

THE
ENGLISH GOVERNESS

AT

THE SIAMESE COURT:

BEING

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIX YEARS IN THE ROYAL
PALACE AT BANGKOK.

BY

ANNA HARRIETTE LEONOWENS.

With Illustrations,

FROM PHOTOGRAPHS PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY THE
KING OF SIAM.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1870.

boats traverse it in every direction without injury to the young rice springing up beneath them.

The climate of Siam is more or less hot according to the latitude ; only continual bathing can render it endurable. There are but two seasons, the wet and the dry. As soon as the southwest monsoon sets in, masses of spongy *cumuli* gather on the summits of the western mountains, giving rise to furious squalls about sunset, and dispersing in peals of thunder and torrents of refreshing rain. From the beginning to the end of the rainy season, this succession of phenomena is repeated every evening. The monsoon from the north brings an excess of rain, and the thermometer falls. With the return of the dry season the air becomes comparatively cool, and most favorable to health ; this continues from October to January. The dews are extremely heavy in the months of March and April. At dawn the atmosphere is impregnated with a thick fog, which, as the sun rises, descends in dews so abundant that trees, plants, and grass drip as from a recent shower of rain.

The population of Siam is still a matter of uncertainty ; but it is officially estimated at from six to seven millions of souls, comprising Siamese or Thai-Malay, Laotians, Cambodians, Peguans, Kariens, Shans, and Loas.

Siam produces enormous quantities of excellent rice, of which there are forty distinct varieties ; and her sugar is esteemed the best in the world. Her rivers and lakes abound in fish, as well as in turtles and aquatic birds. The exports are rice, sugar, cotton, tobacco, hemp, catch, fish (salted and dried), cocoanut oil, beeswax, dried fruits, gamboge, cardamoms, betel-nuts, pepper, various gums and barks, sapan-wood, eagle-wood, rosewood, krachee-wood, ebony, ivory, raw silk, buffalo-hides, tiger-skins, armadillo-skins, elephants' tusks and bones, rhinoceros bones, turtle-shells, peacocks' tails, bird's-nests, kingfishers' feathers, &c.