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***The Eyes of Chowa Maha Vajiravudh***

The Crown Prince of Siam knows how to use his eyes (which are almondoid), as it is right that go great a traveler should be able to do. In a recent interview with certain gentlemen of the press in Philadelphia he explained with great civility that he liked the Americans better than the British because they are "easy to get acquainted with." Other distinguished personages visiting this country have observed the same social phenomenon. Some of them, indeed, have had the penetration to observe several thousand Americans trying to get acquainted with them at the same time, and courteously falling over their own feet in the hospitable attempt. Our politeness and condescension in that particular are so marked that we see them ourselves.

Many years ago, when the Prince of Wales, now the King of Great Britain, visited this country, our willingness to make his acquaintance entailed in many instances a strenuous difference of opinion with our own police, and similar controversies have attended the "royal progress" of other exalted personages from over the seas, where the "effete monarchy" and the "tottering despotism" have their immemorial habitat. As to the absence of hauteur from the national character the tottering despot is a convincing witness.

But we need not penetrate "the fierce light that beats about a throne" in order to obtain credible testimony regarding the good natured accessibility that serves to distinguish us from the haughty peasantry of Europe and the implacable republican citizens of Uganda. Various sorts of kinds of illustrious but untitled persons from abroad have been among us, and all have found us civilly willing to know them. This is attested, for example, in the "American Notes" of an author of some repute named Charles Dickens. And the writer of these patriotic lines has had the privilege of inspecting a full bushel of hospitable invitations to the homes of most excellent ladies, received by a far less distinguished author than Dickens in the first twenty-four hours of his sojourn in one of our cities. He appeared not to know what it all meant, and his gratitude had a faint, far flavor of cynicism, imperfectly removed by the explanation that our people were, in the words of his Royal Highness of Siam, "easy to get acquainted with."

When Mr. Rudyard Kipling visited San Francisco in the early days of his popularity he found the excellent gentlemen of the famous Bohemian Club so ready to be able to say that they had met him that they fell over one another to accomplish their hospitable purpose. Mr. Kipling, one is sorry to say, was not like the Siamese Prince, grateful for the delicate attention, but went away and "poked fun" at them, not as good fun as that of the "American Notes," but pretty good fun.

Affable accessibility to high foreign personages is not a virtue that is held in monopoly by our "lower classes," those, that is to say, who toil with hand and head, the plow and the pen. Among the superior beings who make another and better world of Newport and sometimes revisit the earth at several points in Smarter New York, German Princes, Russian Grand Dukes and miscellaneous foreign noblemen may count on a considerable toleration. And, if innocently

incurred, borne with humility and accompanied by signs of penitence and a desire to make an honest living by marriage, is overlooked, and a chance given to live it down.

On the whole, it may be truthfully said that among the “Judges,” “Colonels,” “Sir Knights,” “Nobles,” “Grand Worthy Potentates” and “Sublime Effulgent Hoohoos” of our simple republican life, and among their ladies, the characteristic American hostility to rank and title is not carried to the point of personal offense. If it is true that “Noblemen cannot breathe in America,” it must be so in the sense that our polite response to their desire to get acquainted leaves them but little space to breathe in.