ma-Dua and Chie-Lo-Ma-Dua were now married; the festive ceremonies were concluded, but they had not yet commenced their wedded life. The object of their journey to Putakai was accomplished. The bride occupied herself with packing what properties could possibly be carried on five extra pack-mules. After four days of ceremonial visits and

final arrangements, early on the morning of the thirty-first day after their arrival, at six A.M., Phya-Rama-Ma-Dua, his family and train, rode out of Putakai amidst the earnest salutations and adieus of the multitude. Their journey was very much of the same character as in coming northwest, only that for some days the route descended, which, although more rapidly accomplished, was more fatiguing for man and beast. The first night they stopped at Muang Chey; the second in a rest-house at Wat Nirva. They encamped at Muang Pôn to the east, and south and east of that at Ban Pe, Muang Tern, Muang Sakotai, Ban Kien, and then southeast to Klong Twin, at the confluence of the Nam-Pat and Mei-nam-Yome Rivers.

The curious and beautiful animals they met at times on this journey gave them very little inquietude. There were gazelles, porcupines, and roebucks, also occasional wild animals, which might have proved troublesome at night but for the protecting fires built by the servants. Chondor, Keló, and Wando-Ua, in turns, kept watch at night. Occasionally, in the daytime, the trailing party would see a rhinoceros; it is an animal that will not attack man unless molested.

From Klong Twin the route lay to the northeast, through valleys winding through the mountains on the west of the Nam Sak River. The last encampment was at Ban Kote.

On the seventeenth day after quitting Putakai, Phya-