

session of Congress for August 7th was a decided surprise in financial circles. At first the report was not credited for the reason that ever since the crisis in silver and the money market there have been almost hourly rumors about an extra session, and when finally the bankers and stock operators were convinced there was a decided feeling of relief, and the consensus of opinion was that the tendency of financial and commercial affairs would henceforth be in the direction of improvement.

HARRISON INTERVIEWED.

Ex-President Harrison, when seen at the Fifth Avenue hotel tonight and asked for an opinion on President Cleveland's call for an August session of Congress, said:

"I am not prepared to say whether I think the August session of Congress will restore confidence, which is said to be demoralized. There may be serious obstructions. I cannot tell what may be the extent of Mr. Cleveland's knowledge on the subject, but I know they would not have repealed the Sherman law for me. I think perhaps altogether too much of the complained stringency is loaded upon the Sherman law. There are a great many other causes which contributed to the present state of affairs."

General A. J. Warner, president of the Bimetallic league, came up from Washington this afternoon for a conference with Senator John P. Jones on the monetary outlook. The announcement that Congress will hold an extra session in August makes it necessary for bimetallics to join together, and, after a long discussion on the subject, it was decided to call a convention of the Bimetallic league some time prior to the date fixed for the extra session of Congress. It will probably be about the middle of July. No place for the convention has yet been agreed upon, but both Chicago and St. Louis are mentioned, and General Warner said tonight that he favored the latter.

President Cleveland and party arrived here tonight.

"I have nothing at all to say now," the President said. "I issued a proclamation calling Congress together on Aug. 7th. In that I have given my reasons for doing so and that is all there is to it."

Colonel Lamont said: "The President has called Congress together and can do no more now. I am in favor of the repeal of the Sherman law, and do not favor free coinage as a substitute, and the President has the same opinion as myself."

SIAM AT WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, June 28.—The Siamese are still anxious to have the friendship of Uncle Sam, and they have not given up their idea of establishing a legation here. They want the United States to aid them in warding off the invasions of the French, who own countries adjoining them, and they will send some of their ablest men here to pave the way. Siam is one of the least known of the great countries of Asia and the society people here are reading up that they may talk intelligently to these princes of the far east. It lies, you know, at the lower part of the peninsula of farther India, and it is cut up by the Gulf of Siam. The mighty river

Menam runs through it from north to south and the whole country is a network of canals. In the winter a large part of it is covered with water and the people go from house to house and from place to place in boats. The city of Bangkok, which lies on the Menam, about twenty-five miles from its mouth, is the Venice of the far east. It contains a half million inhabitants and a hundred thousand of these live in houses which float upon the water. Bangkok is, in fact, a sort of river city, and it is stretched for a distance of ten miles up and down the banks of the Menam. Siam is about four times as big as the state of New York; it contains about 10,000,000 people, and the country and the people, body and soul, belong to the king. The king has the right to every man's labor, and any woman whom he calls must enter his harem. He has the most arbitrary power of any king of the east, and he is one of the rich monarchs of the world. His palace in Bangkok is a magnificent structure, with golden elephants guarding its entrances. It has twenty-five acres of ground about it, and it is said that 5,000 people live within the palace walls. The king is said to have 300 wives, but the queen, who is the chief of these, is his majesty's half sister. She is a very bright woman and has made herself noted for her charity. She rules the harem, and when I was in Siam I was told that she smoked cigarettes and chewed the betel nut.

THEY WILL CHEW THE BETEL.

The new Siamese legation will undoubtedly be betel chewers. Every one in Siam is addicted to this habit, and there is a big store just opposite to the palace of the king in Bangkok in which I was shown, during my stay there, a lot of little china spittoons about the size of a shaving mug. This store supplied the palace with goods and these spittoons were used by the ladies of the harem for the expectoration of betel juice. The betel nut is a native of Siam. It is about as big as a black walnut and it has a green skin. It is sold in pieces the size of a hickory nut, and it is of a soft, spongy nature, having a bitter, astringent taste. The Siamese mix this nut with lime and tobacco. The lime is colored red and it is carried about in green leaves; having mixed his quid the Siamese chews and spits and spits and chews all day long. It makes the teeth black and the juice which the people expectorate is as red as blood. I saw both men and women using it when I was in Siam and I was told that babies were given it almost as soon as they were weaned. Both women and men smoke in Siam and children are taught to puff cigarettes as soon as they are old enough to crawl. If any ladies come with the legation they will probably be smokers and betel chewers, and of the king's harem half of the women have black teeth. The Siamese say that any dog can have white teeth, but only those who are rich enough to buy the betel nut can have black ones.

OUR FIRST BUDDHIST LEGATION.

This legation will be the first foreign mission of pure Buddhists which has ever come to Washington. The ministers from Europe are to a large extent Catholics. The Chinese are Confucianists. The Japanese are liberal free thinkers and the Koreans about the

same. Buddhism is the religion of Siam, and every man of any prominence there has been at some time of his life a Buddhist priest. The king himself was at one time a priest, and he once shaved his head and gave up his crown and harem to wear a yellow cotton scarf about his waist and go about fasting and praying. Any one who wants to become a priest in Siam can do so in a moment's notice. The result is that when a man gets into financial difficulties he enters the priesthood, and in this way his debts are forgiven him. After they have remained here for some time they come out and start into business anew. When a man has done anything wicked he goes into the priesthood for a certain number of years to cleanse himself, and this becoming a Buddhist priest is one of the simplest methods of Siamese divorce. The man who enters the church has the right to dismiss his wife, and when he comes out again at the end of a few months or a year he can marry her again or not, as he chooses.

THE HOME OF BUDDHISM.

Siam is the home of Buddhism, and while I was in Bangkok I saw the purest of the Simon pure article. There are 25,000 Buddhist priests in the Siamese capital, and these are of all ages from sixteen to eighty. They go about with shaved heads and yellow strips of cloth wound about their half-naked bodies, and they chew the betel and smoke cigarettes as they go begging from house to house. The city is divided up among these beggars. Each priest has his beat and at every door he gets an offering of rice or of something else of this kind. I visited the Buddhist temples while I was in Bangkok. They are costly beyond description. There is one right near the king's palace which has \$100,000 worth of gold leaf on one of its spires, and in another temple there is an idol made of jewels and pure gold. It is about a foot high and eight inches wide. When it was being made, while the metal was yet in the crucible, crystals, topazes, sapphires, rubies and diamonds were stirred into it, and before this idol the king comes every morning and worships. I could fill this paper with descriptions of the wonderful temples of Siam, and in one Buddhist temple I found the floor covered with a matting of woven silver wire. It was dirty from the bare feet of the priests, and as I went out I noticed that the door was ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl. In another temple I found an image of Buddha asleep. This image was 150 feet long and the soles of its feet by actual measurement were eighteen feet from toe to heel. A two-story cottage is often not more than eighteen feet high; if this Buddha lay outside of such a one on his back his big toe would be on a parallel with the lightning rod. Of late years a number of infidels have sprung up in Siam, and it may be that our new legation will not hold fast to their faith. Their religion, as it is taught at Bangkok, is full of errors, and I was told there that the people believed the earth to be flat and that their explanation of the lightning flash was that it came from the hatchet of a giant of the clouds, who, angry at his wives, was throwing hatchets at them through the air.

A PROGRESSIVE RULER.

The sending of a legation to Washington is another evidence of the pro-