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HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM AND OF THE REVOLUTIONS THAT HAVE CAUSED THE OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE, UP TO A. D. 1770.

Compiled by M. TURPIN from manuscripts
received from M. the Bishop of TABRACA
Vicar Apostolic of Siam and from other
Missionaries in the Kingdom.

PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY AT PARIS A. D. 1771.

Translated from the original French by
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EXHIBITIONER KING'S COLLEGE (CAMB).

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Turpin's History of Siam, published at Paris in the year 1771 consists of two volumes, the first of which deals merely with the natural History of Siam.—

The present book is a translation of the second volume only, and is of considerable interest owing to the fact that it is the only extant European work dealing with the events leading up to and succeeding the fall of the old capital, Ayuthia.—

We have no accounts of the compiler M. Turpin himself and therefore are unable to give any account of his life or position.—

The present volume falls into the following parts:—

a. A short resumé of the early history of Siam. Few names are given, and the accounts are somewhat vague. *Chapter 1.*

b. An account of the reign of Phra Narai and his immediate successors *Chapter 2-6.* This portion has been compiled from the earlier accounts of Forbin and La Loubère; but Tachard's remarks are not treated as serious history.

c. A short chapter (*Chapter 7*) giving a somewhat vague account of the period intervening between the above and the next.—

d. The events leading up to the fall of Ayuthia.

A description of the Burmese attack on the capital and of the early years of the reign of Phya Tak (*Chapter 8-11.*) This forms the part of greatest interest.

e. A description of the Kingdoms bordering on Siam (*Chapter 12-13.*)

Taken on the whole, the book gives a very fair and impartial account, but as the bulk of the information was derived from the Catholic Missionaries, a somewhat biassed view is taken of the religion of the countries treated of.—

The original has been carefully followed in the translation; here and there a few sentences have been omitted for the reason that such sentences are merely remarks of a moralizing nature on the part of M. Turpin himself, and have no connection whatever with the relation of the historical events.—

B. O. CARTWRIGHT.

BANGKOK: *November, 1908.*

HISTORY OF SIAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST KINGS OF SIAM.

Eastern despotism, which casts a blight on the soul and quenches public spirit, is the primary cause

of all revolutions by which the people seek to ameliorate their condition by the overthrow of their tyrants.

Every State in which there is One against All, has a defective constitution, which causes it to pass in succession from greatness to humiliation, from strength to weakness, and which, in its suicidal policy, awaits but a foreign invasion which will restore to the People, the enjoyment of their Rights.

The unstable and tottering thrones of Asia at last crumble away, and the ambitious, arrogating to themselves the privileges of attempting all things, are overwhelmed by their fall, and, reduce the weak to violate everything in their despair.

The right of the strong is that of a footpad who plunders unarmed travellers, and who, having enjoyed a period of immunity, dies under the axe of the headsman. The Ruler who has the greater share in the benefits of the Law does not recognise his advantages, and when unwilling to extend them prefers to see himself surrounded by trembling slaves who murmur in secret, and only await a leader to become rebels. The crude legislation of Siam has been the cause of all the public ills of the nation. It knows neither the extent of authority nor the limits of obedience. This nation, indifferent regarding the choice of its masters, has received fetters from the hands of ambitious men who spurned the nation while coercing it. Invariably unfortunate, the people have no hope save in a future revolution, which will enslave them to a new tyrant insolently bedecked with the imposing title of "Deliverer".

What can be the motive that prompts a despot to retain the privilege of laying violent hands on the liberty and welfare of his subjects? A despot who replaces natural rights by arbitrary power! He passes away like a torrent which leaves but the remembrance of its devastation behind it. The Kings of Siam, invisible to their subjects made themselves known merely by acts of authority. Thus they could never instil those tender feelings which are inspired by the presence of a King who is both Father and Citizen.

I will not attempt to lift the veil which conceals the beginnings of this Kingdom. This people has never known the art of printing which alone enshrines the virtues and shortcomings of those who preside over the public destinies. Their historical records are founded only on vulgar fables, or on tradition sanctioned by priestly imposture, which gives credence rather to the marvellous than to the simple truth. The Siamese were unknown to us until the discovery of the Indies by the Portuguese, and it is from that period that we ought to reckon their history.

Their first King, according to their vague records began to reign in B.C. 1444. He had forty successors up to the King who was reigning in A.D. 1546. All these Kings were of different families, who were in turn driven from the throne which they had seized, because, having become despots, they were punished for the abuse of their power.

The proud and jealous spirits of a limited dependency ought, in the degradation to which they have been reduced, to console themselves with the hope that their degradation is but transitory, and that their posterity shall be delivered from the chains which have weighed them down. Rarely does tyranny transmit the fruits of its crimes to its descendants.

History has not given us the name of the King who reigned in 1550 A.D., although the chief events of his reign have been chronicled. It was in this reign that the Kingdom of Siam was laid waste by the incursions of several neighbouring nations who carried fire and sword throughout the towns and the country side. Thirty thousand innocent victims were sacrificed to their ruthless vengeance, and this swarm of warriors seemed to prefer to lay waste the crops and to destroy the towns rather than to conquer and govern them.

The King of Siam, alarmed at their progress, arose at the murmurings of his people. He raised a large army. All those capable of bearing arms were summoned to the flag and those who were so cowardly as to excuse themselves from fighting for their country, were threatened with the punishment of being burnt alive. Foreigners were bound by this law.

At that time there were 130 Portuguese in the Kingdom, of whom 120 were obliged to take up arms. The King believed himself to be invincible, when he saw this handful of Europeans whom he regarded as so many heroes at his disposal.

A powerful army of 400,000 men including 70,000 non Siamese took the field with the King at the head. The army was further reinforced on the way by 100,000 men and 4000 elephants. We must regard these numbers as a gross exaggeration. It is true that the temperate nature of Eastern races renders the question of the food-supply an easy matter for the largest armies; but how could so great an army have been collected together in a country which boasts but few inhabitants. However we will set forth the facts as they have been handed down to us, and we can only question them by the light of their probability.

The army, under the command of four leaders (of whom two were Turks and the other two Portuguese) advanced to put a stop to the devastation of the country side. As soon as the armies confronted each other, the enemy commenced a furious attack on the Siamese rear, which would have been destroyed, had not the King altered his tactics. The new disposition of his forces gave him the advantage, and helped by the Portuguese who fought side by side, he was enabled to rally his troops. A general action was then commenced in which his elephants and artillery scattered death and destruction in the opposing ranks of the enemy, who retired under the cover of darkness leaving 130,000 dead on the battle field. This battle cost the Siamese 50,000 men, and flushed with victory, a force of 400,000 Siamese invaded the Kingdom of *Quibem* which was governed by a Queen who had favoured the enemy. The towns which they conquered were looted and the inhabitants, always the victims of the quarrels of rulers, were put to the sword. The capital would have suffered the same fate, had not the Queen, putting aside her natural hauteur, submitted to the conqueror and to the conditions of peace which were imposed. This princess, cognizant of her weakness, consented to pay an annual tribute of 60,000 Portuguese ducats, and her nine year old son paid homage as a vassal to the conqueror who carried him off to Siam to grace his triumph.

The victorious monarch did not enjoy his glory for long; his days of prosperity were changed to days of mourning. The Queen, in his absence, had indulged in a criminal liaison with palpable results. The fear of being punished for her adultery led her to commit another crime, and, to secure her position, she administered poison to her husband in a cup of milk. The King remained alive for five days, during which time he engaged in affairs of State.

Benefits were conferred upon the Portuguese allies; their nation was declared exempt from taxation of every description for a period of three years, and their priests were permitted to preach the gospel in every part of the Kingdom. His son was proclaimed King, and the joy of seeing his successor in power rendered him indifferent to the pangs of death. As soon as the monarch was dead the chief officers of State handed over the reins of government to the Queen of whose misdeeds they were unaware. Her liaisons which could no longer be kept secret, revealed her unchastity, but hardened to crime and with a conscience untouched by remorse, she acted her part with perfect calmness, and, to make matters worse, she openly lived with her guilty paramour. After this act which was the cause of a certain amount of dissatisfaction, but did not create any actual rebellion, she determined to elevate her lover to the throne, and to dispose of the young King by the same method employed in the case of his father. The disaffection both of the nobility and of the common people, checked her in her career of crime, and the national outcry was favourable to her designs. She pretended to fear that attempts would be made against her son's life, whereas in reality she was his sole enemy; and, to frustrate such attempts, she desired to have a body-guard to protect his august head from the wicked plots of which she said she had had information.

She was granted 12,000 foot soldiers and 500 mounted men for his safe keeping.

It was an innovation, that there should be a permanent guard in a State which hitherto, had called up soldiers only in time of external danger, but, it is the means usually employed in all ages to intimidate the lives and liberties of citizens who support their oppressors. No sooner had she found herself in power, but she used it to wreak vengeance on all those who had opposed her, or, who had grumbled at her ill-regulated life. The most distinguished citizens were the first victims. Two of the leading nobles perished by torture on frivolous charges. This Princess, headstrong in her loves and hatreds, imagined that she could retain her position by force, but the shedding of so much blood was a seed from which new opposition to her tyrannical rule sprang up. The confiscation of the property of those innocent victims enabled her to maintain a certain number of partisans, but those whose friendship it was expedient to purchase gave their allegiance only on condition of being supplied with whatever appealed to their greed. She soon found out that instead of friends, she had but traitors pledged to serve their own interests. It was then that she placed her paramour on the throne and declared him to be her consort, considering that a man, rather than a woman who had given so many examples of the frailty of her sex, would be more capable of overawing the disaffected.

The young King, a mere puppet on the throne, was deposed by his hard-hearted mother, and the fatal draught which she personally administered to him anticipated the vengeance which was about to overtake her; but she did not enjoy the fruits of her crime for long. At the moment of self congratulation on having acquired an ascendancy over her subjects, she found by experience that crime engenders nothing but enmity.

The nobles, emboldened by their hatred, and encouraged by the King of *Cambaye*, made a conspiracy to deliver the kingdom from a creature who could not even satiate herself with the blood of her victims. They invited her and her consort to a feast at which both were slain. The throne which they had disgraced was taken by a brother of the late king's father, who, during these tumultuous times had passed his life in the seclusion of a monastery. This new king, during his retirement, had become

morose and savage and he neglected the importance of making himself beloved. His barbarous policy had made him believe that obedience depended on fear, and that punishment was a better instrument of government than clemency. The debauchery into which he plunged could not soften his natural harshness, and, from voluptuous surroundings, he dictated bloodthirsty commands which filled the state with trouble and discontent. His unfitness aroused the ambition of a powerful neighbour. The king of Burma saw that the conquest of the kingdom would be no difficult matter. This nation has had so great an influence on the fortunes of Siam that it cannot be passed over without a few remarks.

People are apt to confuse the kingdoms of Pegu, Ava and of Burma because they are now under the rule of the same king. This country united and open has mountains on its frontiers only. The air is pure and the soil produces all kinds of corn and fruits. The plains and forests abound with game, elephants, buffaloes, goats, deer, and poultry is fine and plentiful. There are mines of iron and lead, which metals are used as a medium of barter, and it is this country that produces the finest rubies and the best sapphires. The diamonds which are very small are found only in the crops of fowls and especially of pheasants. The right of selling diamonds is a monopoly of a single family, and it is a grave offence to dig the ground in hopes of finding them.

The natives of the country differ from the Burmese their conquerors both in dress and in appearance. The Peguans although somewhat stout, are well made and have regular features. Their complexion is of an olive tint. They wear no beard, but carefully pull it out as they consider it to be troublesome growth. Their teeth are naturally white, but they blacken them so that they may have no resemblance to those of a dog. The women who are lighter in colour than the men, are small with plump cheeks and well proportioned limbs. Generally speaking, they are gentle in their way, but very voluptuous. Lewd and licentious, they have quite abandoned all sense of shame. When they appear in public they wear a piece of white cotton stuff draped round their heads which bear no further ornamentation than their raven tresses. The rest of the body is practically naked, they wear but a piece of thin cloth at the waist which allows that to be seen which modesty prefers to hide. This scanty attire was not introduced by reasons of sensuality; it is said that it was the work of a sagacious Queen in order to attract the men who in their transports of passion were addicted to unnatural desires.

The dress of the Burmese is different. They wear a robe of transparent muslin through which the skin tattooed with charcoal dust, can be seen. This ornamentation which is peculiar to them distinguishes them from the Peguans. Their feasts are loathsome and disgusting, as soon as the viands are produced hunger is satisfied. They flavour everything they eat with rotten fish which they use as a substitute for oil or butter just as Europeans use garlic, a plant whose odour is no less unpleasant.

Having no corn, they supply its lack by cakes of rice. Their usual beverage is pure water or a liquid of agreeable flavour which they extract from a certain species of tree.

Whoever takes a wife is obliged to purchase her like other cattle, and if disgust follows possession, the husband has a means of disposing of her. The woman has the same privilege, by the repayment of her purchase price. The rights of hospitality allow fathers to prostitute their daughters to their guests, who take a woman on hire in the same way as they would a house. The majority of persons whose business takes them to Pegu contract temporary alliances of this nature which have nothing of the stigma of concubinage. The Law has provided for such inconveniences as might arise. The King is the heir of all his subjects, but when there are children he has a third share only.

The purity of the air makes up for the lack of medical skill. When anyone falls sick they set a table on which a choice repast is spread, to propitiate the demon, that they consider has been the author of the illnesses that afflict mankind.

The ceremony is conducted by some venerable impostor to whom they give the title of the father of the demon, and although the state of the invalid ought to induce a feeling of sympathy, the whole house resounds with music and song in order to assuage the wrath of the evil minded being.

Gold, silver, rubies and musk are the chief articles of export, and, under the general term "rubies" topazes, sapphires, amethysts and other precious stones should be included. Europeans give in exchange beaver-hats, and the gold and silver brocaded ribbons with which the nobles adorn their heads. All trade is carried on by court officials who hold themselves responsible for payment and if they are convicted of breach of trust, the creditor is allowed by law to seize their wives, children and slaves and to expose them to the glare of the sun at his door.

The Peguans, like all Indian peoples grant the existence of a creator god, whom the people have the exclusive privilege of worshipping. There are lesser deities to whom the people pray in time of need, and the Devil is one of their chief objects of adoration. At early dawn the people are to be seen carrying some rice for his delectation in order that he may be gracious to them during the day time: others throw titbits over their shoulders for him during meal times. This puerile religion is based upon ghost

worship. They grant an eternal succession of worlds each of which has a special deity as its ruler. The doctrine of transmigration has many adherents who believe that souls having passed through the bodies of birds, beasts and fishes, are cast into a place of punishment which they leave to enter a paradise of pleasure where everything awakes and appeals to the senses, and finally that after several transmigrations they will be united with the Supreme Being of whose happiness they will be partakers. They have great respect for monkeys and envy the blessed fate of those who are eaten by crocodiles.

On ceremonial occasions, the assembled people hire women and hermaphrodites who perform dances in honour of the gods of the Earth. The dancers bestir themselves so violently that they fall down in a swoon. It is after this fit that they prophesy the future which has been revealed to them by their gods.

The Priests vowed to celibacy, set a good example of abstemiousness to the populace. They eat but once a day and sobriety is their most prominent virtue. When the soil of the district to which they are assigned is insufficient to furnish to their needs, they send out young novices in search of alms and the credulous mob encourages idleness by liberal donations. The poorest citizens are always those who waste their property in pious offerings. Their morals are simple and it is by their studied mortifications that they impose on the populace whose ideal of the Sublime is the Extraordinary and the Peculiar.

They live far from the haunts of men, in the depths of forests in a sort of cage built in the upper parts of trees, so as to escape the dangers of wild beasts. The obscurity of their lives increases the veneration of superstitious folk who from the earliest times have believed that the deity prefers the silence of the forests or the fearsome solitude of a mountain peak. There are certain days on which they exhort the people to practise virtue. Simple as their preaching is they never argue on knotty points of doctrine. They believe that every religion is acceptable to God and that the observance of the laws of nature will always be worthy of a heavenly reward.

The nobility is noticeable in many ways. Though being in great honour, it nevertheless presents an example of the most abject servility and trembles before a despot who can either raise or degrade it. It consents to cringe in the most servile manner, but often it awakes from its slumber and cuts off the hand that strikes it. A proud race is always ready to take up arms for liberty and for the enjoyment of its rights. Thus it is the noble or the servile inclinations of his subjects, that a wise King ought to study so that he can extend or limit his authority.

The King never appears in public without great pomp and ceremony. Everything inspires a respect which would seem to exclude devotion. Seated on a car drawn by 16 horses, he never travels unless preceded by either the army or a crowd of nobles. Four of his favourites in gorgeous apparel are seated with him in this car. His ordinary progress is more magnificent than a Roman triumph. Although the Law, or rather custom only grants him a single wife, he has the right to keep 300 concubines.

The arms used by the Peguans in warfare consist of the lance, sword, and shield, their firearms, finer than those of Europe yield nothing to them in point of excellence. Their arsenals are equipped with many pieces of artillery which are however of not much practical use owing to the lack of skill on the part of their gunners. Although they possess harbours and an abundance of good timber, they do not build fleets as they have neither carpenters nor experienced sailors. The forces of the Kingdom are strong. The armies more numerous than those of Darius, are usually composed of from 100,000 to 1,500,000 men who receive pay from the King.

In time of war he supplies them with arms and accoutrements and in time of peace, he gave grants lands and towns to the nobility for their support. This number of troops is without doubt an exaggeration, but it becomes more easy of comprehension if the natural frugality of the Peguans be taken into account. They require but a little salt and water to season the roots and herbs which they find on the march. The most loathsome creatures, cats, rats and the humblest reptiles excite their appetite and their fertile country furnishes them with an abundant supply of all that is necessary to life.

This kingdom, founded by a fisherman about 1,100 years ago was governed by hereditary Kings until 1539 A.D. About that period it was conquered by the Burmese who prior to this had been confined to a narrow strip of territory but they founded an Empire extending some 800 miles from North to South and 250 miles from East to West.

These people, though of a warlike disposition had been obliged to yield to the numerical superiority of the Peguans. The Peguan conquerors had exacted a toll of 30,000 Burmese to be employed on various works of public utility. Such toilsome slavery provoked their proud spirit, and unwilling to see themselves working in the mines, formed a general scheme for their deliverance.

The Monarch was accustomed to go in company with all his train to visit the works, and to reward industry and to punish idleness. The Burmese captives took this opportunity to compass his assassination, and, having robbed the Queen and the concubines of their valuables fled to their own

land with a great booty. The successor of the murdered Prince was unable to avenge his death. The nobles fomented discords in the state from motives of self-aggrandizement, and passed directly from slavery to independence. They declared for the rivals of their master by whom they had been reduced to servitude.

Mandara, King of Burma took advantage of their internal dissensions to attempt the conquest of Pegu. He invaded the Kingdom at the head of an army of 1,000,000 men and 5,000 elephants. His fleet was commanded by *Cayero*, a daring Portuguese adventurer who had 1,000 of his compatriots under him. The Peguans were unable to oppose a barrier to the swarms of the invaders.

Mandara, conqueror of Pegu then turned his arms against the vassal states of the Empire which he had just conquered. Martaban, the capital of a Kingdom of the same name was taken, but the brilliancy of the action was tarnished by acts of cruelty. Mandara had promised to spare the lives of the King and his wife and children who were ordered to spend the rest of their days in exile; but the savage conqueror was faithless to his word. The captured Queen was conducted to his pavilion together with her two sons and forty young girls who charmed all by their beauty and still more so by their misfortunes. Priests recited prayers to appease the wrath of heaven. The King her husband at last appeared, mounted on an elephant and dressed in black velvet. He had a rope round his neck and seemed to be more concerned at the misfortunes of his family than with his own.

The next day the Queen and her children with the ladies of the court were led to a mound in the midst of the soldiery who forgetting their natural savagery, appeared to be moved by pity.

The Princess and her children were suspended by the feet to gallows destined for criminals of the deepest dye. The unfortunate King was allowed to survive his family for a few days to brood over the sadness of their fate. He was afterwards hung in a similar fashion and a stone being tied round his neck he was cast into the sea together with fifty of his chief officials who had committed no crime further than their devotion to King and country. This gross act of barbarity aroused the indignation of all the Burmans, and a revolt was imminent had it not been crushed by the diplomacy of the conqueror who held out the prospect of unlimited plunder. The capital was given over to pillage, a hundred million gold pieces were taken from the public treasury and distributed to the army. Everything that did not excite the greed of the conquerors was given over to the flames. Seventeen hundred temples and 140,000 houses were destroyed 60,000 of the inhabitants perished by fire and sword. The survivors of their country's downfall were condemned to drag out the rest of their days in slavery. The neighbouring Kings, jealous of Mandara's rapid success leagued themselves together to check his victorious progress. In great alarm he strengthened his out-posts and put himself at the head of 900,000 men. The rapidity of his movements anticipated the designs of his foes to whom he gave no time to collect their scattered forces. He laid siege to Prome the capital of a Kingdom of the same name which at that time was governed by a Queen acting as regent for her son aged 13 years. A stubborn defence was offered and the Princess's spirit so animated the courage of the troops, that the efforts of the besieging force would have been rendered futile, had it not been for traitors who opened the gates. As soon as the Burmans had proved victorious, the King ordered that the bodies of 2,000 children who had been killed in the general carnage should be dismembered and given to the elephants. The Queen, in a state of nudity, was given over to lust of the brutal soldiery, after which, executioners armed with whips, tore her in pieces. When, amid fearful tortures, she had breathed her last they tied her corpse to that of the King her son and cast them into the water. It is said that Mandara indulged in this cruel excess, because of his hatred towards, her father the King of Ava, who had refused her in marriage. Three hundred of the chief officials of the State were impaled and their corpses had no burial other than in the water.

The King of Ava, learning of the tragic end of his daughter, raised a large army, the command of which he entrusted to his son, who had no thoughts but those of vengeance for the death of his beloved sister. Mandara sent a force of 200,000 men to oppose his progress under the command of his foster-brother, a leader of proved courage and ability. The Burmans made a furious onslaught on the rear guard of the foe. The battle was hard fought, but the victory was gained by the Burmans who lost 115,000 men, although the army of the Prince of Ava numbered about 30,000 men of whom at least 800 deserted to the conqueror.

Mandara, who knew both how to conquer and how to turn his victories to account, sought enemies everywhere in order to increase the number of his vassals. No sooner was he informed of the troubled condition of Siam than he made preparations to annex so rich a prey, but before making a start, he wished to consult with his subjects, not so much as for taking their advice as for assuring himself of their support. The scheme, which, if successful would open a way to China, met with universal approbation. Martaban was the rallying point of his army which consisted of 800,000 infantry 40,000 cavalry, 5,000 elephants, and 1,000 pieces of artillery drawn by buffaloes and rhinoceros. The commissariat and the baggage was carried by oxen. This brave, but undisciplined array was far more

suitable for a marauding expedition than for one of conquest. A force of ten thousand Europeans skilled in military tactics could have easily dispersed this motley rabble, which had to deal with a people quite as undisciplined, and less brave than themselves.

The chief strength of the Burmans consisted in a force of 2,000 brave Portuguese commanded by one Diego Suarèz, who, by favour of the King, had been raised to one of the chief dignitaries of the State. We must remark that in this century the Portuguese scattered over the Indies sold their lives to the service of any King who would pay them well enough. These adventurous heroes decided the issue of wars by their bravery, and the Monarch who had the greatest number in his pay, marched confidently to victory.

The first blow fell on the fortified post of *Taparan* whose garrison of 6,000 Siamese were put to the sword. This slaughter was insufficient to satisfy the fury of the pitiless conqueror who was so cruel as to sacrifice women and children to the memory of the soldiers killed in the operations.

After this carnage, he determined to make himself master of the capital, and without halting at unimportant places, which might have weakened his army, he advanced directly on the royal city, headed by a force of 60,000 pioneers who levelled the difficult tracks through a country covered with forests.

The Siamese, having no sound knowledge of the methods of attack and defence, remained apathetic whilst a numerous army surrounded their ramparts. Terrified, and unskilled in combat, they put their whole trust in their lofty walls which they regarded as being impregnable to attack. At last they were roused from their lethargy by the sounds of an onset. The love of life, rather than that of liberty aroused their courage and they offered a stubborn resistance to the foe who were repulsed with great loss. The besieging force adopted new tactics, which though deadly were not successful. Suarèz, seeing the repulse of the soldiers and that the elephants were terrified by the fire, thought it best to beat a retreat. But the King inflexible in his resolution to capture the city, ordered a fresh assault in the course of which he displayed the greatest bravery, but was wounded by an arrow which confined him to his bed for the space of a week. His wound relaxed the vigour of the siege operations. During the time of inaction he caused wooden towers 65 feet high, mounted on 25 iron wheels and filled with combustible materials to be built. These engines, which demonstrated his skill in mechanics were intended for use against the ramparts. A dark and stormy night was chosen for the attempt and the glare of the lightning and the rumble of the thunder added to the terror they were to inspire. It was in the midst of this blinding storm that the towers were run up to the walls.

The Siamese putting aside their wonted timidity, sustained the attack with great bravery. They set fire to the engines which became fatal to their owners. So stout a resistance only served to increase the courage of the Burmans, but while the King was consulting with Suarèz on the best course that should be adopted, news was brought that the Peguans had risen in revolt to gain the rights of their ancient independence. He raised the siege and instead of attempting the conquest of new territory, he considered it more prudent to take measures for the protection of His own Kingdom.

Having put down the rebellion, he made fresh preparations against Siam, but was assassinated by a gang of conspirators who could not conceal the fact that they had had everything to fear from his vengeance.

Chaumagrin, the foster brother of the murdered King, and to whose instrumentality the late victories were due, succeeded to the throne. He adopted the warlike policy of his predecessor without delay. This Burman would have held a high position amongst heroes if he had had chroniclers to immortalize his deeds which, as it is, have only come down to us by vague tradition. It is said that his mighty army of 1,600,000 men overwhelmed the neighbouring Kingdoms that he extended his conquests to China and Tartary and that he was sovereign ruler of 24 Kingdoms.

The possession of a white elephant of which the King of Siam was very fond was the pretext for a sanguinary war between the rival monarchs. The King of Burma offered large sums of money for the animal which was considered to be remarkably intelligent; but, on being refused, resolved to capture it by force. In reality the sight of two nations in mortal combat for the possession of an elephant is no more to be marvelled at, than the spectacle of European rulers causing the slaughter of thousands of men for the possession of some useless fortress.

The Burmans invaded Siam with a large force, and laid siege to the capital where they expected to meet a long and stubborn resistance. In order to spare the lives of his soldiers, the leader bribed certain traitors who rendered him master of a town by purchase rather than by conquest. The King of Siam became the vassal of Burma. The Queen and her children were exiled to Pegu from which event the rulers of Pegu have taken the title of "Prince of the white elephant" since one of these creatures had been the occasion of a war leading to such glorious results.

After the death of the conqueror his son named *Prunginiko* succeeded to the throne. His first act was to demand the tribute which the King of Siam had agreed to pay. But the latter said, that he acknowledged no master. On this refusal, the Burmans sent a punitive expedition, under the command of a subordinate officer, to take vengeance on the faithlessness of his vassal.

The Siamese Monarch, terrified by this invasion, gave him to understand that if the King had come in person, there would have been no difficulty in rendering his dues, but that under the circumstance he was unable to comply without compromising his dignity in receiving orders from a subordinate. The haughty Burman replied that his vassal Kings as well as the meanest slaves were expected to obey his behests.

The Siamese army commanded by the son of the King, (who was known as the Black Prince to distinguish him from his brother) took the field and gained a brilliant victory, Prunginiko annoyed, rather than dispirited, raised an army of 1,700,000 men under the leadership of his eldest son, who self confident in numerical superiority assumed the title of King of Siam. The reports of his march caused general consternation, but the Black Prince, calm amid the stress, did not lose hope of dispersing them. His soldiers fired by his example, were eager for the fray. A battle was fought on which the fate of the Empire hung in the balance. With equal ferocity, the two leaders mounted on elephants sought each other out and careless of danger, engaged in single combat, appearing to fear death less than the shame of being vanquished by a hated rival. At last the Burmese Prince fell in the dust and died with every symptom of rage and despair. His soldiers, panic stricken, turned and fled and the Siamese harassed them in the rear for a month as they pursued them like wild beasts, and, slaughtered them without mercy. After a glorious reign, the Black Prince who succeeded his father left the Kingdom in a settled condition to his brother the White Prince who had no skill in the art of government. This new King, a prey to greed and suspicion, allowed himself to be ruled by one of the chief nobles at the Court who in order to render the King more odious, encouraged his vices and follies. This faithless favourite with a large retinue of slaves including 280 Japanese, plotted to gain possession of the throne. The King enfeebled by debauchery was in danger of death, but his son, the heir-apparent, was an obstacle to the ambitious ideas of the favourite. The King misled by the representations of his favourite pronounced sentence of death on his innocent son, but the successor to the throne avenged the crime by the death of the favourite to whom it was due. The blood of the guilty was the cause of new troubles. The slaves of the ambitious favourite and especially his Japanese retainers took upon themselves to avenge the death of their master. These bandits, nurtured on crime and rebellion, obliged the King to deliver over to them four of the chief nobles whom they massacred without pity. Their fury extended even to the King who was obliged to sign in his own blood the conditions which they had the audacity to impose. They furthermore demanded that the chief priests should be given up to them as hostages for the promises they had extorted.

This first attempt was followed by the sack of the town and after having despoiled the citizens, they took their departure unmolested with a great booty. The tyranny of the late King had prepared the way for all these outrages. Whoever calls in foreign defensive assistance is no more than an oppressor who has more trust in the mercenaries he pays, than in the subjects he plunders, but he has the sad experience that his paid defenders often turn out to be only traitors. All countries in whose armies foreigners have predominated have only had transitory periods of prosperity, for the reason that those who have brought about their success, have also been the cause of their downfall.

The neighbouring tribes wishing to profit by the troubles in the Kingdom, made an invasion. Their army came within three day's march of the capital, but peace had then been restored as the Japanese had taken their departure. The King of Siam collected his troops, and struck such terror into them that, they retreated precipitately without risking the issue of a battle.

This Prince, with the assistance of the Portuguese, recaptured several provinces which had previously been seized by the Kings of Ava and Pegu, and, full of gratitude towards his brave auxiliaries, he offered the Port of Martaban to the King of Portugal as a base for his fleet. The ambassadors who made this offer to the Viceroy of Goa returned loaded with gifts. They were accompanied by a Dominican friar to whom the negociation was entrusted. They were received with every mark of distinction and concluded a treaty the terms of which were extremely advantageous to the Portuguese. This first success was the cause of a new embassy in 1621 which assisted the progress of the Faith. Some Franciscans were demanded by the King to preach the Gospel in his realm. He built them a church at his own expense and wished to make them wealthy, to which latter proposal they turned a deaf ear. Their disinterested motives of which the country furnished so few examples, increased the admiration which their other virtues had evoked.

This Prince was a curious mixture of strength and weakness, of vice and of virtue. Brave to the point of foolhardiness, he was cruel and savage, and the cowardly and timorous side of his character sacrificed both innocent and guilty to his suspicions. An absolute despot, he was not over-scrupulous in

financial transactions. He was tyrannical, but not miserly. Having a strict eye for justice he cast robbers and dacoits to crocodiles and to tigers and even found a savage pleasure in attending such functions. Ingenious in his methods of reprisal, he imprisoned a vassal King, who had made a rebellion, in a cage and gave him no other food than the flesh which he caused him to tear from his own body. He took delight in the torture of his subjects; he himself cut off the legs of seven of the Court ladies as a punishment for walking too quickly; and performed the same operation on three others who had been too slow to obey his orders. Thus it was an equally heinous offence to walk either too fast or too slowly. His brutality was extended even to birds and animals. He caused the head of a horse to be struck off because the animal had been disobedient, and the same fate overtook a tiger which had spared the life of a criminal that it ought to have devoured.

This crowned monster of iniquity, died in his bed with all the complacency of a benevolent monarch. Perhaps the horror inspired by his crimes was modified by his brilliant talents and the other virtues he possessed. Faithful to his promises and lavish of rewards for services rendered, liberal and magnificent, he had many supporters who having become his accomplices guaranteed his immunity from revenge for his crimes.

He entrusted a large sum of money to a Portuguese to purchase certain articles from Malacca. This madman gambled away the money and then had the hardihood to return to Siam where he expected to meet with severe punishment. The King welcomed him graciously and said, "I think more highly of your confidence in my mercy than of all the rare articles that you ought to have brought me." Like all tyrants, this prince had a favourite who introduced five or six hundred Japanese, disguised as merchants, into the Kingdom as tools for his own aggrandisement. As soon as the King had closed his eyes; he made use of them to ensure possession of the crown. But the son of the late King rallied his forces and snatched the sceptre from the hand of the usurper. He was more fortunate in recovering it than in retaining it as he was shortly afterwards assassinated.

He left the throne to his younger brother who conceived a violent dislike to the Japanese as he considered them a dangerous gang, watching for an opportunity to take his life. Many of these Japanese were killed and the rest were compelled to leave the country. Peace having been restored, it was imperilled by the murder of the King's brother who had been suspected of aspirations to supreme power. A prince of the blood taking advantage of the feeling inspired by this crime, proclaimed himself King. This new usurper, under pretence of safeguarding the interests of the state maintained an armed force in time of peace, and this force was more vexatious to the citizens, than it was dangerous to foreign foes. However by keeping up a standing army he was able to dispose of the partisans of the legitimate heir to the throne. The Dutch to whom he gave trading facilities were his most zealous upholders.

It has been presumed that this usurper was the celebrated *Chao Pasa Thong* whom some maintain was of royal birth, but to whom others assign a lowly origin. For a long time he had held the office of Chacri or Chancellor during the tenure of which he deceived his master, oppressed the people, and made use of his ill gotten gains to consolidate his position. His wealth was lavished on his fellow conspirators. As soon as he was on the throne, he desired to marry the daughter of his predecessor, but the princess unwilling to bedeck herself with the spoils of his brothers who were the proper heirs to the throne, looked upon this criminal union with disgust. The tyrant enraged at their love for their sister ordered them to execution.

Having disposed of his rivals, he showed all the ferocity of his nature. The death of his daughter furnished an excuse for his harsh policy of removing all those who might have checked him in the path of crime. Having celebrated her funeral rites with the utmost pomp; he himself gathered up her ashes, and on seeing a morsel of flesh unconsumed by the fire, made up his mind that his daughter had been poisoned. Mad in his suspicions, he had all the women who had been in attendance on the poisoned Princess, put under guard, and tried to extort by torture an avowal from them of an imaginary crime. The whole court was a scene of punishments. Even so large a number of victims could not appear the cruelty of the tyrant. All the nobles of the Kingdom were summoned before him, and he caused trenches to be dug and filled with glowing charcoal so as to put them to the ordeal by fire. They began by scraping the soles of their feet with a sharp piece of iron and then made them pass over the burning matter. Those whose feet were injured by the fire were held to be guilty.

This tyrant, a cunning inventor of punishments, devised new methods. Some victims were crushed under the feet of elephants, others, buried up to the shoulders, begged for death which alone could terminate their sufferings. It was a heinous offence to give them the least assistance or to hasten their death. He employed fearsome tortures. The bodies of victims were squeezed so tightly by cloths that the cloth appeared to be part and parcel of the body of the sufferer. Some were pierced with needles of various shapes and then were cut in half, the upper portion being placed on a copperplate so as to stop the bleeding and to prolong the agony.

Three thousand persons were sacrificed to the barbarity of the tyrant, who under the pretext of avenging the death of his daughter, found a means of removing the enemies of his usurped power.

There still remained other important victims namely the two sons and the daughter of the late King. As he could only revile them for their misfortune and degradation, he brought a false charge against the eldest daughter whom he accused of having given an exhibition of unholy glee at the cremation of the Princess. She was condemned to the ordeal by fire together with all the ladies of her suite and the pain extorted from her the avowal of a crime of which she was innocent. The executioner at once received the order to cut off a piece of her flesh and to make her eat it. When she was offered this disgusting repast, she cried out. "Vile tyrant! you can rend my body, but remember that my spirit is not under your command. You will observe that the fixity of my purpose renders me superior to your tortures. Learn also that your crimes will not go unpunished and that my blood shall be a seed from which shall arise the avengers of my family and country."

At this, the tyrant highly enraged, ordered her to be cut in pieces and to be cast into the river. The brother of the Princess who at that time was twenty years of age met with the same fate. He had previously pretended to be insane but as soon as he was mounted on the scaffold, he made it known that it was the love of life that had caused him to act in a cowardly manner. The beauty of his countenance which his sad position rendered more touching, caused tears to come into the eyes of the most hardened. When he saw the executioner approaching, he cursed the author of his misfortune. "Although innocent," he said, "I am about to suffer the death of the guilty. The tyrant wishes that I should die, and I shall not demean myself to beg his clemency, a virtue of which he is quite ignorant. I prefer to arouse the feelings of the people and to encourage them to thoughts of vengeance." This usurper, who was notorious only for his cruelties, died after a reign of 30 years. He left a son whom the devotion of the people called to the throne, but he was supplanted by his uncle who based his claim to the throne on the custom which placed the crown on the head of the late King to the exclusion of his children.

The young Prince cleverly dissembled his resentment and waited for a favourable opportunity to show it. His uncle, a man of unbridled passions, wished to take his sister as a concubine. The opposition which her brother made to the match caused his uncle to resolve in his death, which he only escaped by flight. The Portuguese sympathised with him and in hopes of his protection offered him their help to reclaim his brother's heritage. This prince, supported by 1000 of these brave Europeans forced his way into the palace, of which he made himself master before any one suspected his designs. The usurper hoping to flee in disguise mixed with a crowd of slaves, but a Portuguese seeing him escape, seized him and stabbed him to the heart with a dagger. The Prince punished only those who had been concerned in the tyrant's misdemeanours and his liberal policy secured him many adherents.

CHAPTER II.

THE REIGN OF CHAO NARAI.

The death of the usurper opened the way to his nephew's possession of the throne. It was in this reign that the barriers which had divided Europe from the Kingdom of Siam were broken down. The welcome that Chao Narai extended to foreigners, drew them from all parts of the world in the hopes of gaining wealth which in reality did not exist or which at least had been much exaggerated by the reports of untrustworthy travellers. This Prince, endowed by nature with all the qualifications necessary for kingship would have been the creator of this nation, had not the intractable nature of his subjects been opposed to all the good he wished to do for them. They however invariably preferred the old customs to useful innovations. Abuses founded on prejudice and custom are rarely capable of being reformed. Chao, desirous of glory, and carried away by his energetic nature did not, like other Kings of the Indies, seclude himself in the gloom of a harem, there to grow weak in debauch and to forget his duties. His throne shaken by the turbulence of the nobles needed a firm hand to keep it secure. His first victories were those over his subjects, and all premonitory symptoms of internal dissensions were promptly repressed by the death of the rebels. Though naturally of a kindly disposition yet severe in his methods of government, he clearly understood that it was always necessary to be ready for all emergencies when dealing with a people who were ready to renounce their allegiance if not intimidated by fear. A chief priest, proud of his authority took upon himself the onus of reading him a lecture. He dared to tell the King that the whole nation was grumbling in secret at his great severity. The Prince listened to what he had to say without appearing to be annoyed by his indiscretion. Some days later in

order to make him see the folly of his remarks, the King sent a monkey (an animal which is intensely disliked by the Siamese) to the priest and told him to take great care of it and to let it play about without hindrance.

The Priest suffered great inconvenience from his guest who upset all the furniture, broke the crockery and bit all the servants. At last, exasperated by the animal's tricks he implored the King to relieve him of its presence. "Well" said the Prince, "Can you not put up with the petty annoyances of an animal for two days; and yet you wish that I should endure, for the rest of my life, the insults of a people one thousand times worse mannered than all the monkeys in the forests! Learn then, that even if I punish wickedness still more will I reward virtue and merit." Having crushed the rebellion, he put himself at the head of his army and his first expedition was crowned by a brilliant victory. The Peguans had invaded the outlying portion of the Kingdom and had committed great havoc. These people, so often the conquerors of Siam, found by bitter experience that they could not always be invincible, and after sustaining a disastrous defeat hurriedly retreated with their shattered forces to their own territories.

Whilst thus engaged in the repulse of foreign foes, storms were brewing in the heart of his Kingdom. This Prince too enlightened to give himself up to superstitious idolatry, soared above popular prejudice. The priests feared that they would fall in public estimation and that the people, following the example of so popular a ruler, would forsake the altars of their gods. They thought that they might prevent their loss of prestige by the murder of the King. The zeal for the interests of heaven urged them to the crime of attempting his life and misled by sanctimonious piety they chose for their fell deed, a feast day on which the King entered the temple, more as a censor, than a partaker in their vulgar rites. The success of this sacrilegious plot seemed assured, owing to the fact that the royal body-guard was not allowed to enter the temple precincts. A fortunate chance averted the danger. Two officials, sent to examine the preparations for the ceremony, perceived that the temple was filled with a mob of priests, all of whom were armed with swords and daggers concealed under their robes. These warlike preparations were considered suspicious. On hearing the news, the King surrounded the temple with soldiers who cut down the guilty priests without mercy. This just punishment was regarded as an act of sacrilege by the populace who are apt to confound the cause of God with the crimes of His ministers. The priests, to whose interest it was to decry him, proclaimed him to be a bloodstained Ruler who cared naught for God and man. Such was cause of the hatred that this King felt for the priests.

It was under these favourable circumstances that three French bishops came to Siam to plant the standard of their faith. Their enlightened character contrasted strongly with that of the idolatrous priests, sunk in the depths of ignorance and in the mire of debauchery.

In order to slight the priests, the King made as though to favour Christianity. The prelates established a Seminary on a piece of land given to them by the King. The aim of this institution was to educate the young, and to enable them to learn the languages of their neighbours all of whom had establishments in the capital known as 'camps,' that of the French being known as the camp of St. Joseph. The King built them a church at his own expense. This generosity seemed to indicate his leanings towards Christianity, but in reality he was indifferent to all religions and above all took delight in showing his contempt for the idolatrous priests whom he loved to humiliate. The Mahomedans shared his favours with the Christians and if he had been obliged to make choice of a religion, it is most probable that he would have declared for the Koran. A Prince surrounded by concubines would naturally vote for a religion which authorises his predilections. The logic of the Court furnished overwhelming arguments which silenced the voice of reason. The executive was entrusted to a foreigner, who, brought up in the bosom of Christianity, favoured its progress. This man was equally celebrated for his rise and fall; he has played too important a part on the world's stage for us to omit a sketch of him.

Constantine Faulcon, a Greek by nationality, was born in 1650 in the island of Cephalonia. Father Tachard assures us that his father was a noble Venetian who was the governor of the island, and that his mother was a daughter of one of the leading families. This Jesuit, whose works must be read with a great deal of distrust, created titles to do honour to those of his friends and protectors to whom good birth had been denied.

The name of Faulcon does not occur among those of the noble families of Venice, and Forbin, better informed and less of a flatterer, says that he was the son of an innkeeper in a small village known as La Custode in the island of Cephalonia, at which place Faulcon received an education commensurate with his abilities. Nature revenged herself on the caprice of Fortune and his high spirit was evident as he grew up, and his pride could not stand a locality where every thing recalled his lowly origin.

At the age of twelve he took ship for England and did not delay in making himself known for his commercial abilities. His lively imagination knew how to place everything in a favourable light. His ready speech and interesting conversation bore witness to his birth in that happy land which in former

times produced the teachers of the nations. He was sought after by the greatest people at Court, and his intelligence fertile, though uncultivated gave him ready access to the most refined courtiers and the wisest of the learned. Mr. White, a rich English merchant recognised his talents, and seeing the advantage that might accrue from his society, took him on a voyage to the Indies where his skill justified his preconceived ideas.

Having passed through his English service, he found himself possessed of sufficient means to be independent, and started trading for himself. His efforts were not crowned with success. Twice he embarked, and twice was his ship wrecked near the mouth of the Menam. These mishaps did not damp his commercial ardour. He embarked on a third venture, but was again wrecked on the coast of Malabar. He was barely able to save himself from the fury of the elements and managed to recover but 2000 crowns, as the sole relics of his fortune.

Overcome by exhaustion, he fell asleep on the lonely and unknown shore. His disordered imagination gave him a vision of a beautiful and majestic female who, casting tender glances at him, told him to return to Siam where he would meet with better fortune. This dream which he afterwards regarded as a sign from heaven led him to seek means to carry out the project. Thus, smarting from his recent misfortunes, it was from a idle dream, that this man whose talents have been so belauded, took his directions which indeed led him to power. Many unfortunate persons have been led to their doom by following such untrustworthy guides.

Next day, as he was walking along the shore regarding the devouring element that had swallowed up his fortune, he was met by a man in a most wretched plight. It was a Siamese ambassador, who, returning from Persia, had been shipwrecked on the same coast. This personage, having lost all his property thought that he had only been saved from the waves to die on the shore. He was agreeably surprised to meet a sympathetic fellow creature in a similar situation. The account of each other's mishaps cemented a friendship such as is rarely known between those on whom fortune is wont to smile. Faulcon, wealthy compared with his destitute friend, used his remaining wealth to purchase food, clothing and a boat in which they sailed to Siam together, Faulcon found a home in the seminary where he lived on the bounty of the archbishop of Beryta.

The ambassador touched by Faulcon's kindness sang his praises to the Barcalon who desired to see his benefactor. Faulcon captivated the minister by the brilliancy of his talents. The trust he inspired rendered him a necessity to the Barcalon who, a foe to hard work, preferred pleasure to business. He found the burden of the administration could well be borne by a subordinate whose well-directed operations redounded both to the credit of the Monarch and of himself. Faulcon was chosen to accompany an embassy to a neighbouring kingdom where he kept up appearances without causing unnecessary expense. The Mores insatiable in their avarice wasted the public money as they were in charge of the state's finances. Faulcon repressed their greed. This parsimony rendered him dear to the King, who, after the death of the chief minister appointed him as his successor, but the Greek was wise enough to refuse the position as he saw that, he a foreigner, would incur the hatred of the Nobles who invariably aspired to offices without endeavouring to render themselves worthy of their trust. But if he had no show of power, he had all the reality. He was careful to hide behind the machine of which he pulled the strings, and, minister without the title and decorations, he presided as an invisible yet guiding spirit over public affairs.

A Malay who had received the appointment of Barcalon endeavoured to undermine his influence, but the falsity of his charges having been proved, was punished by loss of his office. Nations have spoken differently concerning this singular personage. These who take his lowly origin into account assume him to have been the possessor of superior attainments by which he surmounted the obstacles which hinder the progress of ordinary people.

The French priests supported by his generosity and possibly misled by imposing externals have depicted him in the most glowing colours. Tachard, loud in his praise has represented him as having a nobility of character, a facile mind and polished manners, very rare qualities to be found in a sailor who had passed his life on shipboard in the company of wild, uncouth, seafaring men.

He has also supplied him with natural eloquence and persuasiveness, but the proofs which this Jesuit has brought forward are so open to doubt, that it is fairly apparent that Tachard himself was the author of all the elegant productions which he assigns to Faulcon. The other European nations jealous doubtless of his preference for the French or the Portuguese Catholics, have taken pleasure in vilifying his character. They have painted him with all the vices to which both ancient and modern Greeks are addicted. Perfidious and cringing, concealing the symptoms of frenzied ambition under the cloak of moderation, polite in manner and haughty in character, he did not trouble to disguise his vices in his dealings with a people accustomed to servile obedience. Implacable in revenge, he skilfully laid the onus of the punishment of his enemies upon the king. Everyone agrees that he was possessed of certain

virtues which never became obscured throughout his life. A sincere despiser of wealth, he made use of riches only for the purpose of personal aggrandisement. His incorruptible nature was never suspected of receiving bribes in the administration of justice. Eager for the honours from which his birth seemed to have excluded him, he was all the more anxious to secure them. Faithful to his master, the only reward of his service that he claimed, was the privilege of maritime commerce, which furnished him with the money necessary for his expenses. It seems that he was a true Catholic, since free to make choice of a religion, he deserted the Anglican faith which would have been less of a hindrance to his desires.

He was a man of medium stature, with bright penetrating eyes. Although having an intelligent expression, there were traces of gloom in his character, indicative of a conscience smitten by remorse.

Such was the condition of the court of Siam when the question of an alliance with France was considered. A new treaty, the motives of which could not be clearly understood, drew the attention of those interested in politics.

Those who were jealous of Falcon declared that he had invited the French, only for the purpose of furtherance of his schemes and to place him on the throne that was the summit of his ambition. It is quite possible that feeling himself exposed to the envy of the court, he might have wished to have raised some barrier against the designs of his foes and that in protecting the French, he was actuated by regard for his personal safety rather than by that of his master's prestige.

Whatever his ideas may have been on that point there is no doubt that he was fully alive to the advantages which would accrue to the kingdom from commerce. Otherwise the Dutch, the masters of the Malay Peninsula, would have been the arbiters of the fate of the Indies the kings of which needed an alliance to counterbalance the power of these formidable republicans. Their dangerous proximity was the lure the minister made use of to bring the king round to his ideas.

The Bishops, newly arrived in Siam gave such glowing accounts of Louis XIV that the Siamese monarch was greatly flattered by the prospect of obtaining so illustrious an ally. A pompous announcement of the list of presents sent was made, but fearing lest these gifts might be seized by the Dutch who at this time were at war with France, it had been decided to leave them at Bantam. This delay might have been fatal in a court ruled by avarice, and it was to be feared that over-zealous courtiers, jealous of the favour in which the prelates were held, took every opportunity of doing them harm by declaring that they were secretly plotting to possess themselves of these presents. The king anxious to receive these gifts was persuaded that he would receive them in due course; but hardly had the vessel set sail, than the Dutch caring naught for the King of Siam seized the presents as a prize of war. The Court of Siam broke out in threats at this audacious act; but the Dutch, too powerful to fear any act of reprisal, foresaw a rupture from which nothing was to be gained. So in order to depreciate the high ideal the Siamese had of Louis XIV., they craftily restored all the gifts of small worth, but retained those which were valuable so as to belittle the offering of the King of France.

The King of Siam, hearing of this act of bad faith was only the more eager to hasten the projected alliance, and, to ensure its consummation, he pretended to have decided leanings towards Christianity. The Buddhist temples were closed and those who disobeyed this order were severely punished. The King was pleased to hear the Bishops discourse on Christianity. His gifts helped to embellish the Seminary. He caused a gilt throne to be carried there, the magnificence of which seemed to indicate the respect for the doctrines there promulgated. On the cessation of hostilities between the Dutch and the French, ambassadors were chosen to bear a reply to the French monarch. The King built a church at his own expense. This edifice still remains and the memory of its founder made it to be respected by the persecutors of the followers of Christ. The people, free to select a religion, would have ranged themselves under the banner of the Gospel, if the chief minister had not secretly disobeyed the order of his master.

The first ambassadors had many obstacles to overcome. The Court, impatient at receiving no tidings, sent two other high officials accompanied by M. M. Vachet and Pascal two enlightened missionaries to be their guides in a land where the manners and customs would be unfamiliar.

It was at the beginning of January 1684 that they set sail on board an English vessel, together with six young Siamese who were to be instructed in European arts and sciences. They arrived in London after voyage of six months and thence took for ship Calais. It was then that M. Vachet resigned the position of chief of the embassy in order that the Siamese officials might enjoy the dignities of the post.

M. de Seignelay, before making the news public, wished to learn verbally the reason for the embassy. M. Vachet told him that the fame of Louis XIV, had penetrated to the extreme Orient and that the King of Siam hoping to form an alliance, offered him, if his efforts were successful, a position in a state where a French company might establish a trading station to extend commercial operations to China

and all parts of the Indies.

The minister, having previously been misled by false reports, appeared to doubt the truth of this recital. "Be careful," he said, "in speaking of this embassy we know very well that it has not been sent by the King of Siam and that Louis XIV. fears that his dignity would be compromised if he were to send an embassy to him." M. Vachet had no difficulty in surmounting this obstacle. Louis XIV., who was better informed on the matter, summoned him to his presence and entered into the details of the affair. He appointed a day for the audience of the ambassadors to whom the ministers lent their equipages and retainers.

They went to Versailles, where their presence aroused the interest of the whole Court. Their dress was rich and elegant, they wore white pointed head-dresses ornamented with a ring of gold three inches in width. The spectacle was interesting from its novelty.

They were conducted with great ceremony to the Royal Presence. On the appearance of His Majesty they prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground, having the hands above the head, in the same posture as they were wont to adopt towards their own King. M. Vachet acted as interpreter and the King replied "Tell these officials that We shall have great pleasure in doing what our brother the King of Siam desires."

Afterwards they dined with the King and the luxury of the table appointments, made a great impression on men naturally accustomed to frugality. They were conducted over the park where the fountains which were playing seemed to them to be an exhibition of magical power. Having satisfied their curiosity, they were invited to magnificent banquet. The King's brother was their host at a splendid entertainment at St. Cloud at which the choice vintages excited their appetites. The objects of art in the Prince's apartments attracted their attention and many Frenchmen were astonished to find such good taste and appreciation in strangers coming from so distant a country. The Prince of Condé, who inherited the inborn courtesy of the heirs of his house, invited them to Chantilly. The most distinguished persons vied with each other in the magnificence of their receptions and during a stay of more than two months in France, they appeared of more account than their master.

On their return to Siam, they rendered account of their negotiations and the King pleased with their success and the honours they had received, called M. Vachet to renew to him the assurance of his protection. He addressed him in these words which sounded strange from the mouth of an idolatrous prince.

"Father Vachet, do not pride yourself on the success of your voyage, it is not you that have effected such great things, it is the God of Heaven and Earth to whom all praise be due."

These negotiations were the fruit of Faulcon's intrigues and above all of the zeal of the missionaries for the glory of their religion and of their King.

The French merchants who foresaw new openings for commerce were also greatly interested in the scheme. Louis XIV. had resolved to send out Jesuit mathematicians to China, where their observations might perfect the knowledge of geography and navigation. He seized the occasion of the visit of the Siamese ambassadors to carry out his design. The Chevalier de Chaumont was appointed ambassador to Siam with the Abbé de Choisy as his co-adjutor with instructions to reside in the Indies until the King of Siam had been converted to Christianity and to work in conjunction with the missionaries to further the great work.

The Abbé who was a most agreeable personage, was bent more on pleasure, than on the giving of instruction but it is not by amenities of character that apostleship is successful.

The Chevalier de Chaumont cast anchor in the Gulf of Siam on September 27th 1687 after a voyage of six months duration. He was accompanied by M. M. Ceberet and La Loubere the chiefs of the deputation, five missionaries and fourteen Jesuits. Father Tachard who had no rank other than that of a mathematician was the life and soul of the party of which he alone imagined he pulled the strings. The stress he lays on the smallest details of the negotiations ought at once to make his position suspected. The French were received with every mark of distinction. The King of Siam, laying aside the hauteur of an Asiatic monarch became quite familiar. It was then that the ambassadors become apostles and begged the King to become a Christian.

Their efforts were redoubled on receiving the news that an ambassador had just arrived from Persia to convert the King to Islam. The Missionaries in their zeal and desire to gain so illustrious a convert, overstepped the limits of his favour. The Chevalier du Chaumont under instructions from them and from Faulcon (who though animated by the same zeal had yet other motives) never ceased pointing out to the King on every possible occasion, that it was the ardent wish of Louis XIV that he should embrace

Christianity.

Narai, wearied by his importunity, asked what had led the King of France to believe that he had wished to become a Christian.

The following was the King's reply from the memory of those who were present and who were desirous of his conversion. Faulcon himself acted as interpreter.

"I regret that the King of France sets me so difficult a choice. I should be rash to embrace a religion of which I know nothing. I wish for no other judge than this wise and virtuous prince. A sudden change might cause a revolution and I do not intend to forsake lightly a religion received and practised without interruption in my kingdom for the last 2229 years. Besides this I am greatly surprised at the eagerness with which this King upholds the cause of heaven, it seems that God himself takes no interest whatever in the matter, and that He has left the mode of worship which is due to Him to our own discretion. For could not this true God who has created heaven and earth and all the dwellers therein and has endued them with diverse characters, in granting souls and bodies to mankind, have inspired mankind with similar ideas on the religion they ought to follow, and have indicated to them the mode of worship most agreeable to Him and to have submitted all nations to a uniform law. As He has not done so we ought to conclude that He has not wished it to be so. This ordered unity of worship depends entirely upon a divine Providence that could have introduced it into the world just as easily as the diversity of sects that are established. It is then natural to believe that the True God takes as much pleasure in being worshipped in different ways as by being glorified by a vast number of creatures who praise Him after one fashion. Would the diversified beauty which we so admire in the physical, be less admirable in the ethical world or less worthy of the Divine Wisdom? Whatever may happen, since God is the absolute ruler and director of the world I resign myself and my kingdom entirely to His good providence and with all my heart I trust that His eternal wisdom will so order them according to His good pleasure."

These brilliant sophisms showed that the Prince had no great leanings towards Christianity. The Abbé de Choisy was quite capable of understanding their hollowness but, convinced that the logic of Kings is hard to refute, became tired of his apostleship owing to the small hope he held of success.

The French were none the less well received, and in virtue of a secret treaty, Mergui and Bangkok were banded over to the soldiery to whom the King extended a welcome. These towns were reckoned as two of the ramparts of the country the one on the Bay of Bengal and the other on the Gulf of Siam. Des Farges was appointed governor and commander in chief of the French soldiery.

These foreigners transferred to the Kingdom of Siam, were regarded as its defenders. Twenty-four of them were selected to act as a bodyguard to the prime minister, and the King himself never appeared in public without a French escort. One of these men was raised to the rank of colonel of the guards and others were placed in command of Siamese regiments in order to instruct them in military discipline. The soldier who fell ill was sent to Louvo where he received better attention than he would have in his own home. These privileges were extended to all Christians who enjoyed full rights of citizenship. The French Jesuits were allowed to preach the Gospel in all parts of the Kingdom. The King appointed many of them to Buddhist temples under the pretext of their having to learn Siamese, but in reality to observe their procedure as the priests were neither suited for, nor willing to act as spies. The minister laid the foundations of a college for the education of the younger member of the nobility under the name of College of Constantine. M. the Chevalier de Chaumont having brought the negotiations to a conclusion departed from Siam at the end of 1688. He was accompanied by three Siamese Ambassadors equally distinguished by birth and ability and who were in charge of some rich gifts for the King of France.

The object of this mission was to demand that engineers should be sent to instruct the Siamese in the art of fortification and in the methods of attack and defence of positions. They were also empowered to request a body of troops to perfect the Siamese in military evolutions.

The French officers and soldiers who remained in Siam abused the consideration they had enjoyed. Convinced of their superiority in power and knowledge, they were rash enough to presume upon it, and instead of laying themselves out to please, desired to be thought much of. With impudent mockery they condemned every thing that differed from their own customs. The people and nobles at first suffered the pride of their insolent guests in silence. The Bishops and clergy alone were not exposed to the popular dislike. Keeping within the seminary and devoting their time to labour, they were neither vain nor ambitious, they were known by the services they rendered to the public and above all to the unfortunate.

The Jesuits, animated without doubt by the same motives had other means to attain their end; and it was by the brilliancy of their accomplishments that they endeavoured to enjoy the public confidence.

Surgeons, physicians, astronomers and mathematicians, they beheld men of all stations in life coming to ask their advice and to follow their teaching.

But while making converts, they multiplied enemies. The more they displayed the superiority of their talents the more were they suspected of dangerous designs. It was incredible that such learned men should expose themselves to such fatigue and danger for the mere purpose of dressing wounds free of charge, and to teach how to calculate eclipses or the periodicity of comets. They were both admired and hated, and the Siamese were told that it was merely by this display of secular learning that they had succeeded in having a powerful following in Japan. In such manner they decried the zeal of these religious persons pure in their motives, but perhaps too ostentatious in their methods.

Many of the Siamese, attached to their own habits and customs were alarmed at seeing so many foreign priests and soldiers introduced into the Kingdom. They could not but perceive that this policy was a forecast of an approaching change in the laws and religion of the country. Faulcon, the author of these innovations, became the object of public execration. A zealous, but indiscreet Malay informed the King that the minister, the accomplice of the French, had conspired against him and the state. The Monarch having been forewarned of this tale would not deign to listen to the proofs he had to offer and instead of receiving the rewards that he thought would be his due, was condemned to be devoured by tigers.

The Prince of Johore, a vassal of the King of Siam, wrote to the King to induce him to expel these foreigners from his Kingdom; alleging that the French after having been received as allies would soon attempt to become masters. This prince with the connivance of the Dutch, offered his troops to help in the liberation of the Kingdom from these new oppressors. His advice was rejected in anger, and the envoys would have been beheaded had not Faulcon been wise enough to check an act of violence which might have led to disastrous results.

A few remarks should be made here on this embassy which was a brilliant, rather than a useful achievement.

The French clergy who had been the primary occasion of the embassy had only the interests of Christianity at stake, but the political party regarded it as an advancement of the prestige of the King of France, who, in his turn, surrounded by flatterers, was misled by their counsels.

Father Tachard, ready to grasp anything that would advance the interests of either his master or his sect, thought that the conquest of Siam was reserved for his own society. He was seconded by Pere de la Chaise, who removed all the opposition on the part of the ministers to this expensive and useless alliance.

The Chevalier de Chaumont and the Abbé de Choisy had had but a very superficial idea of the Siamese nation. They had been present at banquets and hunting parties and the Royal Treasures had been displayed to their view. They had been conducted round the temples where they had been told that the colossal images therein were of solid gold, whereas in reality they were only of plaster skilfully gilt. The ambassadors, dazzled by what they saw, deceived the Court of France in their turn.

Count Forbin, the head of the navy and a thorough Spartan, had observed all this parade in a philosophic spirit. This brave soldier who preferred the roar of cannon, to any more sensuous form of music, perceived that the French were being blinded by a bogus magnificence. The simple account he has given of this journey is a complete refutation of the meretricious lies of Tachard and Choisy.

His insight into the wretched state of the country was keen, and Faulcon, fearing lest he should discredit the reports that the ambassadors were about to carry to the French Court, asked the Chevalier de Chaumont that Forbin should be appointed Admiral of the fleet. The Count was obliged to obey the orders of the ambassador and was duly appointed Admiral and Commander-in-chief of the land and sea forces of the Kingdom of Siam. This grandiloquent title gave him opportunities of investigating the true state of the country the misery and weakness of which he soon discovered. Some days after he had an audience with the King whom he found surrounded by officials seated on wicker-work mats. A single lamp illuminated the hall and whoever wished to read, pulled out a yellow wax taper from his pocket, lit it, and then extinguished it with great economy when he had finished with it.

One day the mean and miserly Monarch asked the Count "Well Admiral, do you not find great pleasure in your appointment at Court?" Forbin was obliged to answer that he considered himself highly favoured to be in his service. This plain-spoken sailor ground his teeth as he uttered this polite lie.

The severity with which the slightest faults were punished made him squeamish. Those who did not speak sufficiently had their mouths slit from ear to ear and those who spoke too much had the mouths

sewed up. Petty offenders were burnt in the arm or lacerated in the thigh, Forbin was surprised to see that the highest officials were exposed to such shameful treatment, from which even the King's brothers themselves were not exempt. He feared for his personal safety, but was reassured by Faulcon who employed every artifice to retain him in the service. He was not over-satisfied with the allowance made for his pay and accomodation which was quite out of proportion to his grandiloquent title.

He was given thirty six slaves to wait on him, and two elephants. His house was small and poorly furnished. He was presented with twelve plates two large silver cups, four dozen table napkins and a daily allowance of two of yellow wax tapers.

Such were the emoluments of Count Forbin, Admiral and Commander-in-chief of the forces of the Kingdom of Siam. This mean equipage can give some idea of what an Asiatic monarch considered to be luxury.

It seems that Fortune, in retaining Count Forbin in the service of a nation incapable of profiting by his example, had foreseen that the chance would be given him of acting as the country's defender, as happened in the Macassar revolt which broke out two years later and of which the circumstances shall now be related.

CHAPTER III.

THE REVOLT OF THE MACASSARS.

A people to whom the Kingdom of Siam had given refuge in their misfortunes, were the cause of an event that shook it to its foundations. The King of Macassar, a district in the island of Celebes, had been dethroned by the Dutch. One of his sons, escaping from the vengeance of the conquerors, had sought asylum in Siam. The King of Siam, attracted by the rank of the unfortunate prince, granted him land on which houses were built for him and his followers who had accompanied his flight.

This locality which still retains its name of 'The field of the Macassars' was situated adjacent to that assigned to the Malays who were also a Mahommedan people.

The benefits showered on the fugitive Prince only made him ungrateful, and when he ought to have sacrificed everything for his benefactor, he made an attempt on his life, in order to place the King's younger brother on the throne. The conspiracy was discovered and the author of it deserved severe punishment, but Narai overlooked the offence and magnanimously pardoned him. Daen (this was the name of the treacherous Prince) emboldened by impunity, considered himself more powerful than the Prince to whom he was so much indebted.

Base characters regard clemency as a sign of weakness, not as a virtue. Humiliated by an unmerited pardon, he rendered himself still more unworthy by entering into a new conspiracy. As he needed fellow-conspirators for the execution of his evil designs, he corrupted by means of specious promises, the three Princes of Champa, who, like himself had sought refuge in Siam, after the death of their father to escape from the machinations of their brother, who having succeeded to the throne, would have in accordance with Mahommedan usage, laid violent hands on possible rivals.

These Princes conspired with the Prince of Macassar to open a road to the throne. Their plot was, at first, to place the crown on the head of the youngest of the King's brothers and to reign in the name of the crowned phantom. They were resolved to compass his destruction after having elevated him to the throne and to substitute one of themselves by vote. It seemed that the interests of their religion justified the conspiracy in their sight. They intended to offer to Christians and Mahomedans alike, the alternatives of death or the Koran.

One of these three Princes occupied a high position at Court. He was the youngest, and the others placed him at the head of the conspiracy. He was of an age at which ignorance of the risk he ran, might lead him into crime without his perceiving the fatal results. He followed the counsels of a bold Malay who had nothing to lose and who was ready for any desperate deed. It was necessary to enlist the sympathy of heaven for their cause so as to inspire their followers with that fanatical enthusiasm which regards the present life as a mere prelude to eternal felicity.

They received great assistance from the impostures of a Mahomedan priest who informed the Malay and Macassar encampments that a sign of evil omen had appeared in the sky and that their nation was

threatened by a grave disaster. For the space of three months he published these dreadful tales. Fanatical madness is contagious, and an imposter who misuses the name of the Deity can soon reckon on a numerous following.

With the exception of three hundred Malays, everyone eagerly drank in his words. When the plot was ripe, the three ringleaders sought means to win over these three hundred to their side, as the success of the plot largely depended on their co-operation. They decided that on the appointed day, they would summon them to their meeting and that they, seeing their compatriots armed for the common cause, would no longer hesitate to throw in their lot with them. It was resolved to break open the prisons and to liberate the captives to augment their forces. As their financial resources were limited, they signified their intention of looting the palace and the treasury in the hope of encouraging the bravery of their fellow-conspirators by the prospect of a rich booty.

On the appointed day, before striking the first blow, the two Princes wrote to their brother, who was holding office in Louvo, to advise him to put as great a distance as he could between himself and the Court. He received the letter at nightfall and the messenger disappeared without waiting for an answer. The hasty departure of the messenger aroused the prince's suspicions and guessing that the letter contained some important secret information, gave it unopened to Faulcon, who alarmed at the news of the rising, hurried off to inform the King. Three thousand men were sent to defend the palace. The guards stationed near Louvo prevented the outbreak of the revolt by their vigilance. Forbin was sent to Bangkok to attend to the defence of that important port.

The conspirators ignorant of the discovery of their plot, assembled to carry out their designs. When the three hundred Malays, whom the conspirators had been endeavouring to win over, had discovered the nature of the plot, they became highly indignant and protested that far from wishing to betray the King their benefactor, they were ready to shed their blood in his defence.

Their fidelity brought back many to a proper sense of their position. The Mahomedan priest trembled for his life and saw no better way out of his difficult position than by revealing the secrets of those whom he had deceived. The princes no longer doubted that they were discovered, especially when they learnt that the palace was defended by three thousand men and that armed guards were keeping watch on the ramparts.

They returned home without striking a blow. The King, although he could have punished them very severely, showed his clemency and pardoned them.

The Malay leader, who had been the arch-plotter deserted the camp of the Princes whom he had so seriously compromised. He divulged all the secrets and sources of the plot and avowed that he had only served with the Princes in order to be able to disclose the matter to the King.

Faulcon was sent to interview the rebels and to induce them to return to their allegiance. He pardoned all those who came and acknowledged their faults. The Malays who had rebelled simply because they had been prevailed upon by the others, gave testimony of their repentance and obedience in future. But the Macassars, who were unprincipled scoundrels, showed a ferocious courage that feared death less than the shame of submission. Their Prince was frequently ordered to appear before the King's tribunal, not to be judged, but merely to acknowledge his guilt and to reveal the names of his fellow-conspirators. He excused himself on various pretexts and alleged that although he was not guilty, yet he could not endure the shame of having to justify his actions. If he had anything to reproach himself with, it was the fact that he was unable to reveal the names of those who had entrusted him with their secrets, but that his dignity would have been compromised had he condescended to play the part of a spy and informer, and furthermore that far from wishing to betray the King to whom he owed so much, he was incapable of traducing the very least of his friends. The King who could not subdue his pride by kindness, found that he was obliged to resort to force. But the Macassars too hardy to blench at the approach of death, gave him to understand that the most formidable enemies are those who are prepared to die.

Hearing of their resistance, the King of Macassar sent slaves and money to the rebellious princes to ensure them a means of subsistence.

A Malay captain, one of the ringleaders of the revolt, thought that he could take advantage of the ship which had brought these gifts to Bangkok, to find a home in some other land. But the Chevalier de Forbin by means of a warrant he had received for his arrest, prevented his escape. He had asked for, and obtained a passport to leave the Kingdom, but on his arrival at the chain stretched as a barrier across the river, Forbin sent an order that he should land and give an account of the members of his suite.

The Captain, perceiving the threatened danger, replied that he would only submit to the governor's

order on condition of his being accompanied by all his suite bearing arms.

After some deliberation he was allowed to land with an escort of eight soldiers armed with daggers. These daggers are formidable weapons as they are usually poisoned. The possession of one of these daggers is a mark of honourable distinction among the Macassars, and the surrender of it to an enemy is considered to be the greatest disgrace, and whoever draws his weapon and does not succeed in killing his adversary is held to be dishonoured in the sight of the nation. The captain, apprehensive of danger, fearlessly disembarked from his ship and made it known to his companions that it was his determination to plunge his dagger into the breast of the first man that attempted to disarm him. On his arrival at the fort he was ordered to send for the rest of his suite who remained in the ship. He was obliged to yield as the hall was filled with soldiery. An officer commanded him in the King's name, to surrender his dagger, but instead of obeying, the Malay stabbed him to the heart. Two Siamese soldiers tried to seize him, but they met with the same fate as their officer, and a fourth man succumbed to his blows. Then in a frenzy of rage he and his companions rushed on the soldiers who were armed with pikes, and forced their way through in defiance of death. They sprang upon a bastion, but the musketry fire compelled them to leap into the fosse. Some, even were able to make a stand against the guards posted to stop their flight, but, sorely wounded, they received the fatal strokes they had desired to deal. When the captain lay dying in the dust, a French officer advanced to seize his dagger, but instead of grasping it by the handle, he only managed to get the scabbard. The Macassar, recalled to action by the fear of losing his weapon, snatched it and ripped up his adversary and exhausted by the effort, died together with him. By this stubborn resistance Forbin was assured that the survivors would sell their lives dearly. He turned out the garrison which numbered four hundred. There were only thirty-two Macassars and they were reduced to desperation. These savages, more like wild beasts than men, wished to dictate terms rather than to make them. They demanded the body of their captain and threatened to punish the French if they refused to give it up. When they perceived that Forbin was making preparations to attack them, they made ready for a vigorous defence. They twisted strips of cloth round their arms and shoulders to serve as shields. An English captain, underrating the strength of these fanatics, told the general that he would go forth and bring them back in chains. He advanced, but soon fell a victim to his daring. The Macassars fell upon him and stabbed both him and his followers through and through with their daggers. The garrison on seeing this rash venture, were panic-stricken and broke their ranks. Forbin made vain efforts to rally them and ran a great risk of losing his own life. If the Macassars had but known how to take advantage of the terror they had inspired, they could have rendered themselves masters of the fort. But as they were more desirous of the blood of their enemies than of dictating terms; they massacred without mercy all the soldiers, women and children who fell into their hands. Having glutted their thirst for vengeance, they dispersed into the jungle where they suffered greatly from hunger and the attacks of leeches and mosquitoes. They were hunted like wild beasts, and in spite of their desperate condition, they had the courage to face death with their weapons in readiness. They appeared merely to regret the fact of death in cases where they could not take the lives of their adversaries.

Those who were taken alive, begged for death, and tired of life, they merely desired the same fate as their companions whom they did not wish to survive.

The Prince of the Macassars, to whom the fate of his companions should have been a warning, ought to have yielded himself to the mercy of the King; but he still persisted in his refusal to appear at Court.

A force of 6000 men under the command of Faulcon was sent to force his submission. This body of troops ought to have been more than sufficient to crush a handful of undisciplined men, but the Macassars are the bravest and most determined of the Eastern races. Energetic and fearless in danger, they despise luxurious habits that sap vitality and extinguish all sparks of courage.

On hearing the trumpets sounding the attack, they maddened themselves with drugs and in a blind frenzy of passion fell upon the foe. Faulcon, who relied on strategy more than on numerical superiority, embarked in a ship with an Englishman the captain of a war-vessel stationed at the bar of the river. He was accompanied by a missionary and several Europeans who were more reliable than the Siamese who trembled at the mere mention of the name of the enemy.

The captain of the guard at the head of fourteen slaves, made an advance in the direction of the Macassar camp, without taking precautions to cover his retreat. A Macassar with thirty men springing from an ambush fell upon them and slew the captain and seven of the slaves. The remainder of the party fled in the darkness. At the same time the English captain of the war vessel made an attack on the extreme point of the camp. Their musketry fire riddled the Macassar huts and caused the inmates to beat a hasty retreat. The captain, followed by a dozen Englishmen and a French officer pursued them. The Macassars turned at bay and then with a haughty defiance, advanced, armed with their daggers, determined neither to ask nor to give quarter. The English captain fell dead on the scene of the combat, his companions fled in terror, and the French officer had to swim for his life.

The Macassars deserted their ruined camp and endeavoured to reach the Portuguese quarter in order to make a furious attack on the Christians. Falcon seeing their plan, made arrangements to circumvent it; and, followed by eight Frenchmen, two Siamese and one Japanese, unwisely made a frontal attack. He advanced, but the enemy had formed up in two parties to cut off his retreat. Maddened by their drugs, they fell upon his little band like hungry tigers upon their prey and Falcon seeing that he was in danger of being overwhelmed by numbers, beat a hurried retreat after losing half of his men.

It was evident that the attack must be made more warily and that it was useless to imagine that mere force of numbers would be sufficient to crush them. Falcon rallied his whole army and fell upon the foe who fought with the courage born of despair. At length the Macassars, overwhelmed by numbers, retired, some to their huts and others behind hedges of bamboos. Twenty two of their number took refuge in a temple and resolved to bury themselves in its ruins. The huts were fired, but the Macassars did not emerge from them until, they were nearly burnt. Then to cut short the agony, they rushed forward sword in hand on the pikes of their foes and fought till they died pierced through and through, The Macassar Prince, wounded by a ball in the shoulder, perceived Falcon, the man whom he considered to be his most dangerous enemy. The thirst of revenge lent him strength, and mad with rage, he advanced on his hated rival, but as he was in the act of striking with his javelin; he was shot by a French soldier.

Those who had taken refuge in the temple, surrendered without striking a blow. Thirty three more who had been severely wounded were taken prisoners. One of the sons of the Prince, a boy of 12 years of age, implored the mercy of the conqueror. He was shown his father's corpse. "Alas," he exclaimed "he was the cause of our country's miseries, but I feel his loss none the less keenly."

A few remarks on these curious people might be made here. It is quite a novelty to find in an enervating climate, such an example of ferocity. The Macassars have no knowledge of fire-arms and they regard them as detrimental to personal prowess, because they render modes of attack by bodily strength of no avail. Besides this type of weapon hinders the user from tasting the fruits of vengeance and leaves him ignorant of the number of the slain. On the other hand, this dislike for fire arms may be due to the fact that they do not know how to use them, as they would have to surrender their superiority in the art of hurling lances and assegais. They show the greatest skill in the use of the sword and dagger, and they employ long blow pipes from which they shoot arrows tipped with a poisoned fish-bone. Whoever is struck by one of these deadly missiles has not more than three hours to live.

Forbin cites an example of their intrepidity. One of these fanatics was making a rush at him and he stopped him by a spear thrust in the abdomen, but the Macassar, although mortally wounded was still anxious to have his revenge. He continued to press forward on the spear, so as to reach Forbin, who, stepping backwards, still holding him off by the spear with which he had impaled him; gave time for others to come to his assistance, and slay the Macassar. Especially when they were subjected to tortures they evinced the greatest firmness of demeanour.

Amongst the prisoners were found four soldiers who had deserted, and these men were selected to serve as an example of severity. At first they were tortured. Splinters were thrust under their nails, after which their fingers were crushed. They were then burnt in the arm and their heads were compressed between two boards. They suffered all these torments without a murmur. A missionary thought that, exhausted by torture, they would be easy subjects for conversion and approached to lead them to Jesus Christ, but the victims deaf to their entreaties gave no sign save those of pride in the fact they knew how to die. After having been tortured in every possible way, they were tied up to a post with their hands and feet bound in order to be devoured by a hungry tiger that merely sniffed at them. The executioners goaded on the tiger until it at last devoured its prey. One of the prisoners watched it eat his own foot without making any effort to withdraw it. Another hearing the crunching of his own bones, uttered no sound. A third, while the animal stood licking the blood which was running down his face did not even care to glance round. The King of Siam spared the lives of the two sons of the Macassar Prince. They were sent to Louvo under the charge of a Christian, from Constantinople, who had entered the Siamese service, and, later, they went to France where they served in the navy. Falcon had the bodies of all the rebels found armed decapitated and exposed the heads in the then deserted encampment. The English and French who had shared the dangers and who had been instrumental in his success were loaded with honours and presents.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVOLUTION THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE DOWNFALL OF FAULCON AND THE FRENCH.

Whilst Faulcon was doing his best to ensure the prosperity of the state, the nobles, jealous of his power and influence were humiliated by having to be subservient to a foreigner. The priests discredited, and without the enjoyment of Court favour, saw to their sorrow a minister, who despised their religion and set an example to the nation of forsaking their gods and superstitions. The common people, blind to common sense, and ready to follow any leader as foolish as themselves, espoused the cause of the priests who, to promote the cause of Heaven, sowed dissensions broadcast. Kings ought to have learnt by experience that when a people is discontented, an ambitious man is all that is required to make it rebellious. A single man suffices to instil into dull minds the fact that union is strength, and to cause them to pass from the ignominy of slavery to the desire for freedom.

The Siamese people, who were murmuring in secret, only awaited a leader to break out in revolt. Men of all conditions yearned for a deliverer and any ambitious personage had a chance of assuming this imposing title.

An official by name Pittracha, took advantage of the popular discontent as a basis on which to rear the fabric of his fortune. At first he sheltered his aims under the cloak of religion; and a hypocritical zealot in religious matters, he gained the confidence of the priests and people, who regarded him as the protector of their temples and of their ancestral form of worship. This imposter in disguise took the surest means to stir up the fires of rebellion, as the mob invariably supports those who take up arms on behalf of their religion.

Some say that Pittracha was born to be galley-slave rather than to succeed to a throne, but I can affirm that, from reliable information received, that he was of the blood royal and even first cousin to the reigning King. His mother who had been nurse to the King had two children, Pittracha who has been mentioned, and a daughter. Both these children had been brought up in the Palace and had been the playmates of the King in his youth. First impressions are the most durable, and the King had always a kindly feeling for the playfellow of his youth, whom he afterwards advanced to the highest official position in the Kingdom. The daughter who was comely and pleasing withal, was admitted to the harem and became the favourite wife. Unfortunately she conceived a guilty passion for the King's brother and as there were too many spies about for the liaison to be kept secret for long, the faithless wife was condemned to be devoured by tigers.

Pittracha dissembled his resentment so as not to lose favour; and the King, charmed with the apathy he exhibited, ordered him to chastise the offending prince with a rattan.

Pittracha carried out his instructions with such effect that the Prince dragged out a wretched existence; as the punishment had caused severe injuries.

The other brother of the King had been implicated in the Macassar plot, and this fact added to his natural vicious habits debarred him from any possibility of obtaining the throne.

The fact of the King being in poor health, and of his having no heirs was favourable to ambitious designs.

Pittracha though small in stature was high spirited. His physiognomy was interesting; his glittering eyes seemed to pierce the inmost depths of one's thoughts and although 56 years of age, he still had the strength of youth. His natural eloquence won the hearts of all. Popular amongst his subordinates, and haughty towards his rivals, he adopted even with the King, the tone of a censor animated by the public welfare. His frankness was a clever artifice by which he might reproach the King with his faults or those of his ministers, whom he rendered odious, by acting the part of the zealous citizen. Although he managed to conceal his criminal designs, his more indiscreet followers embittered the people by the announcement that the minister (Faulcon) in calling in the French soldiery was scheming to place the sceptre in their hands, and to raise Christianity on the ruins of the faith of their forefathers.

The alarm of the nation was strengthened by the fact that Bangkok and Mergui had been handed over to the French and the same fact gave colour to their statements.

Pittracha, calm in the midst of the general turmoil, pretended to deplore the evils for which in reality he was responsible. He had a rival for the King's favour, and he considered it wise to help his rival's claims so that he might the more readily be able to compass his downfall.

There was a favourite at Court named Monpit aged twenty-two years whom the King had loaded with honours. The licence that both he and his relatives enjoyed, gave credit to the rumour that he was the offspring of a secret amour between the King and a concubine; and that he had been chosen as heir to the throne. The eyes of all were fixed on this rising star which was confidently expected to preside one

day over the destinies of the nation.

His inexperience rendered him an easy prey; and the favour he enjoyed rendered him unsuspecting.

Pitracha, accustomed to Court life, where a kiss is the usual prelude to treachery, found in him a suitable tool for the accomplishment of his designs. He pointed out to him, that as he had been adopted by the King as his son, he had only one step to take to become his successor; but that he ought to act with boldness so as not to render the promises of fortune worthless.

Monpit dazzled by visions of power, surrendered his will entirely to the counsels of an enemy in the guise of a patron. He begged Pitracha to act as his father and promised to share the throne with him.

The Court was ruled by three men, all of whom were actuated by different motives.

The moribund King had but a shadow of that power of which the favourites possessed the reality. The hearts of all the nation beat for Pitracha, who artfully appeared to despise the power which in secret he coveted. His devotion to the priests had enlisted them in his cause, and there are no more zealous partisans than those who imagine they perceive in an ambitious hypocrite, a defender of their temples and rites.

His designs could not escape the notice of Faulcon who was sufficiently clear sighted to see their aim, but was too weak to circumvent them. Full of confidence in the French, he considered that he could oppose them as a rampart against the assaults of enemies.

He had been informed that Pitracha had counterfeited the seals of state so as to be able to issue orders favourable to his schemes. His emissaries, spread throughout the provinces, were raising forces under pretext of guarding against imaginary dangers. Pitracha, despairing of ingratiating himself with Faulcon, sought means to undo him by pandering to his self esteem, by means of the encomiums that the office holder invariably imagines are his due. "It is unfortunate for you and for the State," he said, "that being a foreigner, you are not eligible for the throne, as otherwise you would rule as King, an Empire that you administer to-day in your official capacity."

"The King, who is well aware of the incapacity of his brothers would always have a scruple against giving us such masters. If by some unlucky chance, they came into power, they would use it against the favourites and officials whom they hate as the authors of the punishments they have had to bear. Believe me, let us anticipate their revenge and as soon as the King is dead, let us take possession of the palace. I would see that you were conducted to Bangkok by my friends and there you could bid defiance to any who might wish to supplant you, Monpit is working in your interests and in mine. Our safety is dependant on our union, but for my own part I have resolved to bury myself in solitude and to consecrate the rest of my life to the worship of our gods whom it is quite impossible to serve amid the stress of state affairs." Faulcon did not believe a single word of this, and was convinced that ambitious men have no disinterested friends. He replied that he intended to remain faithful to the service of his master, and that he considered it treasonable to form any league; and assured those who looked for his co-operation that he would only act on behalf of the King's interests.

He resisted the temptation of revealing the matter to the King and besides the fear of aggravating the illness of the Royal patient caused him to dissemble. He had no convincing proofs to bring against the guilty parties and he might have exposed himself to the risk of punishment inflicted for slander. The King would have with difficulty given credence to his recital, and his deluded heart would have justified his favourites. Had Pitracha been exposed, the plots would only have come to a head, and as no precautionary measures had been taken, it was necessary to dissemble.

It is politic to ignore crime that cannot be punished. Faulcon, in order to retain his prestige in sight of the people, let it be understood that it was he who had been the cause of Pitracha's advancement; and in favouring his cause so as to the more easily bring about his downfall determined that the dying King should hand over the regency of the Kingdom to him. Pitracha made great protestations of gratitude in order to be afterwards ungrateful for his success. He played his part so well that the Greek, who considered himself a past-master in the art of plumbing the depths of a man's character, believed that he had no more zealous partisan, especially since his advice was always followed in the councils of state. As the keeper of the King's conscience, he was exposed to the danger of causing the happiness of the few and of arousing the hostility of the many. Every case heard before his tribunal increased the number of his enemies, because those who gained the day were never grateful to justice, while the losers imputed their defeat to the corruption of the judges.

The new regent had no more eloquent panegyrist than the man whom he wished to destroy, and the King delighted in listening to the praises which the minister showered on his secret enemy. The King charged them to continue to work harmoniously together as the public welfare depended on their

concord. He made them embrace each other as a pledge of eternal affection, but the favours of courtiers are but as snares for the credulous, who are influenced by externals only.

Faulcon's friends who were more clear sighted warned him of the approaching storm, but he was blinded by his uninterrupted successes; and prosperity unmixed with reverses had made him forget that Fortune is apt to desert her favourites. Accustomed to being in authority he never considered for one moment that his credit might fail; and a fortunate office-holder invariably believes himself to be a necessity to his employers.

M. de Métellopolis, with more foresight, pointed out the gulf yawning under him, but Faulcon treated him with the scorn which is the reward of dreamers who offer visions for realities. A Jesuit was hounded with ignominy from his presence for having had the boldness to give him some advice, and he was indiscreet or ill-natured enough to reveal to the other officials the sources from which he had obtained his information.

At last his eyes were opened to the dangers, but it was too late to find a remedy. The King suffering from dropsy, was sinking rapidly. As he could now no longer hide the approach of Death; he nominated Monpit as his successor.

His friends and relations filled all the important offices, and troops had been raised to support his candidature. Faulcon, ever devoted to the interests of his master, acted on his behalf, but Pittracha condemned his action in no measured terms. He proclaimed that it was his determination to place the crown on the head of the King's brother whom he would set up as an imposing phantom so as in reality to secure the power for himself. Pittracha was the wire-puller of this macheviellian policy and to attract the Princes to the court, pretended that the King their brother wished to nominate one of them as his successor.

They hesitated for a long time before yielding to his pressing solicitations. The youngest, braver or perhaps more ambitious than the rest, presented himself at the court with the Princess whom he had just married. They were given a magnificent reception. All the nobles hastened to render homage, but Monpit and Faulcon alone held aloof. The eldest of the Princes on his arrival shortly afterwards, refused to receive either Monpit or Faulcon when they asked for an audience.

As soon as the regent had all those who might cross his path in his power, he resolved to wait patiently for the death of the King and then to be proclaimed as his successor.

But having been informed by his spies that an armed force, was advancing to support the claims of Monpit, he resolved to hasten the consummation of his crimes. Monpit, who for several days had been watching by the bedside of the dying King; was called out of the room and stabbed to death by the emissaries of Pittracha, regardless of the outcries of the King who implored them to spare his son. At last, Faulcon who had been lulled to a sense of false security, realised the condition of affairs. He could only cure the evil, by striking at the root, namely by arresting Pittracha, and thus secure the loyalty of the disaffected; but he was powerless, as he himself was surrounded by enemies in a court where Royal favour and the fact of his being a foreigner had drawn upon him the hatred of all. There was only one resource left, and that was the assistance of the French soldiery. He instructed them to assemble under arms at Louvo and told them that their presence was necessary to the mutual interests of the allied monarchs. The rapidity with which Des Farges took action showed that he was ready to do everything for the benefactor of his nation.

He set out with 100 picked men of his garrison and this little band was sufficient to overawe thousands of the Siamese. The general passed through the capital before proceeding to Louvo, but at this point timidity prevented his further advance. The report that the King was dead had been disseminated by the rebels, who wished to sound the popular feeling, and everything pointed to a generally disturbed state of affairs. Des Farges went to the Seminary and thought it would be wise to hold a consultation with those who lived there.

The protection that the missionaries had enjoyed caused him to regard their abode as an inviolable sanctuary, and the confidence he reposed in them, invited him to follow the wisdom of their experience.

The Missionaries, deceived by the popular rumours, told him that he would be running useless risks, that the roads were lined with ambuscades ready to annihilate all the French.

The general, unmoved by these tales dictated without doubt by the desire they had for his safety, appeared to wish to persevere in his design of going to the rescue of the King and his minister.

He was all the more anxious to do so as he foresaw that the downfall of Faulcon would mean his own ruin, and, that shut up without hope of succour in a town ill-fortified and badly provisioned, he would be obliged to submit to any humiliating condition they might impose upon him.

Not however wishing to precipitate matters, he sent one of his officers to Louvo to find out how matters really stood. Whilst he lingered at the capital, a secret rumour aroused the inhabitants against him. It was reported that the object of the French forces in going to Louvo was the pillage of the public treasury, and that they intended to dispose of the throne as they pleased. In order to reassure the inhabitants the general thought it more prudent to withdraw his little army whose presence had caused such alarm. He retired a distance of two leagues from the town, and was met by his envoy who gave him an account of the events at Court. Whether this officer had been misled by his own fears or that he was convinced that there was imminent danger, his recital so alarmed Des Farges that he believed the reports he had heard on his arrival in the capital. So, instead of marching to glory, his only idea was that of retreat; he was no longer a warrior ready to encounter danger that his friend might be saved.

Des Farges, followed the advice of his timorous companions and returned to Bangkok; but, before his departure, wrote to Faulcon to justify his retreat. He informed him that, as it was reported that the King had died, he thought it would be rash to withdraw his troops from a position on which their safety depended, and that he might be punished if he were to endanger the lives of the soldiers under his command without sufficient reason, and that finally he offered him and his family shelter in a place that the French had resolved to defend to the last.

The friends of the fallen minister slandered the Bishop of Métellopolis and the missionaries. They blamed them for the disgrace of the French retreat. The chief authors of this calumny were those who were obliged to refute it. Jealous of the esteem in which this prelate was held and because he was not ambitious, they strove to decry the missionaries, so as to gain all the consideration they enjoyed, and to raise themselves on their ruin. But the defence of the prelate was an easy matter. Ought he to have concealed a danger which was imminent? Had the troops been cut to pieces, with what horror would not Europe have learnt that a French Bishop, misled by overconfidence, had kept silence about what ought to have been revealed. Would he not have been rightly considered the author of a massacre of his fellow-citizens? Duty obliged him to reveal the reasons of his fear. It was for the commander to reject or to follow his advice. But it is certain that had he marched to Louvo he would have failed in the first of his duties, namely to remain on guard at his post.

Faulcon left to the mercy of his enemies, complained bitterly that the French had deserted him, and on hearing the news, exclaimed. "Alas they do not consider that they themselves will be involved in my downfall," and turning to his retinue, asked them to follow him to the church saying "I was wrong to trust to human aid, I wait for God only. There is His House, He alone can suffice to protect and defend me."

He positively refused to accept the commander's offer of shelter, as it would have justified the slanderous reports that he had handed over the place to foreigners so as to arrange for a place of safety in time of danger.

Instead of flight, he preferred to reveal part of the danger which threatened the State to the King. The remedy lay in the choice of a successor who could subdue the disaffected. The Prince proclaimed his daughter as Queen and allowed her to select whichever of her uncles she might prefer as her husband.

So feeble a measure was not sufficient to remove the cause of the disaffection rife everywhere. Factions increased, and the ringleaders were only waiting a favourable opportunity to break out in open revolution. The policy pursued by the conspirators towards Faulcon, lulled him to a sense of false security. He still perceived the danger, but he thought it had been relegated to the future. He sought the King and said "Sire, the time for repining and speech is over. We must act, and that silently."

"Decisive measures must be taken against the impending evils, and a half hearted policy will only favour the progress of their designs. If Pittracha be arrested, the conspiracy will come to naught. Remember that the greatest secrecy is absolutely necessary to the success of this enterprise, and, to be successful, we must dissemble our feelings." The King understood the importance of this advice, but weakened by illness was unable to keep the matter secret, and he could not resist the temptation of breaking out into threats and reproaches. Pittracha's suspicions were aroused mid he anticipated matters. He assembled his retainers and pointed out the serious nature of the situation. Without delay they marched on the Palace and possessed themselves of the King. Faulcon, alarmed at this sudden turn of events, would not follow the advice of his friends who desired him to remain at home to await the upshot of affairs. His impolitic attachment to the King was the cause of his downfall, and believing that inaction would be detrimental to the favours he enjoyed, followed the promptings of courage and duty.

He went to the Palace accompanied by Beauchamp, Fretteville, Vaudrille, Laise and the Chevalier des Farges, all of whom were French officers. He was followed by two Portuguese and sixteen Englishmen who were in his pay as guards. He took his departure and said to his wife "Farewell for ever, madame."

The King is a prisoner, and I am going to die at his feet."

His zeal and courage buoyed him up in the hope that with this little band, he could force his way to the room of his master, but no sooner had he entered the outer courtyard of the palace, than Pitracha at the head of a Siamese force arrested him on the charge of high treason.

His first thought was to defend himself but on seeing that his guards had basely deserted him, saw that resistance was useless. The French officers however justified the confidence he had in their courage, and alone, they thought they could scatter the armed mob, but Faulcon exhorted them to give up their swords and they were led off to the common prison under pretext of rescuing them from the fury of the crowd.

Pitracha, now absolute master of the King's fate left him the empty title of King with the shadow of power, and to render the fact of his usurpation less objectionable, merely took the title of chief minister of State.

All submitted to him. The priests whom he had deceived by his hypocrisy, belauded him as the defender of their faith. The officials regarded him as the liberator of their country from the oppression of the foreigner. The populace, were foolish enough to imagine that a change of masters, would be the prelude to a happier condition of existence.

The usurper, now assured of the support of the whole nation, saw that the French were the sole obstacles in his path. To him they seemed invincible, as they possessed the two strongest positions in the Kingdom. He sent for M. de Métellopolis, who fearing punishment for having advised Des Farges, excused his attendance on the ground of ill-health.

M. de Lionne, Bishop of Rosalie, however acted as his substitute. Pitracha insolently addressed him in these words.

"It is with the greatest disgust that I learn that the French troops who come to Siam to serve the King, refuse to obey his commands. I order you to write to their commander to enforce their obedience. Should he persist in his contumacious behavior you shall suffer for it, I will give your Seminary and Church over to pillage, all the French shall be blown from the cannon's mouth, and every Christian shall be put to death."

M. de Rosalie replied that although he had no authority over the French commander, he would endeavour to arrange matters that Des Farges should come to Louvo in person. This offer was accepted, and the prelate accompanied by two officials who had been members of the embassy to France, set out for Bangkok.

Des Farges, on learning the nature of the mission at first was uncertain as to how he should act. At last he decided to set out and to follow M. de Rosalie and the two officials with one of his sons, the other being detained as a prisoner in Bangkok.

Pitracha haughtily reproached him with his refusal to bring up the troops that the King impatiently demanded. He threatened to employ force if his demands were not complied with and informed him that ten positions as strong as Bangkok would be but feeble ramparts against the vengeance he premeditated.

Des Farges replied with the greatest moderation to these threats and having waited till Pitracha had exhausted the exuberance of his verbosity, said "The King my master sent me here in command of troops at the bidding of the King of Siam his ally only, but since these troops cause trouble, kindly order that ships may be furnished us or grant us permission to equip the same. The speed with which we shall hasten our departure, shall leave no doubt of the good will of the King my master." This proposal was rejected and Pitracha sharply ordered him to write to his lieutenant to bring up the troops.

The commander replied that as he was not at his post, he no longer had the authority, and that the only way to ensure the obedience of the garrison would be to allow him to return to Bangkok. He promised to do his utmost to persuade them to obey his wishes, and in addition, offered to give his children as hostages for his word. Pitracha gave his consent. But on the return of Des Farges to the fort, the officers and soldiers swore they would leave it only to return to their native land. Pitracha, hearing of their determination advanced with an army. The French evacuated the fort they had occupied opposite to Bangkok, and the Siamese taking possession of it commenced hostilities. De Bruant and Beauregard, who were in command at Mergni, fearing that they would shortly be attacked made ready for a vigorous defence. They were not about to fight for mere glory, a more powerful incentive fired their hearts. It was a case of life and death itself. The Siamese ordered them to capitulate, but were repulsed with severe loss, and, the conquerors having seized one of their vessels

as well as an English ship then in harbour, embarked and set sail for Pondicherry where they landed without further mishap.

The French, shut up in Bangkok were a source of annoyance to the usurper who was sure that M. de Métellopolis would have had more influence over them than M. de Rosalie. He ordered the former to be conducted to Bangkok by an escort of "Tattooed Arms" who are the bailiffs and minions of the law. The servants of the prelate were the victims of innumerable insults from these officials who are as cowardly as they are insolent. They were pilloried, bound, and half strangled and exposed almost naked to the burning rays of the sun, to the importunities of insects, and to the extremes of hunger and thirst. The Bishop and M. Basset a missionary were equally targets for their witticisms. The bulk of their clothes were taken away and even their hats. This was but the commencement of the cruelties practised then in the fort opposite to Bangkok. The officer in charge exposed them on a bastion in range of the French artillery which did not cease fire until the victims had been recognised.

The stubborn resistance of the French modified the hostile disposition of the Siamese. Pitracha who on the death of the King had succeeded to the throne, thought he ought to get rid of guests too warlike not to be a subject of dread. He resolved that they should take ship for Pondicherry on condition that the Bishop and the Missionaries would engage on peril of their lives that the ships and sailors with which they would be furnished, should be returned. While the new King was negotiating with the French, his heart, a prey to the anxieties and suspicions which are the first punishments that crime brings in its train, thirsted for the blood of his enemies.

Faulcon who formerly been an object of fear to him was singled out for his first act of vengeance. As soon as the tyrant had him in his power, he caused him to be led in triumph on the walls of the palace.

This favourite of fortune, now fallen into the deepest disgrace, was cast into a filthy dungeon to which admission was refused to everyone. Some say that the head of Monpit was fastened to his neck as a punishment for his complicity. In addition the soles of his feet were burnt, and his head was placed in a vice in order to make him acknowledge crimes he had never committed. This man, formerly the centre of an admiring throng was now guarded in a narrow prison by barbarous gaolers who kept at a distance those who might have procured some respite for him.

His wife however discovered the place of his confinement and she obtained permission to supply him with a few necessaries.

The usurper, who still retained a trace of humanity had restored to her son whom the soldiers had carried off; but this was only a passing favour, the natural ferocity of the tyrant softened but for a moment.

She was suspected of having concealed immense wealth, and that was quite sufficient cause for her to be treated as a criminal. Her weapons, documents and even her clothes were taken away; a guard was posted in front of her house and a sentry at the door of her room. The brutal soldiers who watched all her actions caused her to complain bitterly. "Well" she remarked "What have I done to be thus treated like a felon." But ashamed of her weakness she rose superior to fear and misfortune. She had need of all her fortitude and contempt for earthly possessions. Two days afterwards an armed force seized the furniture, money and jewels which the palace contained. Unmindful of the loss of so much property she cried out. "At last God alone remains for us and no one can take Him from us."

The insatiable spoilers suspected that she had hidden the bulk of her wealth and their pitiless leader threatened her with death. He ordered two executioners to come forward and at a signal, they struck her on the arms without regard for the weakness of her sex. Her grandfather and son witnessed her sufferings and showed their sympathy by cries and tears. All the servants who had chosen to share their sorrows were punished for showing their sympathetic attitude.

The wretched family knelt at the feet of the official, who, enraged at not being able to find a new victim, ordered the executioners to redouble their blows. "Alas" cried the wretched woman covered with blood, "have mercy on me or at least take me away that my relations see not my sufferings."

These words coming from a woman aged twenty-two years who was both beautiful and of a noble disposition made not the slightest impression on the official. He ordered her to be taken away together with her son and her slaves and only set her grandfather free on account of his age and infirmities.

For a long time no one knew where she had been imprisoned. A missionary, passing by the palace stables saw her aunt who had been confined with her. With difficulty he obtained permission to see her for a moment. He found her in a dismal dungeon, stretched on a mat with her unhappy and innocent son by her side whose lamentations seemed to reproach her for having brought him into the world to suffer.

This woman, brought up in luxury and splendour, bore her hard fate as if she had been born to it. She displayed that serenity of mind which is a sure indication of a calm and pure soul and she appeared more at peace in her gloomy prison than she had been amid the gaities of the palace.

For some time they respected the life of Faulcon since he was under the protection of the King of France and they feared to incur the vengeance of the French troops. But the usurper on seeing how little interest the French took in their old protector, considered that now was a chance to get rid with impunity of an enemy who though even in irons appeared formidable. Sentence of death was pronounced against him on the charge of high treason, a crime on which those in authority are wont to arraign fallen ministers. He was punished for having introduced foreigners, whom he wished to use as a means of self aggrandisement and for the furtherance of his ambitious designs in the kingdom. At dusk he was taken from his prison and went by elephant to a forest near Louvo to receive the fatal stroke. It seems that his barbarous enemy had chosen the silent forest for the execution ground as if he wished to bury the horror of his unjust revenge in eternal silence.

Faulcon's countenance was pale, but this was caused rather by the sufferings he had undergone in prison than the fear of the death which was about to end them. His glance was fixed and he uttered no groan or complaint; he seemed lost in communion with the God he was so shortly to meet.

Having arrived at the spot where he was to meet his doom, he saw the son of the tyrant who was in charge of the execution. He turned towards him, not to implore mercy but to ask for time to make his peace with the Judge before Whom he was so soon to appear.

The soldiers seemed distressed to see one before whom the people and the nobility but so recently had bowed down, now brought to so pitiable a condition. Having finished his prayer, he protested that he was innocent, but that in dying guiltless, he had at least the consolation of being able to expiate, by a painful death, the weaknesses and follies of a life devoted to the pursuit of fruitless ambition.

He added that during the whole course of his tenure of office, the only motives by which his policy had been directed, were the glory of the true God, the service of his King, and the interests of the State.

After this protest he spoke a second time to the young official in these words, rendered more pathetic by their eloquent grief rather than by any devices of art.

"I am about to die. Remember that even if I am guilty, I leave a wife and child who are innocent. For them I ask neither rank nor wealth, but at least let them enjoy freedom and life."

Having said these words he remained silent and at a signal, the executioner cut him down with a blow of his sword.

He fell with a sigh, the last he ever uttered.

So died at the age of forty one years, a man who had risen from the petty details of a counting house to the most prominent position in a great Empire.

His skill in politics justified his master's choice and he would have been numbered among the greatest public men of his day had his end been as brilliant as his beginning.

If his sagacity had been led astray it is not certain whether that he feared that, being a stranger, his most disinterested actions would have been objects of suspicion. Cautious and circumspect as he was he did not fully grasp the situation of present affairs, as his mind dwelt more upon eventualities. His virtues were marred by several faults; passionate and easily moved to anger, he would lose in one day, the fruits of the work of several years. A man of great ambition, he showed all the pettiness of vain-glory.

The magnificence in which he lived was a almost an insult to the poverty-stricken nation whom it was thought he had plundered. The produce of every province appeared at his table and four hundred slaves hastened to serve him, to obey the wishes of his guests and to make parade of his opulence. Generous to a fault, he spent upwards of 100,000 crowns on gifts during the space of 3 years. His policy betrayed by the wishes of the moment, blinded him to the fact that bounties of this kind are more apt to give rise to suspicion than to cause happiness. After his conversion to the Roman faith he submitted to all its dogmas and practiced all its precepts and although a public man, he believed he could not dispense with the obligations binding on private individuals.

His wife, still languishing in prison, forgot her own sufferings in lamenting the demise of her husband. "Well" she exclaimed "Why is he dead? What was his crime that he should have been treated like a felon." An official, a relative of Pitracha's who was standing near her whispered that his crimes

had been the favour he had enjoyed, and his natural abilities.

Shortly after this, she and her son were condemned to the humiliation of slavery and she was set free that she might perform her duties.

The death of the King and his brothers had happened prior to the execution of Faulcon.

It was rumoured by some that the King had been poisoned, while others averred that the weariness of captivity was the cause of his death.

Pitracha, who held the fate of his master in his hands, and seeing that the King was on the point of death, thought it politic to compass the destruction of the King's brothers who might have put difficulties in the way of his succession.

He caused them to be put into velvet bags and handed them over to the executioners who beat them to death with clubs of sandalwood.

This method of death which had no disgrace attached to it, was reserved for Princes of the blood-royal.

The King shortly followed his brothers to the grave. This Prince, who had been so ardent a partisan of the French, has been depicted by them in glowing colours.

Though naturally of a warlike disposition, but a true friend of his people, he preferred to adopt a policy of pacification rather than to follow his inclinations which would have caused public misfortunes.

Though keeping his high spirit under control, he was none the less formidable to his neighbours who preferred to have him for an ally rather than for an enemy. As a monarch who took deep interest in all affairs of State, he allowed himself but little leisure; and his sole relaxation was the chase, the usual pastime of active persons and sometimes also of those weighed down by anxieties.

He showed an appreciation of science and art, several foreigners had been called in to be his instructors and had the soil been good, the harvest would have been fruitful.

He left a daughter aged twenty eight years who had been proclaimed Queen during her father's lifetime, she had her own territories and officers and soldiers who were subject to her only.

Every day she gave audience to the wives of the officials, and seated on a throne she received the homage of these women who crouching on the ground with bent heads adopted the same posture as did their husbands when in presence of the King.

She was severe, almost ferocious and seemed made rather to rule wild beasts than to govern men.

CHAPTER V.

THE BREACH BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE USURPER.

The revolution was managed so adroitly, that there were no perceptible changes in public affairs. The palace was the scene of some disturbance, but outside, everything was peaceful. Pitracha who had succeeded quietly to the throne went to the capital where he was proclaimed King amid the shouts of the multitude. The chief offices of state were held by men of his faction and scorning the baseness of revenge, as soon as there appeared nothing more to fear from their actions, he promoted all those of whom he had previously cause to complain. The people were relieved and his alms to the needy won the hearts of all. He married the daughter of the late King. At first this Princess was averse to the union, but fired by ambition, she preferred life rather than the death which would have been her portion in event of a refusal.

The negotiations with the French had been brought to a successful termination and it was agreed that ships and sailors should be provided to convey them to Pondicherry, and, as a guarantee of good faith the King sent his two sons who had been at court up to that time to the French commander. All the officers who had been arrested at Louvo, were released and from them the details were forthcoming of the humiliations that they and the Christians of different nationalities had suffered. The Seminary had been give over to pillage; the Christian virgins became the prey of the licentious soldiery,

the most favoured of them however being reserved for the harems. The missionary priests were put in the pillory whence they gave an example to their flock of how to suffer in silence.

While preparations were being made for the departure of the French; their open-hearted generosity very nearly caused an awkward complication of affairs. Madame Faulcon too weak to endure the hardships of slavery, asked the Bishop of Métellopolis to gain the interest of the French commander on her behalf, and to make arrangements that she might take her departure on board one of their ships. The Bishop spoke greatly in her favour, but Des Farges, with more diplomacy than gratitude replied that he was obliged to wait until the Siamese had supplied him with everything needful for the voyage and that when all was ready, he would consider her request. She, however, had grave reasons for hastening her departure and every moment of delay was vital.

The son of the King, worn out by debauchery, had conceived a violent passion for her. She would have considered herself guilty of the death of her husband had she shared the couch of his murderer. To gain her consent, in vain did he point out that by this act alone she could regain her position and rescue her son from the vengeance of his enemies. The brave woman replied. "Are you unaware who I was and how I have lived. My religion forbids so sinful a marriage. I loved my husband with all my soul, and, faithful to his memory, my heart is closed against any new passion. My son is dear to me and I ought to live for his sake, but I refuse to buy life at such a price as you offer."

The young Prince, whose passions knew no restraint thought he would be able to conquer her proud spirit by the most tempting promises. But he met with so stubborn a resistance, that he showed his affection in a tyrannical fashion. She was carried off to the palace where she had no defence other than her tears and outcries.

The Prince, fearing that this abduction would reveal the secret of his debauched life to his father, already annoyed at his disorderly conduct, determined to send her back, saying, that as she still persisted in her resistance, there was nothing left for her but to die with her son. She took no notice of these threats, she preferred to die in innocence than to live in guilt. Her grandfather aged 88 who was a descendant of the famous martyrs of Japan, upheld her resolution.

A slighted affection, often becomes cruel. The Prince in order to frighten her, caused her to be arraigned on a charge of embezzlement. She was summoned before a tribunal and the judge although convinced of her innocence ordered her to receive 100 strokes with the rod. She was delivered to her merciless executioners who seeing her faint under the punishment; only administered one half of what had been ordered. Her relations were also punished, she had to endure the agonising spectacle of beholding two of her uncles, two aunts and her eldest brother undergoing tortures before her eyes. Her grandfather would have suffered likewise, had not mercy been shown to him on account of his infirmities.

While this courageous woman seemed to have nothing but sorrow as her portion for the future, Sainte Marie, a young French officer offered to escort her in safety to Bangkok. She was too unhappy to listen to prudent advice. She embarked with her son in secret on a vessel belonging to this officer, determined to risk all if she could but escape from her persecutors.

Her arrival at the fort was a signal for general rejoicing but the commander alone showed his disapproval, and had the pusillanimity to wish that she should be sacrificed, rather than that a drop of French blood should be spilt in her defence. "Alas" she exclaimed, "is Faulcon's widow, the sole person who will have failed to find sanctuary under the flag of France."

The King, on hearing of her escape, was convinced that she had carried off a quantity of valuables with her. He at once sent two officials to bring her back, and, in case of a refusal, to recommence hostilities.

As soon as the report of her arrival had spread, the French were seized with a burning desire to fight to the death for her sake. The tears of the unfortunate widow, the youth of her son, and the memory of her husband who had been the protector of the French interests were telling points in her favour. The officers and soldiers were unanimous, and all declared that they would rather face death than the shame of having betrayed the cause of a distressed woman who had thrown herself on their protection.

Des Farges, unshakable in his resolution to send her back to Siam, made arrangements with M. de Métellopolis whose outspokenness and skill well fitted him for the negotiation of such delicate business. The Bishop had need of all his urbanity to break such distressing news to her. He found that she was firmly resolved not to return to Siam on any account short of actual force. She waited for several days, her mind wavering between hope and fear until one day a French officer came to inform her that she must make her preparations for her departure.

There was nothing for it but to obey, and she solemnly protested against the violence which snatched her from the protection of the French flag. The official who had been sent to bring her back came to conduct her to the river side where a vessel was lying in readiness. She was accompanied by her son, by one woman and a missionary whose zeal sustained her drooping courage. Her distress became the more acute the further she went from the spot from whence she had been thrust forth, abandoned by the French whom she still could only regard as friends. The sight of Siam rendered her grief more poignant; for there lay the scene of the punishment of her husband and there that she expected to undergo new tortures and to be parted for ever from her son, the sole prop of her existence.

Her lot was happier than she had hoped. The son of the King, rebuffed by her scorn, no longer desired her, or what is more likely was too much afraid of his father to give rise to fresh scenes of violence and scandal. She was appointed to the Royal Kitchens. In the opinion of the Siamese, this is an honourable post and by no means a humiliation. She had two thousand women under her orders, as palace servants. She was entrusted with the care of the gold and silver plate, of the King's wardrobe and of all the fruits served at table. Her lack of self interest made her despise the valuable perquisites of her office and, very different to her predecessors, handed over a considerable sum every year to the royal treasury. The King of Siam, surrounded by corrupt and rapacious officials was astonished to see such honesty, and often said that only Christians could carry the scorn of wealth to such a pitch.

Although she was not so unhappy as she had anticipated, she suffered considerably from the fact that her son had been taken away from her. For a long time she feared that his education had been entrusted to the idolatrous priests, but she was much relieved to hear that he was being brought up at the Seminary in charge of the Bishop and the French missionaries.

Her son afterwards obtained a captaincy in the Siamese navy, on the Coromandel coast. In 1749, he was entrusted with a mission to M. Dupleix who at that time was Governor-General of the French possessions in the East Indies.

The governor, a man of sound abilities though not brilliant, remembered that he had to deal with the son of one who had been a friend to his nation. He considered that it was his duty to give him substantial proofs of the gratitude the French owed him, by granting him exemption from all taxes levied on foreigners.

He sent him back, satisfied with the success of his mission and gave him many valuable gifts. The name of Dupleix will ever be graven on our annals devoted to citizens who have benefited their country.

Faulcon, on his return to Siam was favourably received. Having inherited his father's abilities he might have risen to a high position. But lavish as his father had been, he desired wealth merely for the purpose of making presents to Princes and Kings. His bounties, which ensured his favour at Court, exhausted his resources. He died in poverty in 1754, leaving his wife a son and several daughters in absolute want. One of his daughters married a Dutch shipmaster, who was ruined by the loss of his vessel few years afterwards.

She soon lost her husband and when the Siamese were led in captivity to Pegu, she was married again to a Portuguese half-caste by name Jeanchi, a captain of Burmese regiment, He will be spoken of later.

The other daughters did not long survive their father. There remains only a son named John Faulcon, married to a Portuguese in Siam. The Burmese took him prisoner, but evading the vigilance of his guards, escaped to Siam with his wife where they lived in obscurity.

Such were the posterity of the celebrated Constantine Faulcon who, of humble origin, raised himself to the steps of the throne.

The obstacle, to the conclusion of the negotiations with the French which had been caused by the flight of Madame Faulcon, was removed by her return. Both parties were equally anxious to come to an agreement. The French were desirous of leaving a land where they would only encounter fruitless and inglorious perils. The Siamese could not but be uneasy while they still retained guests, of whose heroic valour they had had such an experience. I cannot refrain from citing two examples of the intrepid courage of these brave men.

Saint Cri, a French captain was sailing downstream in a boat, the Indian crew of which were all drunk and incapable, and he had only two Europeans with him who were ready for any emergency.

The Siamese, seeing his defenceless condition made preparations to board his vessel.

One of the two Europeans became terrified and swam off to parley with them, but he was taken prisoner and loaded with chains. Saint Cri, too weak to offer any resistance, feared lest he should fall into the hands of these savages. Death appeared to be a preferable alternative to slavery and brave to desperation as he had but one soldier with him, put his powder and handgrenades on the bridge. He calmly waited till a large number of Siamese had boarded his ship, and then, fired his powder and blew his enemies into the air.

The ship, damaged by the explosion, ran aground.

The Siamese, thinking that all the powder had been used up, imagined that it would be an easy matter to seize the vessel. But Saint Cri gave them cause to repent their rashness. He fired some bags of powder that he had kept in reserve and although he himself was among the slain, this explosion was more deadly than the first. His companion, sword in hand gained the shore. The savages fell upon him, and, overwhelmed by numbers, he perished, but not before he had slain five of his assailants.

Another case bore witness to the inflexible purpose of the French commander, whose two sons had been retained as hostages in the capital. The King made them write to their father saying, that if the garrison were not brought to Louvo, they would be put to death. The commander, although devoted to his children, remembered his duties to the state. He replied "My children I Feel as much for your sad condition as you do yourselves, I would willingly lay down my life in order to save yours. I cannot but urge you to follow my example and to be faithful to duty. If you perish remember that you are dying for your God, your King, and your country and be sure that your deaths will not be unpunished."

Such heroic conduct had made the name of Frenchmen to be feared, and caused the Siamese to hasten their departure. They were supplied with three frigates, and to ensure that the ships should be returned, the Bishop of Métellopolis, the chief of the French trading company, and the two sons of the commander were given over as hostages. The troops marched out of the fortress on the first of November 1688, taking with them two officials as sureties for the King's word. During the night they sailed down to the mouth of the river.

The French commander invited the officials who had come with the French hostages to a great feast. After the meal the Siamese hostages were asked for, but Des Farges said that he would not return them until the four vessels bearing the baggage, three officers and fourteen soldiers, hove in sight. The officials, learning of this refusal hastened to inform the Barcalon.

This official was highly incensed at the breach of faith on the part of the French. He summoned M. de Métellopolis and said "These careless officials will be severely punished for having released the French hostages before receiving our own. You and I will both be involved in the trouble. You will be considered as the accomplice of the French treachery and I shall be punished for having confided the matter to untrustworthy persons. Let us find some way of escape from the danger common to us both."

The bishop, who had not been informed of the plans of Des Farges, neither dared to lay the blame on him, nor to find excuses.

They agreed that if one of the hostages were given up, the Siamese would deliver over a third part of what they were retaining and that the remainder would set out for the mouth of the river whenever the last of the officials should have set sail.

Des Farges released one official on the spot, but as he had given the first example of bad faith, the Siamese considered that they were at liberty to break their word also, and, instead of sending down the ships, demanded with threats, that the other two hostages should be restored.

M. de Métellopolis wrote a pathetic letter to the commander, pointing out how his line of action would cause the ruin of the French and of the growing Church. The inflexible resolution of Des Farges could not be shaken and after having waited five days for the fulfilment of the Barcalon's promises, he set sail for Malacca en route for Pondicherry taking with him the hostages who were of no possible use to him.

CHAPTER VI.

After the departure of the French, the Christians were left without defenders. The Siamese highly enraged at the loss of their hostages, stirred up a sanguinary persecution, and the Bishop of Mételopolis was the first to suffer. He was taken off his ship and dragged in the mire with every possible insult, exposed for a long time to the heat of the sun and to the torments of insects. Some pulled him by the beard, others spat in his face, and those who could not get near enough to strike, threw mud at him.

The Barcalon, witness of all these outrages from which he could have protected him, seemed to have no pity.

M. du Har, a French officer, shared the same fate. Both were loaded with fetters, put on board a boat and taken across the river. On the bank they found the bodies of their unhappy companions hacked to pieces. The poor bishop, old and infirm and exhausted by what he had undergone could not bear to look at this painful spectacle.

He fainted and fell half dying into the mud, from which he was with difficulty extricated. He passed all the day and night in his wet and muddy clothes.

A spark of the respect which could not be denied to his virtues, softened the hearts of his persecutors. The Siamese took him to Bangkok and shut him up in a hut next door to the house of a Christian woman by whose kindly ministrations he was restored to consciousness. As soon as he was able to stand the fatigues of the journey he was taken to the capital. He was placed under a guard of cruel and rapacious men, who in order to extort money from him, exceeded even the severe orders of their master.

The other Frenchmen were cast into the common jail, a place reeking with disease and filth, where with the idea of death constantly before their minds, they ceased to dread its approach.

The brutal soldiery made a raid on the college and carried off the priests, the students and the servants. They respected neither the innocence of youth nor the infirmities of age. All were marched off to prison and handed over to a harsh gaoler who regarded it as an act of merit to make them suffer hunger and to expose them to the inclemency of the weather. Seven of the French died under this treatment. The Missionaries, more accustomed to a hard life, held out longer, but nine of them died a few days after they had been set at liberty.

Painful sights were to be seen in every street of the capital. French priests and officers, almost nude, pale and haggard, dragged themselves along begging scraps of food which were cast at them with scorn, and in spite of their weakness they were forced to carry baskets of filth on their shoulders amid the jeers and coarse jests of a villainous mob.

The Mahomedans seemed to lay aside their natural antipathy to Christians. They took pity on their hard fate. They even took such an interest in the matter that they drew up a petition saying that it was against the laws of nations to treat prisoners of war with such harshness but it was in vain. Their leader, who was an official of the highest rank, feared that this petition, if presented, would cause him to lose favour at court. He treated two missionaries who had been handed over to him, with the greatest severity. They were condemned to the most painful and degrading tasks. Some English officers, seeing these aged priests staggering under the weight of their baskets boldly announced, that if this harsh treatment were not put a stop to, they would show no mercy to any officials they might meet. They did not content themselves by the mere utterance of empty threats. They lent a considerable sum to these unfortunate men.

The missionaries consider it is their duty to say that wherever they have met Englishmen, they have experienced their natural generosity. The wretched plight of the prisoners, touched the hearts of their oppressors, and their fate was made less hard.

They were allowed to beg for one hour daily. Sympathisers bestowed alms on them which were appropriated by the felons chained with them. Those who had had the good fortune to have escaped persecution by flight, wandered from hut to hut.

A Tonquinese Christian gave shelter to several of them in his house in spite of the edicts to the contrary.

The Portuguese Jesuits who had avoided persecution by secret means; made use of their freedom to help their unfortunate co-religionists M. Pomard a missionary who had cured the King of a dangerous disease, had not been involved in the general trouble, and it was he who especially attended to the needs of his brethren. The mere mention of the word foreigner or the slightest sign of pity was sufficient to arouse the hatred and fury of the populace. An Armenian who had carried food to the prisoners was put in chains and was afterwards murdered by the fanatical priests who imagined that

their god would be pleased with assassination. Two Portuguese, after having suffered cruel tortures were condemned to cut grass for the elephants. Their wives and mothers-in law were reduced to slavery.

A nun, who had come from Manilla was dragged ignominiously along the street with a crucifix fastened under her feet so that she could be reproached with having trampled her God under foot.

Several slaves cared naught for the tortures, and remained steadfast in their faith. The Tonkinese and Cochin-Chinese, in the camp of St. Joseph were secure against pillage; but some were condemned to the galleys and others to work in the stables of the elephants. Their wives and children were employed on the public works, and no mercy was shown to the Siamese Christians.

There is no need to enter into further details of this persecution, as it would be a mere repetition of scenes of horror and barbarity. The Portuguese, calm amid the storm, were highly delighted at the fate of the French. Their jealousy blinded their eyes to pity, and they were so indiscreet as to openly show their feelings. They thought now that as their rivals were out of the field, they would be able to gain the commercial advantages previously held by the French.

The King of Cochin China looked upon this persecution as a crime against humanity. It had been reported to him, that the French were turbulent disturbers of the public peace, who having caused endless confusion in Siam were about to make trouble in his State. The clear sighted ruler perceived that this was a tissue of lies and even sent ambassadors to Siam to protest against the persecution. But as their object had been previously found out, they were sent back without an audience. The Prince of Cochin China, a proud and warlike individual would have revenged this outrage had his plans not been anticipated by death.

The hatred against the Christians was on the wane, but when news was brought that Des Farges with 5 vessels had landed at Jonsalam, it was considered that he was merely waiting for reinforcements to take vengeance for the insults offered to his nation. Popular imagination pictured him as an angry conqueror, who was about to visit their towns and possessions with fire and sword.

The prisoners were put under more rigorous surveillance and their lot became more pitiable.

But the fears were allayed next day by a letter from the French commander, who declared that his intentions were peaceable. Having explained the reasons for not giving up the hostages, he declared that he preferred to surrender his rights, rather than to break the alliance between two powerful Kings and so he sent back the hostages with a promise to return the ships which had been supplied to him in good condition. He announced at the same time, the approaching arrival of the head of the French trading station to settle the accounts and to repay loans advanced in cases where the value of the merchandise which had been taken from the warehouse was not enough to pay the out-standing debts.

The Bishop was released from his fetters on the same day as the letters were received, and was taken to Court. He was made to walk through the town barefooted, hatless and in rags. The missionaries also appeared loaded with fetters.

The presiding official proudly announced that if the French Commander made the slightest sign of hostilities, all the Christians would be blown from the cannon's mouth in revenge for his breach of good faith. M. de Métellopolis was commanded to write to the commander. He obeyed promptly and although the King and his ministers appeared satisfied with the missive, they substituted another for it and sealed it without allowing him to read it. The prisoners were sent back to their work, pending the receipt of a reply; they were confined in more spacious quarters, and experienced less discomfort.

Des Farges, anxious to set sail, sent back the last of the hostages who was very pleased at the kindly treatment he had received. It was thought that by this means, the prisoners would be able to gain their liberty, but only the Bishop was released. The others suffering from the hardships of so lengthy a confinement petitioned for death or liberty. This announcement produced its expected result. They were relieved of their bonds and the harsh treatment was somewhat relaxed. The court proclaimed that it was unlawful to jeer or to make lampoons on foreigners, and those who interfered with their religion were to be punished severely.

This first exhibition of clemency aroused hopes of a speedy release, but the Dutch fearing to see the French restored to favour, spread a report that France was sending out a punitive expedition against the Kingdom. The trick was successful; the prisoners were again put in chains and had no other consolation than to sing hymns. M. Paumard, a Missionary who was trusted at Court said that the reports spread by jealous enemies were nothing but absolute falsehoods and the court, which respected his outspokenness, believed him.

The prisoners were transferred to a neighbouring island whose climate was as fatal as had been the

putrid stench of the prison.

Many died in consequence, and the survivors passed days of continual suffering.

While they were suffering without hope of relief Father Tachard landed at Mergui at the end of 1690 and before entering further into the country informed the Barcalon that he was the bearer of a letter from Louis XIV and that he had been entrusted with negotiations for the renewal of the alliance between the two crowns; and that he could not, without compromising his position, ask for an audience without previous assurance of the nature of his reception. Two Siamese officials who had come from France went in advance to the Court where they made a great display of the magnificence of the French King and of the honours that had been conferred on them even after it was known that his forces had been obliged to evacuate the fortified posts of Mergui and Bangkok.

The vanity of the Siamese was immensely tickled by the fact that a King, whose power had humbled the pride of Holland, the only country dreaded in the Indies, had sought alliance with them.

The first result of this embassy was the restitution of the Seminary, which by the energy of the Bishop of Métellopolis was soon restored.

An Armenian lent him a large sum which M. Deslandes, the head of the French trading station at Surat had the generosity to repay.

The zeal of the missionaries had become more active under the stress of persecution and they did their utmost to minister to the needs of the sufferers. The prelate, frightened by the despair which had caused them to beg for death, offered to stand surety for them to the King. The respect inspired by his virtues granted his wish and on the faith of his promise, the others obtained their freedom.

The Seminary was over-crowded with 113 people, who were destitute of both food and clothing. The prelate deprived himself of the necessaries of life so as to relieve their more pressing wants. No one knew how he managed to do what he did, but generosity is never exhausted by gifts. The King himself was astonished at his never-failing charity and wishing to help, contributed 500 crowns.

It was by the bishop's exertions that many Christians condemned to slavery regained their liberty. Others held by officials as debt slaves could not satisfy the greed of their masters, and languished in chains until 1695.

The persecution which had crowned so many martyrs had also been productive of many apostates. The Siamese cruel in the invention of tortures, are too cowardly and too weak to bear them; and their example is another proof that cruelty is a vice that accompanies a pusillanimous character. History records events only that we may profit by them and on reading the account of this revolution, it is important to disentangle causes.

Faulcon, whose position was always uncertain and unstable in a country where his condition of foreigner exposed him to envy and hatred, thought he could have kept his position by calling in the help of the Europeans against the Siamese, who although indebted to him were none the less his enemies. He had no ambition to mount the throne as his foes have reported. Contented with the second place, it would have been madness on his part to have formed the idea of taking the first. The French eagerly seized the chance of extending their power and commerce, and, dazzled by the magnitude of his promises, they were foolish enough to believe that they were to be the leading power in the Indies.

Faulcon made religion serve his ambitious policy. Those who were really interested in the triumph of the Faith, were led astray by the hope of converting the King to Christianity. But the French officers less zealous and more far-sighted, were well aware that the project was but a snare set by the minister to appeal to their credulous simplicity.

Forbin, when questioned by Louis XIV replied that the King of Siam had not the slightest idea of forsaking the faith of his fore fathers and added that in the first audience given to the ambassadors, Chaumont made a long speech on the beauties of Christianity and that Faulcon who acted as interpreter never said one word about it to his master; and that in private audiences the ambassador had always laid great stress on religion, but that the interpreter had invariably proved faithless. The Bishop of Métellopolis who had been present and who understood the Siamese language could have divulged the matter, but he feared the wrath of a minister who knew how to punish as well as how to reward.

Father Tachard was one of the ringleaders of this expensive expedition. Doubtless, his zeal misled him in his blind trust of the cunning minister whose secretary he was, and Forbin states definitely that he has seen several documents signed by the King and lower down, "Tachard." So while this Father was lording it in the councils of State, the bishops and priests were preaching among humble dwellings

where they were more sure of finding converts than they were in the royal palace. This revolution could easily have been foreseen. The predilection of the King for the French was a passing caprice rather than a decided liking. Their position could only have been secure during the life of the King, who, in leaving his throne to his successor rarely transmits his likes and dislikes. The appearance of the French on the scene was brilliant but the favour in which they were held was unstable, even as they were.

It is a fate which they experience every where, Fortune smiles on them at first, they seem made for the conquest of all hearts; and they end by being disliked.

CHAPTER VII.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1760.

At the end of the last century, the Kingdom of Siam was in a flourishing condition as far as internal affairs were concerned, and was respected by outside nations.

The help that Louis XIV had condescended to render, had assured its prosperity, and might have sufficed to correct its constitutional vices; but what ought to have given it a new brilliancy was the cause of its misfortune and its overthrow. The Siamese were ignorant of the value of a benefit which would have ensured their safety.

The pusillanimous prince feared to accept the services of 500 men who had been sent to defend him. They were regarded as ambitious persons who although under the title of friends had only come to be their tyrants. The Buddhist priests stirred up sedition against their noble defenders, and placed an ambitious man on the throne who had dazzled them by an affectation of zeal for their rites.

Pitracha, seated on a throne defiled with the blood of the royal family combined in himself all the talents of great men with all the vices of the vilest scoundrels. As soon as he had compelled the French to leave the Kingdom, he found nothing else at which to take offence. Whilst surrounded by his satellites, and enjoying the fruit of his crimes, a Peguan priest, who gave himself out to be the elder of the two brothers of the late King fomented a new rebellion. He had been a prisoner in Ayuthia for a long time, and during his incarceration had been informed of the state of the court. This imposter painted his story in glowing colours and ten thousand Siamese rallied to his standard.

It was easier for him to delude individuals than to cater for an army, but the fanaticism he inspired caused his followers to close their eyes to the magnitude of the peril and all appeared ready to fight or to die for their leader.

The son of the King having determined to take a pleasure trip to a spot at some distance from the capital, proceeded thither with a magnificent retinue. The Peguan priest determined to lay an ambuscade in a forest through which the royal party would be obliged to pass.

His plan was to massacre him and all his suite, to march on the unsuspecting city, and to make away with the King and all the Royal family.

The plot which had been kept a profound secret would have been quite successful had not the innate suspicions of the children of the tyrant enlightened the prince as to the danger which threatened him.

He saw the armed mob and at once perceived that he was about to be attacked and so instead of defending himself, he fled promptly, leaving a rich booty, the collection of which prevented pursuit by the conspirators. When they had satisfied their cupidity they marched on the capital which they had hoped to find defenceless. Pitracha however having heard of the danger into which his son had nearly fallen, at once sent out a force of 12,000 men to disperse the rabble.

The rebel priest at first was of good cheer but he led forces without courage or discipline as everything was to be feared and nothing could be hoped for. His little army panic-stricken melted away without striking a blow. Only 300 prisoners were taken and not more than 300 perished by the sword.

The Priest pretender wandered in the woods for several days with a young man who had remained faithful. He was found sleeping under a tree and was taken to Ayuthia where, chained to a post, he was exposed for several days to the contumely of the mob, and afterwards he was disembowelled and while still breathing saw his own entrails being devoured by dogs.

It seems that Pitiracha did not enjoy the throne for long, as his son succeeded in 1700. The first year of his reign was marked by a scandalous marriage with his father's widow who gave her hand but not her heart.

This Princess had an extraordinary career she was successively the wife of the father, the son and the grandson.

This victim of passion never reciprocated the love which she inspired in others and to separate herself from a husband whom she detested, retired to a convent where she died in 1715.

The new King, a prey to superstition and debauchery, surrendered himself entirely to the idolatrous priests, who, by their austerities, engaged to expiate his faults. Following his example, everyone built temples. Trade and manufactures languished and the populace given up to fantastic ceremonies no longer gave thought to the question of the defences of the State. The false gods had many worshippers and the State had no soldiers available for defence. Fortune favoured the kingdom as the neighbouring Kings were all engaged in war against each other and having too much on their hands at home, had no time to think of foreign aggression.

It was in this reign that the kingdom was visited by the scourge of famine. A long period of drought had converted the fertile soil into a barren dust. The rice, which is the staple food stuff, was soon exhausted; fish became scarce and poisonous. The water of the River naturally clear and limpid, suddenly became green and turbid.

A sort of green scum covered the surface of the great river and the fish were either dead or dying. The King feared that the polluted water would only increase the sickness in the land and forbade its use for drinking or washing purposes.

This prohibition caused discontent among the populace, for whom water is a most necessary article.

The revolt was ready to break out, when the court appealed to popular superstitions to avert the calamity. The priests said that a god known as Pra In had appeared near one of the city gates and had declared that the change of the water was one of his blessings and had become a panacea for the ills they suffered. At this news, the whole populace, passed from despair to hope, every one ran to the river to wash and to anoint themselves with scum that had appeared so deadly a moment before. At last after 15 days the phenomenon passed away. Abundant rains caused the water to overflow the country and to fertilise the ground.

The reign of this Prince, like that of his successors, offers nothing worthy of record.

His son, who succeeded him, is only known by the defeats he sustained.

His army 50,000 strong and his fleet carrying 20,000 fighting men, invaded Cambodia, at that time torn with internal dissensions.

This army would have been victorious if its leader had been more skilful. But the King of Siam, enervated by harem life, had entrusted the command to his first minister, a man of peace, and without skill in warfare.

The Minister who well knew the direction in which his talents lay, had no wish to take the command, but the King who thought he could make no mistake in the choice of his agents, was certain that one who knew how to govern an Empire would also know how to conquer.

The King of Cambodia, too weak to offer resistance to the invading hosts, ordered all his subjects who lived on the frontiers to retire with their belongings to the capital and to burn everything that they could not carry away. The fields were laid waste, fifty leagues of territory were changed into sterile deserts that could hardly sustain animal life.

The King declared himself a vassal of the King of Cochin China in order to obtain a force of 15,000 men for land defence and 3000 for service on the galleys for the defence of the coast. The Siamese army, full of confidence in the superiority of numbers, and still more proud to find that no foe dare dispute their passage, rashly penetrated into the country but the further they advanced, the nearer they approached to their fate. Famine, more cruel than the sword ravaged their camp. The devastated fields, gave neither fruits for man nor forage for beast.

They were obliged to slaughter their baggage animals in order to provide themselves with meat.

The soldiers, unaccustomed to a flesh diet, were attacked by fever and dysentery and more than half of their number died.

The leader who had forseen the catastrophe, but had been unable to prevent it, retired with the remainder of his army and was harassed in the rear by his enemies without respite.

The Siamese fleet four times larger than that of the enemies met with no better fate. Their small vessels fired the town of Pontemas 200 tons of ivory were destroyed by the flames. The Cochin Chinese profited by the absence of these vessels to attack the transports anchored four miles from the town. The Siamese vessels aground in the river, which was extremely low could render no assistance, and fearing that famine would be as detrimental to the fleet as it had been to the army, set sail for their own country.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1760.

Before narrating the events of the revolution which, in 1760, threw the Kingdom of Siam into confusion, we ought to give a summary of the succession to the throne.

The heir of Pittracha had several sons and as he was displeased with the eldest, he nominated the second as heir to the throne. This man showed that he was really worthy of the crown by his refusal to accept the succession to the detriment of his elder brother. He only made one condition and that was in case the elder were to predecease him, the succession should devolve on himself. This condition was accepted. The elder received the heritage of his father and the younger was declared Crown Prince, that is to say heir-presumptive to the throne.

The new King had several children and misled by parental affection, showed none of that generous nature of which his brother had given so noble an example.

Faithless to his promises he nominated his eldest son who had entered the priesthood, as his successor. The young Prince a respecter of promises made, had no wish to be a party to the perjury committed by his father. He preferred the simplicity of the monastery to the splendour of the Court, which he could only enjoy by desecrating the memory of his father.

The King seeing him persist in his refusal appointed in 1733 his second son to be his successor and died shortly afterwards of a cancer in the throat.

The brother of the dead King was known as the Crown Prince, and the Siamese were accustomed to look upon him as their future ruler. Five thousand soldiers whom he kept in his palace, were ready to devote their lives in support of his rights.

His nephew relying on his father's will, had collected a force of 40,000 men in the Royal palace so as to overawe his rival. He had been careful to win the four chief officials of the State over to his side and having charge of the Treasury, it was a simple matter to purchase adherents. All the common people were in the power of the officials who all hoped to extend their authority over a young and inexperienced ruler, who would be obliged to put the burden of state affairs on their shoulders.

The union of the nobility under the flag of the young Prince, seemed to indicate that his cause would be successful, but in reality it was the cause of his downfall, owing to internal jealousies as to who should be leader. The higher officials thought that the Barcalon, misusing his almost unlimited power, wished to use them as tools for his personal aggrandisement.

They appeared to fear that after having been sufficiently powerful to hold the Crown Prince in subjection, he would yield to the temptation of taking the crown for himself.

It seemed more fit that they should obey their old masters rather than to see themselves reduced to ask favours of an equal, and thus all plotted secretly to destroy their work.

War broke out between the two rival Princes. The disturbance was aggravated by the party feeling of the mob. Shots were exchanged between the two palaces. The frightened inhabitants awaited death in their houses and the whole town would have been reduced to a heap of ruins had the gunners been good marksmen.

The Barcalon, full of confidence, resolved to risk a decisive engagement, having the lesser palace as its objective.

A hand to hand conflict occurred, and the Crown Prince's forces were routed and pursued to his own palace wall. The conquerors took counsel as to practicability of carrying the palace by storm. The Barcalon and his friends voted for the proposition, but one of the chief leaders said that as it was nearly dark, it would be better to defer the attack till the next day alleging that by so doing fewer lives would be endangered than if a night attack were to be attempted.

His advice was taken and the assault was deferred. The Crown Prince, being informed by spies of all that passed in the camp of the enemy, took advantage of the sense of security inspired by an initial success and convinced that the advantage lies with the attacking force, made a sortie against the forces near the foot of the palace walls. The darkness increased the fear inspired by this attack.

The besieged, taken by surprise and being defenceless, allowed themselves to be slaughtered like brute beasts. Others took flight, and casting away their weapons, were pursued to the walls of the grand palace. The King sent reinforcements to act as a barrier against the host ready to devour him. The lawless and rebellious soldiery renounced their allegiance and instead of obeying his orders deserted to his uncle.

Seeing that he was betrayed and deserted by his adherents, he put all his trust in the Malays whom he employed, and having encouraged them with magnificent gifts and by hopes of great rewards, they left the palace with proud and haughty expressions which seemed to bear witness to their zeal and to be an earnest of victory. But hardly had these mercenaries left the palace behind when they gave an example of the greatest infidelity, or of meanness of character.

These strangers, loaded with gifts, deserted the flag of their benefactor. Some retired to their own country to enjoy the fruits of their treason, and, others baser still, enrolled themselves under the banner of those against whom they had promised to fight.

The Barcalon and the Chakkri, standing on the high walls of the palace, were the sad witnesses of the desertion. Fearing for their safety they disappeared on the pretext of going to issue some orders. The other officers, not seeing them return, scattered to find some refuge where they would be secure against the anger of the conqueror.

The King remained alone with his two brothers awaiting his end. The elder brother retired into his monastery, where he deplored the disturbed state of affairs of which he was neither the author, nor an accessory. The other two, forsaken by their mercenary followers, escaped with some servants in a boat and managed to carry off a large sum of money as well.

As soon as the Crown Prince had been informed that the Royal palace had been abandoned, he ordered his men to take possession. Several princes of the Royal family had shut themselves up in the palace as in some sanctuary. They were loaded with chains and were made to suffer all manner of tortures invented by the cunning of revenge and after all their property had been confiscated, they had no hope left but death.

This civil war caused considerable bloodshed, but more perished by the sword of the executioner than on the battlefield.

The new King, on his accession to the throne, gave an example of the greatest clemency which dulled the remembrance that the slaughter of his subjects had been the cause of his success.

He offered the crown to the eldest of his nephews, but in vain.

This latter, a religious prince, resolved to die in the priesthood, as he ultimately did. The King was sure that his position was insecure as long as the two fugitive princes were not in his power. The old officials wandered about the kingdom and stirred up civil strife.

The Chakkri and the Barcalon had the temerity to appear in the capital, dressed as priests. They thought to escape punishment by appearing in a dress that was respected.

The King, in order not to commit any outrage against the priesthood, arranged that they should be arrested by the Chief priest. They appeared before a tribunal where they were subjected to a searching cross-examination. Their cunning replies were unanswerable.

They pleaded that they had been carrying out the King's orders and that they had been pledged to serve him absolutely.

By this excuse they were enabled to escape, the terrible punishment which had been prepared for them.

It had been determined that they should be hung up with hooks by the chin until they expired. The idea was that their punishment should resemble the fate of fishes, as being keen anglers they had caused the death of many fish, a heinous offence to the Siamese who have scruples against fishing.

As the judges found no evidence on which to convict them, the King sought other methods by which he might undo them. He took counsel with the ministers and the legal luminaries of the kingdom, who, after examining the charges on which they had been arraigned, replied, that far from being culpable they were worthy of the highest rewards. The verdict was remarkable, coming from the mouth of judges who trembled under the sceptre of a despot, a single word from whom could degrade or destroy them.

The despot himself announced that "A citizen is not guilty in carrying out the orders of his superiors."

He ordered that the accused should be instantly released, and as if wishing to honour their fidelity, he appointed them to the control of the two chief temples in the city where they hoped to lead a peaceful existence in the obscurity which is the only protection of a citizen against the violence of arbitrary power.

But hardly were they installed in their retreat, when, towards midnight, five or six Malays came to demand them in the King's name. They guessed that sentence of death had just been passed on them. The Barcalon, indifferent to his fate, showed that life no longer appealed to him and far from being terrified, reproached the Chakkri for his weakness and cowardice.

He told him that he must bow to the inevitable. When they were outside the temple, they were stripped of their priestly robes and were given a loin-cloth. The Barcalon beheld the instruments of death without betraying the slightest emotion and presented his breast to the dagger of the executioner and died, pierced by a single stroke. The Chakkri, on the contrary, tried to defend himself, and received many wounds before he was finally disposed of. Their bodies were taken away and impaled and exhibited to the public eye as an example of the vengeance of the King.

The two princes who had escaped, were a continual source of trouble. For a long time they managed to evade their pursuers; and means were taken to prevent them from escaping to some neighbouring country where they might have been able to stir up a rebellion. They remained hidden in a rice field, and were soon deserted by all their servants except one who remained faithful.

This faithful attendant used to go to forage for them. They passed a month in this way exposed to the weather; a prey to their needs and to fear.

At last the servant was recognised in a public place where he was wont to make purchases for his unhappy masters. Several persons identified him as having escaped with them, and that as he had been their companion in flight, he ought to know their hiding place. The secret was wrested from him by torture.

The Princes were captured and confined in the palace dungeons. From that moment knew that death would soon be their portion and that their uncle would never pardon them as they were the sons of his enemy. They were put to the question, and in their answers they showed more firmness than would have been expected from their youth. Sentence had preceded trial and hence they were unanimously condemned to death.

The younger had designed some dresses for a theatrical performance which he had desired to be performed. He asked that, before his death, he might be allowed to see them. This showed that he was childish, or, rather frivolous. The Queen, in vain begged that their request might be granted. The King replied that they had been born with desires that would one day be fatal to the State. These Princes whose fate should have excited compassion were not regretted in the least. It was generally known that their tastes were depraved. It was not by their death that the Crown Prince really became King. He gave his whole heart to his nephew, who had refused the crown that the Siamese had wished to offer him.

The King's predilection excited the jealousy of his eldest son who made a plot to assassinate their cousin, and a day was arranged for the execution of this wicked design.

The Prince had gone to pay his respects to the King and was attended by his cousins who by certain gestures gave him an inkling of the plot against his life. He became frightened and fell at the King's feet who being informed of the plot, made enquiries into the truth of it. The second and third of his sons were convicted of being the authors of the barbarous idea. This father, horror stricken, summoned them fore him and pronounced such dreadful punishments against them that, in order to clear themselves, they protested that their elder brother had led them into crime. The father was deeply grieved on learning that his dearest son had been the most guilty. He summoned him to his presence

and made him lie on the ground to receive his punishment. The Priest-prince, witness of the terrible scene, of which he was the innocent author, thought of what the consequence might be, of a punishment inflicted on one who might one day be his master. He prostrated himself on the body of the guilty and cried out. "Father, order that I receive the beating rather than your son". The King was a father and was soon turned from his purpose by his feelings. His wrath merely found vent in threats against his guilty son, who, to become reconciled with the priest-prince, entered the same monastery; but in the shadows of his retreat he enjoyed all the sweets of power. The chief officers of state and the people continued to regard him as the heir-presumptive to the crown. As it happened, he left the priesthood in 1740 and his father declared him his successor. Henceforth he lived in the palace which was appointed for Crown princes, but was quite unworthy of his father's choice. His vices drew upon him the hatred of his father in 1756. He was accused by his bastard brother of having defiled his father's bed, and was summarily sentenced to imprisonment for life. There remained but two legitimate sons to the King whom he had had by the late Queen.

The elder had sunk into the lowest depths of debauchery, which was sufficient reason against his succession to the throne, so much the more so as he was afflicted with a loathsome disease. The younger was preferred to him, he was called Chaoual Padou, that is to say, Lord of the Temple. This prince, brought up from his earliest years among the priests was permeated with the poison of error. A zealous champion of the foolish religion of his country, he was beloved by the nation who saw their superstitions ennobled by so illustrious an example. A stickler for justice, he punished fraud and theft with severity. His good qualities were universally recognised by all from the Crown Prince downwards. His marriage which occurred shortly after his accession, was regarded as a token of the prosperity of the State. His father bent by age died in 1748 aged 80 years. Chaoual Padou was soon recognised by all the officials of the State. Some of his bastard brothers attempted to stir up civil strife, but they did not escape punishment. They were cast into prison where they died of neglect. Peace reigned in the Kingdom after their death, and the people gave him no cause for anxiety.

But his brother whom he rashly had recalled to court favour, was a cause of scandal. He bitterly criticised the government and behaved as a ruler, rather than as a subject and to lighten the disgrace of his degradation, he managed to place himself at the right hand of the King too modest and too weak to punish him.

At last the King being no longer able to tolerate his imperious behaviour, resolved to abdicate a crown the burden of which had become insupportable, and to retire to the seclusion of monastic life. For a second time he donned the robes of a priest and shut himself up with about a thousand idolatrous priests whom he endeavoured to surpass in pseudo-science and in the art of fortelling the future. He sought a secret means by which to render himself invisible and immortal by the use of mercury of which he took so large a dose that all his teeth fell out. Devoting his whole time to futile researches, he became quite indifferent to affairs of State and had no other relaxation than to pore over lying records and to extract therefrom stories fit merely for the credulity of fools.

While he was living in seclusion in his country, the enemy carried fear and destruction to the gates of the capital.

The King, who knew nothing of statecraft or of war, was powerless to avert the storm. The Princes and nobles went in a body to the temple of Chaoual Padou and begged him to take up the reins of the stricken Empire. He acceded to their wishes and his brother, laying aside his pride as there was no time for concealing his weakness and incapacity, handed over the sceptre that he could wield no longer and invited him to re-ascend the throne. He yielded to the pressure brought to bear on him from so many quarters and sacrificed his own inclinations for a quiet life.

But before entering into the details of the revolution we ought to give some account of the strength and situation of the people who were to be their adversaries.

In 1754 the Burmese, the inhabitants of the kingdom of Ava had been in subjection to the Peguans for five years. They had seen the death of their King, their Queen and the majority of the Royal family. The memory of their past misfortunes and the present reality of their servitude, and degradation caused them to yearn for a deliverer. They did not seek one among those enervated by the luxury of court life or those who in the pride of their usurped titles measured their capabilities by their ambition.

Their eyes were turned to one of their fellow-countrymen Manlong by name, a gardener by profession who though physically compelled to labour of a humble description, had the bravery and heart of a hero. With one voice all united in begging him to accept the crown so as to free them from the yoke of their tyrants. "Yes" replied this extraordinary man! "I agree to become your King, but first of all I wish to find out whether you are worthy of having such a leader as I! I command you to go and cut off the heads of all those petty oppressors whom the Peguans have set over you."

All answered, "If that is all you want us to do, you shall be obeyed speedily," and forthwith they departed to slay all the military and judicial officers whom their tyrants had placed in authority over them. Soon they returned to their hero, their hands streaming with the gore of their oppressors and proclaimed him King without a dissentient voice.

The new King distributed arms to his subjects. He taught them to ride and to shoot as he himself was a good horseman and a dead shot. His musketeers were ordered to fire on any one who had the cowardice to retreat either in siege operations or in actual battle. This new discipline was rigorously observed. The Burmese became invincible and dominated Pegu. A Peguan commander who had retreated with his army into a forest, on learning that the Burmese army had returned to Ava, took advantage of their absence to recapture Siriam, a seaport town of Pegu. He captured a ship which he at once fitted out and departed early in 1759 for Pondicherry on the Coromandel coast.

At the same time he wrote to the governor of the French stations in the East Indies to whom he sent valuable gifts in the hope of obtaining guns and military stores.

The ship was unable to reach the Coromandel coast; contrary winds rendered it necessary to anchor at Mergui a seaport of Siam. The Burmese army returned to Siriam three days after the departure of the ship. The King, who was in command wished to give an example of severity to the people. The town was utterly sacked and at the mere sound of their approach the Peguans and their leader fled to the forests.

The Governor of Tavoy, a Peguan city close at hand had established himself as an independent ruler. The Burmese King advanced to Martaban, a town close to Tavoy, and demanded the governor to surrender. The governor was too weak to offer any resistance and therefore complied. But his submission availed him nothing, for as soon as the King arrived, his head was cut off. It was here, that the King hearing about the richness of Siam conceived the idea of attempting its conquest, but wishing to have a valid excuse for his greed, he demanded that they should restore the ship that had been seized at Siriam from whence it had been brought to Mergui. The Siamese court having been informed that the ship was bound for Pondicherry ordered that the ship should continue the voyage in order to maintain the friendly relations existing between the Siamese court and the French stations.

This refusal was the cause of a war in which many lives were lost.

The Burmese King, having seized all the shipping and wealth of the country, made Tavoy his headquarters. He sent out an expedition of 30 vessels to reduce and burn the town of Mergui and to take similar action against Tenasserim, the chief town of a province of the same name.

At the approach of the fleet, the inhabitants of Mergui fled and the town, previously so full of inhabitants, was left deserted.

M. M. Andrien and Lefebvre, French missionaries, seeing before them a prospect of danger and useless suffering, embarked with their converts in two ships of which one was a French vessel and the other was the very ship to which the King of Ava laid claim. The fugitive inhabitants, after aimless wanderings sought refuge in the forests and in desert islands.

The King of Ava, surprised at the fear inspired by his name and forces, was quite sure that the conquest of Siam would be an easy matter. The fact of a whole province having been subdued by his little fleet, gave him to hope that there would be no obstacle to the success of his united forces. He visited Tavoy in person, being the place at which the different sections of his army had been ordered to assemble. As soon as the Siamese court had been informed that the Burmese had invaded the country, the Barcalon sent to the Bishop of Tabraca ordering that Christians should be called upon for military service. The Bishop replied that he would willingly send all those whom he believed were physically able to defend their King and country. He summoned his converts at once pointed out the danger by which the country was threatened, and exhorted them by the sacred ties of King and fatherland. The flock, obedient to the voice of the shepherd, remembered that the God of Peace whom they served was likewise the God of Battles. More than one hundred took up arms for the common defence. This levy, though so small in numbers was sufficient to give examples of courage to the others.

The Priest King who had just come to the throne was without resources to carry on a successful struggle against so warlike a foe. He knew the weakness of his subjects only too well not to put his trust in them.

His arsenals were well furnished with arms and ammunition, but he lacked men to make good use of them. He commanded a timid and undisciplined mob, equally incapable of attack or defence, who had been pressed into service to meet the urgency of the situation, and who trembled at the sound of firearms. A fair-sized army of this character had been collected but was of no use against an enemy.

These miserable cowards threw down their arms on the approach of the Burmese, and, conquered without striking a blow, fled to the capital which was thus overcrowded with useless mouths. The Christians acted in quite a different manner and behaved heroically to a man. The King seeing their bravery, entrusted to them the guardianship of the palace and the city walls, but they were too few to present an unbroken front to the swarms of the enemy who were overrunning the country. They had left their homes defenceless, and, placing duty before the safety of their own possessions, they had left them to the greed of an enemy to whom plunder was the main object.

The hour of the downfall of Siam was not yet come. The Burmese King was but three days march from the capital when he was attacked by a fatal illness. Thinking less of his sickness than of the obstacle that had checked his victorious progress, he summoned certain Europeans serving in his army to his bedside. He asked them in what time they could gain possession of the city. They replied that it could be done in three days, "Go quickly" answered the King, "and make this rich conquest and if fortune does not bear out your valour come back to me at once."

The army started. All the outlying villages were burnt, and even the suburbs of the capital were included in the devastated area. The Christian quarter alone was respected, as the Burmese warned of their valour, had not the courage to attack men so freed from earthly ties that they feared not death. Some of the Christians, who had not followed the example of flight set by the others, shot two of the enemy from the seminary, and this brave defence was the salvation of all. The terrified Burmese had no longer any desire to attack them. The Dutch quarter was reduced to ashes and only the warehouse known to contain valuable merchandise was spared.

While the town was threatened, the outlying districts were ravaged with fire and sword, and the inhabitants, loaded with fetters, were led into captivity. The children too weak to share their sufferings were the unhappy witnesses of tortures inflicted on their parents. Several children were put to the torture to make them reveal the hiding places of their parents' wealth. On information extorted by violence these pitiless creatures massacred unfortunate individuals without mercy who could only reproach themselves with not being rich enough to satisfy the greed of their executioners. The chief priests who were suspected of having concealed vast wealth, were repeatedly roasted on gridirons until they had confessed where their treasures were hidden.

Women were bound above the ankles so tightly that the cords cut into the flesh. Their inexorable tormentors made them answer questions by striking them with the flat of a sword, and even the cries and lamentations of the children whom they compelled to witness their cruelties could awake no compassion in their stony hearts.

The men received still harsher treatment. Their ankles were bound in the same way as those of the women, and, to add to their miseries their arms were tied behind their backs so that the elbows touched. It seemed in their wretched plight that their bowels were about to gush out. So severe were the agonies caused in the joints, that the victims swooned in many cases.

While these sad scenes were being enacted in the Provinces, the capital of Siam was attacked with vigour. But the enemy, after several futile assaults, were obliged to give up their task; and, taking advantage of the darkness to conceal the shame of their retreat, made the same signals as before; in order that the Siamese might still believe they remained near the walls. The news of the death of Burmese monarch caused them to renounce the hopes of conquest. The youngest of his sons was proclaimed King. He needed the army to strengthen his authority and to put down malcontents. The troops were ordered to evacuate Siam and never was a retreat more hurriedly beaten.

The Siamese, free from the yoke of foreign oppression, reoccupied their former possessions. Having suffered by experience, they ought to have taken steps to prevent a fresh invasion. The Dutch, established in the kingdom, could have provided them with artillerymen as there were many stationed at Batavia in the island of Java. But the Siamese unmindful of danger, and arrogant though cowardly, considered that it would be derogatory to their dignity to implore the help of a foreign nation to teach them lessons.

The high opinion which this nation held of itself, gave rise to the idea that the native Christians would form an impregnable barrier against foreign invasion.

The examples of bravery they had shown, caused them to be regarded as so many heroes to whom the common defence might be entrusted.

The French church was called the Church of Victory, and in gratitude for services rendered, presents were given of suitable garments to the Bishop, the priests and the converts. All the Christians who had assisted in the defence of their country received a gift of money and eight of them who had shown the greatest bravery in face of the dangers undergone, were promoted to the highest positions in the army.

The Siamese had no less confidence in their wisdom than they had had in their bravery. They were consulted as to what measures should be taken for national defence. These men full of zeal, showed that if they knew how to fight for their country, still more did they know how to advance the cause of their God.

They pointed out that, as during the war the temples had afforded shelter to the Burmese, they were of opinion it would be advantageous to destroy all the temples round the town, so much the more so, that in case of a new invasion it would be impossible to preserve them.

The elder brother of the King agreed with this proposition but the other Princes and all the priests regarded it as an act of sacrilege.

The King joined the latter party as his inclinations were all in the direction of his former station in life and even in the brilliancy of court functions, sighed in secret for the solitude of the temples.

A zealot for the religion of his country he showed that he was jealous of the praises showered upon the Bishop of Tabraca, who, was regarded as a heavenly messenger sent to reform their morals. The respect given to the worshipper and minister of a foreign God appeared to the Monarch to be a slight on the national religion.

He commanded that European titles only should be used as honorable appellations in his his case, and to suppress all Siamese words by which respect and greatness were indicated.

The order was by no means universally obeyed. The nobility and the people never ceased showing forth their regard for the Bishop and continued to load him with titles which he preferred to deserve rather than to receive.

This enmity engendered by jealousy would not have been productive of evil results as the Prince was weak rather than evil-minded. It seemed that peace would continue, but soon the State was plunged into a new commotion. The King pronounced sentence of death against a favourite of his brother's who was suspected of having carried on treasonable correspondence with the enemy. This decree was regarded as an abuse of his authority. The people demanded that account should be rendered of the blood shed on slight grounds of suspicion. A general discontent made the King re-enter the priesthood, and he appeared to abdicate the throne with more pleasure than he had ascended it. His elder brother became King, and the position which he thus occupied, showed up his vices and follies to the full light of day.

In May 1762 the Prince resigned the crown in favour of the priesthood. A great number of Siamese followed his example. The State was burdened with an excess of useless citizens who kept aloof from those they ought to have served. Sorcery and magic were the principal topics of conversation, everyone had formulae for the compounding of love philters for immoral purposes, and the secret of rendering the person invisible for the purpose of robbery and assassination without fear of punishment, was the universal object of research.

The priests who had become more haughty since the King had entered their order, demanded that they should receive divine honours. The ignorant populace wasted their substance in their support, and kept them in idleness. These holy ministers, naturally poor, found abundant means of livelihood in the folly of the vulgar, an inexhaustible ever ready source of supplies for the use of impostors. Not even was their moral character an object of respect. They frequently gave rise to many scandalous scenes and, immune from punishment, they would not even cast a veil over the filthy pleasures to which they were addicted. By greed and cunning they obtained possession of everything that could not be appropriated by force.

The reigning King gave precedent for these irregularities by his example.

Unbridled in his lusts, and shameless in his actions he had no other rule of conduct than his own sweet will; and in the intoxication of his brutal passions, had the folly to marry his father's sister openly. The nobility too feeble and too cowardly to attempt to reform the abuses, preferred to follow the example of the tyrant rather than to fall as victims.

The officials, brutalised by the debauchery into which they had sunk to please their master, knew neither how to foresee nor to fear coming troubles.

Their security was founded on the report that the Burmese King, a warlike and restless Prince, had been dethroned on his return to Ava, and that his elder brother was content to govern his own people and had no ambition for foreign aggression.

A peaceful régime seemed necessary to him to ensure his rule over a turbulent race, and his efforts

were directed towards the maintenance of peace and to the civilization of his people. He was highly indignant with those who had advised his father to attempt the invasion of Siam, that had cost the nation so many valuable lives, more precious than all the spoil they had carried off.

Such peaceable tendencies promised a spell of unbroken peace to the neighbouring Kingdoms, but the appointed hour struck for the punishment of a people sunk in slumber and debauchery. The peace-loving King died suddenly, and his successor a man of great ambition and, feeling too cramped in his own territories, was the rod by which God struck the Siamese.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1767.

The new Burmese monarch desired nothing better than warfare and conquests. Too proud to conceal his feelings, he boasted that he had promised his dying father to crush the the cowardly nation that merely waited for a conqueror to reduce it to bondage. Several high officials supported his ambitious projects.

His first victories were gained over his intractable and rebellious subjects. As soon as they had been subjugated, he sent one of his generals in command of five thousand picked troops to effect the capture of Tavoy, whose governor, although a Burman, had made himself independent in 1761.

This rebel, not feeling that he alone would be able to maintain his position with his own troops, sought an alliance with the English who supplied him with all manner of arms and ammunition. At same time a vessel from the Coromandel coast, and laden with rich presents for Pegu, was obliged to drop anchor at Tavoy. The idea of a rich booty won over the governor who resolved to appropriate so valuable a cargo in order to purchase an alliance with Siam, who, alone could have supported him in his encroachments.

Having taken possession of these valuable spoils unjustly, he sent them to the King of Siam and besought his assistance. The ministers took counsel together as to whether the reception of this embassy would be compromising to the dignity of the King, and for some time were uncertain whether good or evil would result if the conditions were accepted.

They thought the wisest course to pursue was to ask the opinion of the Bishop of Tabraca and the Missionaries, who having no personal interest in the matter ought to be able to give good advice. They replied that to protect a rebel was contrary to all equity and policy. They added that Tavoy had always been a Burmese dependency and that in assisting an ambitious man who had usurped the power, they would become accessories in the rebellion and would expose the Kingdom to the vengeance of a powerful neighbour, who had nothing to lose by defeat and everything to gain by victory. The ministers were satisfied with this answer and asked that it should be given in writing feeling sure that the authority of the Bishop and the missionaries backed up by their wisdom and character would have great weight with the King.

The document was drawn up, and the ministers presented it to the step-brother of the King, who was hankering after the rich presents of the rebellious governor. He made a great show of indignation against those who by their scruples would have deprived him of the objects of his greed. He tore up the document which indicated the line of action on which depended the peace and prosperity of the State.

The intrigues of the favourites were successful and the ambassadors were honourably received and listened to graciously. Urgent commands were sent to the governor of Tenasserim to fit out an expedition for the relief of Tavoy, but nothing came of the project. The governor of this town became the object of public execration; the bloodshed of the leading citizens was the means by which he had wished to consolidate his growing power, and his new subjects became his enemies. Attempts were made on his life in 1762, and as punishments were multiplied, the more unpopular he became.

The Burmese general had arrived at Martaban with his army. From this town he wrote to the governor ordering him to offer no resistance. He uttered dire threats against the inhabitants who refused to help him.

The people of Tavoy seeing an army ready to beseige their town, declared that they had determined to render homage to their legitimate ruler. The usurper surrounded by both foreign and domestic

enemies, weak in his defences and threatened by invasion, had no other resource left but flight.

He equipped a vessel for his escape, but the people by whom he was hated, suspected his plan and fired his ship either from motives of revenge, or to prevent him from carrying off his wealth.

He was so unwise as to show himself in public and found out that despots cease to be respected when their power is gone.

His subjects, who before had been trembling slaves, planned to slay him at the city gate. The women, always more excited by popular frenzy vied with each other for the honour of striking the first blow. They were highly delighted to see as a suppliant before them, one who formerly had exacted unquestioning obedience.

The rebel, after many adventures sought sanctuary at Mergui, to which place he was followed by his relatives and a few supporters who had either the nobility of character to wish to share his misfortunes, or perhaps so guilty that they feared the harshness of an angry judge.

His fleet of sixty galleys by no means reassured the inhabitants who were not anxious to shelter an outlaw pursued by a victorious army. Panic was general, some fled to the forests, and others to desert islands fearing death by starvation less than to have to appear before a wrathful conqueror.

The governor feared that those who had given him shelter would not respect the rights of hospitality for long. He only begged a small force with which to go and retake the town that he had evacuated on the strength of a false report. He considered that the letter from the Burmese General had been sent by an advanced body of troops whom he would keep up even in time of peace. He then began to doubt whether the document had been genuine and suspected that it had been the work of some disaffected persons who had concocted it to give him a false alarm, and to make him take his departure. He was so convinced that his idea was correct that he persuaded himself that his subjects were his only enemies. Thus a victim of his blind faith he went to give himself up to a ruler whom he had offended.

This rumour was taken as credible by so many that the captains of the ships at Mergui, who had been alarmed by the first news of the Burmese advance, believed they were in perfect safety. Trade that had been interrupted for some time was renewed. The fugitives returned to their houses, and the town that had been deserted for eight days, resumed its normal aspect. The Christians had been very anxious to embark for the Coromandel coast and only one availed himself of the offer of a Portuguese captain who sailed on January 8th, 1765, but the rest very soon saw that they had been misled by a false sense of security.

On the 10th of January, a confused noise as of a shouting multitude was heard in the evening by the river side. The sounds gave rise to the idea that the enemy were approaching and that the first alarms had been only too well founded. In fact the enemy were only three or four leagues from the city and a pilot had seen ten of their ships. A short period of calm succeeded this alarm. The pilot on being questioned replied that he had seen nothing whereupon everybody returned home quietly.

The missionaries were in a calmer frame of mind, because they had seen that quiet reigned on board the ships anchored in midstream, and were sure that the noise that had been reported was only a product of panic stricken imagination. But at four o'clock in the morning fifty gun shots were heard which left no longer room for doubt that the Burmese had arrived.

The startled inhabitants perceived that death or speedy captivity would be their portion. The captains of the trading ships cut their cables at once, and fearing to fall into the power of a savage foe, allowed their ships to drift with the stream without heeding the danger of shipwreck to which the inequalities of the river bed rendered them liable.

The Christians who remembered the horrors of the late war shuddered with dread at the thoughts of these savage creatures steeped in the gore of old men and of children butchered on the still smoking bodies of their mothers. All fled to their boats and endeavoured to escape from certain death.

The Burmese made their attack and found no resistance. The love of life had driven away all thoughts of defence.

The pillars of fire that were rising on all sides made the inhabitants judge that their country was but a wood-pile being devoured by the flames. M. M. Andrien and Alari both came down to the church and were soon followed by a crowd of Christians. These two missionaries exhorted them to make a generous sacrifice of their lives and promised to set them an example of how to meet death. The fire which was devouring the neighbouring houses was about to attack the church. M. Alari thought of running away and begged the others to look to their safety. He took some money for his needs and buried the rest at the foot of a tree, in the hope of finding it again after the fire had burnt out. He saw

that the enemies had gained possession of the gates. Then to save himself from the impending danger, he told a young servant who could speak Burmese to inform the soldiers at the gates that neither he nor his companions would offer any resistance. The Burman was satisfied with this message and with some money which was given to him he put down his spear, but he asked for and was given a shabby hat which had aroused his cupidity.

But the soldiers who came up shortly afterwards were not so moderate in their demands, for they pulled off all his clothes.

In vain they were informed that nakedness was shameful. He spoke to the Burmese but they would not listen to him. The same soldiers greedy for more valuable booty entered the house to seize what they could. They broke open the chest containing the sacred vessels which they defiled with their impious hands. The missionaries, robbed and almost naked were dragged to the harbour and put on board a ship. As the water was rough they were made to cross long stretch of ground covered with mud and they would have been buried in the mire if they had not been helped by two native servants who had still remained faithful.

Hardly had they embarked when they received the order to return. As soon as they had arrived at the general's tent they were placed on the ground, and were beaten with rods to make them put down their legs. This they had not done, as they were unaware of the etiquette of the Burmese towards their superiors. The general surrounded by his savage myrmidons commanded them in threatening tones to go with the other Christians to seize those ships which had not cut their cables. M. Alari who was also ordered to convey a letter to the captains, replied that his sacred office forbade him to take up arms and above all to shed human blood. Many of the bystanders testified to the truth of his statements and his excuse was accepted; but although they had escaped this danger they were reserved for more terrible misfortunes.

Attendants armed with lances conducted them to the bank of the river where they were obliged to witness the greatest scandals and the filthiest abominations. They were exposed in the middle of the public market, with their feet in the mud from daybreak till noon. Their hats which alone could have protected them from the burning rays of the sun had been stolen. They expected death any moment but awaited its approach fearlessly. A lively faith upheld them and they only noticed the misfortunes of other Christians who like themselves had fallen into captivity.

The general encamped by the shore, made careful enquiries in order to discover the place or any information as to where they had buried their wealth and the secret was discovered by torture.

M. Andrien was denounced as a wealthy man, and acting on the information received, the general went to the church with Gaspard, the honest servant of the virtuous missionary. Both prayers and threats were employed to make him reveal the spot where his master had hidden his wealth. The young man naively answered, "that as his master was a priest to whom earthly possessions were valueless, he had never possessed anything besides what the Burmese had carried off."

The greedy Burman unsatisfied with this answer, condemned him to the torture. His feet were thrust into a brazier of glowing charcoal in hopes that the torment of fire would make him reveal a secret that the insolence of authority had failed to do.

Gaspard, who had withstood their promises, showed that he cared naught for tortures. The barbarian was highly annoyed at such contumacious behaviour, whereas he ought to have admired the heroism displayed. He drew his sword and was about to cut off his head. The young man 17 years old was quite impervious to fear, he had not the slightest intention of begging for his life, he merely asked for a few moments in which to commend his soul to God "Let me say a prayer" he said, "and after which you may do as you please with me." His request was granted and after a short interval spent in prayer, he cried out "strike."

The general, amazed to see such heroic conduct in the case of one so young, was seized with a sudden admiration. He thought that a man who had given so striking a proof of fidelity to his masters, ought to join his retinue, and he was treated more as a favourite than as a slave. If we draw a comparison between the atrocities perpetrated by this nation in the war of 1760 and their conduct in this latter conflict, we can perceive that they had lost something of their former savagery. In the former struggle, children had participated in the tortures of their parents, but on this occasion they were merely mournful spectators. But even this blessed change which commenced to become apparent in the manners and customs of the Burmese was still too weak to disguise their pristine characteristics, especially in cases in which they had given themselves up to the lust of avarice. The following notices will assure the reader on these points.

When the Burmese King undertakes a war, he retains only the parents of the conquered as slaves,

and he generously hands over the children to the generals and other subordinate officers. It follows from this method of sharing the spoils, that children are often separated for ever from their parents. Here is a touching example of the unhappiness of such innocent victims.

A child six years of age, having been left in a boat, cried ceaselessly for his parents from whom he had just been separated. His streaming eyes were fixed in the direction of the spot where they had last been seen. After two days he saw on the bank one of his aunts to whom he was much attached. This woman, grieved at the loss of her nephew, followed the boat to console herself with a sight which could only make her grief more intense. The child, for whom the sight of his aunt was only a new torture, cried and stretched out his arms and called to her to help him, and at last flung himself in the river to go and rejoin her. The Burmese, untouched by this victory of nature, saved the child only to make him feel the loss of his liberty more keenly. A tender heart had restored him to his relatives, but the brutal captain thrust him into the hold of the vessel so as to run no further risk of losing him.

The Burmese are desirous of great wealth, and, although by nature a warlike race, it is rather the lust of pillage than the mere idea of glory that incites them to risk their persons. War is but a trade, according to their way of thinking, and he who returns with the richest spoils receives the greatest honour from his country. Those who fall into their power have every thing to fear if they are unable to satisfy their greed, and it is quite certain that avarice is the mainspring of their cruelty. A poor Christian, who was believed to be possessed of great wealth, was put to the torture to make him reveal the hiding place of his non-existent riches; but no amount of suffering could extort a word from him. The angry Burman in the presence of his wife and dying mother drew his sword to cut off his head. Frightened at the near approach of death, he begged for a respite, in the vain hope of discovering some means whereby the greed of his savage master might be satisfied. He was unable to fulfil his promises, and, to punish his failure, he was bound hand and foot and cast into the river.

His mother at the point of death, summoned up all her strength and looked at the surface of the water fated to be the tomb of her son, and, just as he was sinking, she grabbed him by the hair and saved his life.

A shipmaster by name Rolland was highly respected at Mergui where he carried on a considerable amount of trade. For a long time he was uncertain as to which party he should favour.

When he saw that the Burmese had gained possession of the town, he thought it expedient to set sail, but as his vessel was out of repair, it appeared that this course would be too dangerous. He retired with some of the members of his family to the hut of some Christians who had showed hospitality towards him, but he was shortly afterwards discovered and robbed of all his possessions. Unfortunately for him, he was found with arms in his possession. On being questioned as to their use, he replied, that, at the first rumour of the Burmese arrival at Mergui he had thought that a force of Malays a people well known in the Indies for their piratical tendencies, was about to make an attack, and that having at once resolved upon flight, he had taken up weapons with which to defend himself against tigers which were numerous in the forests. The shipmaster and his companions had no longer any fear for their life or their liberty.

The enemy were graciously pleased to give them back some garments and a fair supply of provender, more than they had expected from conquerors already pressed by famine.

To the Burmese, any attempt at self-defence is a heinous offence, and whoever has lifted his hand against them need not hope for any mercy. Thus instead of respecting the bravery of a foeman, they show pity only on the poltroon who grovels before them.

A Moorish ship, in setting sail had fired several guns at their vessels. Four sailors who had not had time to embark were ruthlessly slaughtered in revenge for the deed of their companions. Their cruel fate caused much anxiety among the Christians. Several had been convicted of bearing arms, and there was no doubt that sentence of death would be shortly pronounced against them. The executioner was awaiting the signal to give the fatal blow. In this moment of suspense, a venerable old man advanced crawling on hands and knees and prostrating himself before the general, informed him that the condemned missionaries were well known for their bounty and their zeal for the relief of those in trouble, and that far from having taken up arms with hostile intent, their religion forbade their use even for purposes of self-defence. All those present appeared moved, and took their part with the general, who at last relented. The sentence of death was revoked. The Christians and Mahomedans who would have been slaughtered together, were sentenced to transportation to Pegu to swell the ranks of the royal slaves.

An unforeseen occurrence was the cause of great rejoicings on the part of the Christians. At this period these unhappy people, expecting no human aid, had given themselves up to God alone. They saw a young Portuguese half-caste who had just arrived from Pegu, come on board their vessel. He offered

to be their liberator on condition that they would follow him to Pegu to minister to the Christians who had no pastors in that country. This young man Jeanchi by name, was a native of Macao in China. He had been carried off as a slave from Mergui by the Burmese in 1760, and had been taken to Pegu where by his industry he had found a means of gaining his freedom. His abilities were well known and well rewarded.

He afterwards married the granddaughter of Constantine Faulcon and was besides a zealous Christian. The missionaries welcomed their deliverer as a messenger from heaven. He claimed them as ministers of his religion and the general released them on those grounds without further delay. Owing to the fact that his duties frequently called him to distant ports, he sent them back in charge of a Burmese captain of milder disposition than the rest. The captain who had his own affairs to attend to, forgot to supply them with food. In the evening, Jeanchi sent them a little rice which they shared with the other destitute Christians. He endeavoured to muster all the scattered Christians together and lodged them in houses that had been spared by the fire. Sometimes he found young children whom he restored to their sorrowing parents. Sometimes he gave back a wife to her husband, and when he could not succeed by artifice he cast himself down before the leaders to beg for their release with great eloquence. "Kill me," he would say to them "and let me no longer be the witness of their misfortunes which I myself feel so deeply." His prayers were heard as he was regarded as a national hero. His skill had directed the operations of the war and his courage had contributed to their success. But in spite of his importunities, and the esteem in which he was held, he was unable to obtain the Christian virgins whom the barbarians wished to retain for the gratification of their brutal lust. It was pitiable to hear the groans of these pure unsullied doves, who sighed for the deliverance that none could afford them. The married women were more fortunate, as they were protected by the scruples which these savages hold regarding the sanctity of the marriage-tie. These scruples acted as a check on their unbridled lust, and it was quite sufficient for a man to claim a woman as his wife to prevent an attack on her modesty.

Several virgins declared they were married women and by this harmless fib they were enabled to avoid the brutish embraces of the men whom they considered as executioners rather than as lovers.

The ships that had been obliged to beat a hurried retreat had abandoned part of their cargoes on the bank. The missionaries and the other Christians were obliged to put these goods on board other vessels; all were forced to this work without exception. The master found himself working beside his slave. Several old and respectable ladies walked along, staggering under heavy burdens that taxed their strength, and frequently whips were used to stimulate their exertions.

The Burmese were too eager for plunder to be satisfied with the conquest of Mergui. One of their generals set out with the greater part of the army against Tenasserim, the capital of a province of the same name.

This town although strongly fortified did not appear to a sufficient defence against the Burmese rabble, who reached the foot of the walls without meeting any resistance. The gates were wide open and the terrified inhabitants had fled to the forests to avoid a danger that they were unwilling to face. Fear had exaggerated the number of the foemen, and the governor had been the first to desert his post. They were conquered by terror rather than by the arms and the valour of their enemies. The Burmese filled their ships with loot and having seized everything of value, fired the town and returned in triumph to Mergui. Jeanchi, who was anxious for the safety of the missionaries made them embark with their converts. The voyage was only of six days' duration and although they were well-cared for, they had to suffer in various other ways. They were continually threatened with death if the least thing were to be missing from the plunder on their arrival. Twenty soldiers armed with spears and daggers watched all their actions and they were forbidden to get ahead of the war-vessels that were acting as their escort to the harbour.

They were welcomed on their arrival by two Peguan Christians who showed great pleasure at meeting them. They were escorted by a ship belonging to a rich and powerful Mahomedan who did his utmost to protect those in trouble.

He informed them that their master had given him permission to take them on board his own ship where they would be in safety. After this comforting information, they set out to meet the generous Mahomedan, by name Mamasadech, who evinced the greatest sympathy for their sorry plight, and promised to rescue the Christian girls from the arms of their ravishers. As a result, next day an edict was issued forbidding the Burmese of all classes to insult any Christian.

The liberal Mahomedan spared no expense on behalf of the Christians. He gave them much good advice and showed the greatest sympathy towards those in misfortune. The missionaries assured of his good faith, breathed again. But at the moment of their new-found security they were summoned before the commander, who showing them the vases and sacred vessels that had been seized, told them to point out which were their property. Having been satisfied on this point, he enquired how much money

had been taken from them. This cunning question caused M. Andrien much embarrassment, who feared to injure his despoilers and those whose vengeance he had to fear. He answered, that as his knowledge of the language of the country was scanty, he was unable to explain.

This reply aroused the suspicion that he had some money concealed. The general ordered that the torture should be applied. There was a cauldron of molten lead close at hand into which the hands of those from whom they desired to extort confessions were plunged. He was led up to the glowing metal and a soldier seized his hand, which he held out over the cauldron awaiting a signal to plunge it in. M. Andrien turned towards his judge with a calm expression and protested that he had concealed nothing, and, at the same instant, Mamasadech hearing of what was happening, ran up to save him from the impending danger. His companion underwent the same examination, but his fate was very different. He was unaware that to conceal money was a heinous offence among the Burmese. He had given some to Captain Jeanchi for the redemption of Christians from death and slavery and had reserved a moderate sum for the relief of his brethren. These facts caused his embarrassment when subjected to the examination that he feared.

He had been brought up in a school where mental reservation and equivocal replies were regarded as being contrary to the simple truth. He warned Jeanchi that he would be expected to answer, and that he did not intend to disgrace himself by uttering falsehoods.

Jeanchi was well aware of the consequences of an avowal that would be equally fatal to them both, and in order to forestall them, gave back the property together with the agreement that all his expenses would be paid, and, a few days after, stirred up a persecution caused by weakness rather than by hatred against his friends. He had been accused of having taken money from a Christian virgin who had laid information before the Viceroy. He feared that the evidence of M. Alari would only make his case worse and so thought he could best clear himself by declaring to the Viceroy that he had just restored the money to the missionary by whom it had been entrusted to him.

The Burman was wrath, and summoned the missionaries before him. They appeared destitute of all human succour. They had no knowledge of the language necessary for the proof of their innocence and had no interpreter other than their betrayer, who fearing to appear in league with them, was able to twist their replies to his own advantage. Their fears were justified by the result. Their defence was badly put, and the Viceroy, in an access of rage, as he had not understood the case, condemned them to death.

Their arms were bound with cords and they were dragged a short distance and prostrated before the seat of the Viceroy. Their fetters were taken off and they thought that they were about to be set at liberty. But suddenly they were surrounded by armed men, who, spear in hand, awaited the signal for their death. Their calmness seemed to bid defiance to their executioners.

A savage soldier thrust his lance several times near the breast of M. Alari and said, "Say where your money is hidden or I will stab you."

The saintly man quietly replied that he had none. His companion, when questioned made the same answer. The Viceroy fearing lest the secret of their treasure should be buried with them in the tomb, attempted to wring it from them by torture. At the word of command, a soldier seized a cudgel about seven or eight feet long and thick in proportion.

The missionaries lying face downwards on the ground were expecting death any moment. A stalwart ruffian approached and laid on several blows with the cudgel with his utmost strength.

Their bodies were streaming with blood and they were left for several hours on the spot exposed to the burning rays of the sun which rendered their wounds more painful. The irritation caused by insects eating their flesh and sucking their blood caused new torments, and they were surrounded by armed executioners ready to put an end to their existence.

The Viceroy was astonished at their fortitude, and was convinced that men who held earthly possessions of so little value could not be attracted by the desire of wealth. He made a sign to the interpreter who had treated them so badly and had them raised from the ground. They partook of some food that the other Christians had prepared for them, and, for a long time endured the most acute sufferings.

Jeanchi overcome with shame was unable to conceal the state of his feelings.

The missionaries were convinced that he was repenting of what he had done, and exhorted the Christians not to reproach him. He continued to reside with the flock whose shepherds he had wished to destroy. The Missionaries were transferred to a filthy hovel exposed to the inclemency of the weather. The night-dews and the bad food hindered the recovery of their strength.

Mamasadech, always kind-hearted, and a philanthropist before everything, offered them the use of his ship that was anchored a few leagues distant. Here their health was restored and they had the pleasure of seeing the arrival of the Christians who found a haven on the waters, free from the unpleasant conditions they had fled from on land. A few days after they set sail for Rangoon, the seaport of the Kingdom of Ava.

The Burmese army engaged in pillage, rather than in conquest, made away with the property of the conquered. When they had taken all that was to be had, they sought a new prey. The leader in the flush of his initial successes was sure of easy victories. He marched against Ayuthia, as he considered that if the capital fell, the other towns would submit without much difficulty.

The route lay across vast forests and over steep mountains. All these obstacles had been foreseen and provided for. The provinces situated to the north west of the capital were laid waste and the inhabitants through fear of death or slavery fled to the forests, where they had to contend against wild beasts for their existence. The burning towns and villages threw the capital into a state of panic. The Siamese threatened with utter ruin, massed their forces and marched in fear against an enemy of whose courage they had had experience so many times. They ventured on a battle, and fought with greater courage than they were wont to exhibit. A crushing defeat was inflicted on them which left the whole country at the mercy of the invader.

The country side, ravaged by fire, had nothing to show better than barren cinders, and the impending famine was a prospect as terrible as the sword of the barbarians.

While the victorious army spread desolation on every side, a fresh horde of barbarians overran the country. The Burmese, meeting with no resistance, occupied the province as conquerors and everywhere left traces of their ravages. They built a town at the junction of two rivers and named it Michong. This position was intended to act as a base of operations in case of defeat.

During these troublous times, the King of Siam, shut up in his harem, made light of his people's woes. The news that the enemy had evacuated Tennasserim and Mergui had given rise to the belief that the danger had passed, and that the State would require no defenders. At last the Burmese appeared before the city gates, and there was hardly a ghost of an army to oppose them. At the tumult caused by the entrance of bands of peasants seeking refuge in the royal city, the King was awakened from his state of lethargy. The refugees were obliged to assist in the repair of the fortifications of the town. Mounds forty feet high were built for artillery of position. The Christians refused to assist in this work, as they were certain that these mounds would crumble by their own weight.

The Bishop of Tabraca who had foreseen the danger and who could have escaped it, considered that the town was a post to which he had been assigned, and which he could not desert without betraying his trust. But although fearless of personal danger, he considered that it was his duty to take steps for the safety of the young people confided to his care. Thirty young pupils were sent to M. M. Kherve and Artaud who took this little band into the eastern part of Siam, whence it was easy to retreat further in case of necessity. It was lucky for them that they had been able to effect a speedy departure, for, a few days later, orders were issued forbidding any one from leaving the city.

The enemy, before commencing the assault on the city, laid waste the surrounding country. They were certain of finding means of subsistence on the land they had recently seized, and, their policy of destruction was in order to compel the submission of the Siamese through famine. One of their parties extended its ravages up to the city gates. Bangkok, a fortress which had been defended, was destroyed, and the gardens laid waste. A college established by the Missionaries in the vicinity was razed to the ground, and, after this attack, they retreated hurriedly to join the main part of the army and their departure caused a momentary suspension of hostilities.

At this juncture, two English ships arrived. The captain presented the King with an Arab horse, a lion, and some valuable merchandise. The captain whose name was Pauni, had on several occasions proved himself a brave man. The King who had more confidence in his courage and his ability than in his cowardly and effeminate followers begged him to take charge of the defence of the city.

But the Englishman, convinced that a craven race would prove but poor seconds, declined the honour of the post and the example of the Dutch, who had retired, strengthened his decision not to accept it.

The Dutch would not have abandoned their compound in which they had stored much valuable property, had they believed that the Siamese were capable of assisting in the common defence.

The captain was uncertain how to act, when suddenly he found himself the object of an attack by the Burmese, who having captured Bangkok were preparing to bombard him.

The brave Englishman, too weak to offer a defence and too high spirited to surrender, wisely decided

to tow his ships to the spot which the Burmese were attempting to fortify. His artillery fire destroyed their position and scattered death broadcast in their ranks. The Englishmen protected by their guns were able to bid defiance to the Burmese attack. Their pride was wounded by remaining quiet on ship-board, and, eager to punish their assailants, they made several sorties, and their well planned attacks on the undisciplined foe, caused wholesale slaughter.

Pauni, compelled by necessity, agreed to take charge of the defence of the capital on condition that the requisite arms and ammunition for attack and defence were forthcoming. This was agreed to, and the Siamese, as a pledge of his good faith, stipulated that he should deposit his cargo in the public arsenal. This condition was galling to him, but he was obliged to agree to it. He delivered thirty eight bales of valuable merchandize and placed the rest on different ships. Having made arrangements with the officials, he returned to his ship where he made preparations that justified the trust reposed in him. He devised attacks, all of which were deadly to the foe. Their fortifications were scarcely completed, when they were demolished, and every day saw the defeat or repulse of the enemy. In order to follow up his advantages, he wrote to the Siamese authorities demanding arms and ammunition as his supply was running short, but he was refused.

The Siamese feared lest he should become too powerful; or that they might be ruled by a foreigner. The ministers replied that the enemy were about to make an assault on the other side of the town and that they needed all their available artillery to repel it.

The Englishman, annoyed by this act of faithlessness, determined to have no further dealings with a nation that neither knew how to fight nor to furnish one who was then friend with the wherewithal to protect them. But before setting sail he issued a manifesto against the King of Siam giving his reasons for deserting his post. He seized six Chinese ships of which one belonged to the King. The five other vessels coming to trade with Siam, were stopped in the gulf, and were considerably surprised to find themselves despoiled of their goods. The Englishman, in return for what he had taken, gave the captains bills of exchange drawn on the King of Siam to the value of the thirty eight bales of goods that he had deposited. Having thus taken his security and passed proudly before his foes who instead of being downcast at his retirement, were highly delighted to behold the departure of a rival who alone could hinder their success.

The Burmese, on his departure, again took the offensive and as they had merely feeble adversaries to consider, destroyed everything they could find. The temples were burnt and the lead found there was made into bullets. The enemy, for a considerable time master of the countryside, had issued strict orders that no cultivation was to be carried on. But the fertility of the soil caused an abundant crop that was not due to agricultural labours. The grains of rice fallen from the hands of the reapers of the previous year grew and came to maturity. This unexpected blessing was a great consolation for the people threatened with famine. But this, which should have been to their advantage, was considerably the reverse. The inhabitants went out to gather the rice, but were surprised by the Burmese, who led them captive to their camp.

While the Burmese, scattered over all the provinces, were carrying on a war against men and nature, the King and his superstitious ministers put all their trust in their magicians. The officers and soldiers followed their example and consulted them as to how they might render themselves invisible in order to attack the enemy unawares, and the hope of learning a secret so favourable to their cowardly nature, prevented them from going out to fight before it had been revealed to them.

The delusion was so powerful that even experience was unable to convince them of the futility of such schemes.

The leaders, on a par with the subordinates as regards valour, appeared to have taken up arms against their fellow citizens only. They robbed them of their money and food with the excuse that they were required for use of the military to whom they distributed the least valuable part of their spoil, but this bounty was merely to cloak their own extortions. Whilst the more wealthy citizens were being ruined, the vigilance of the missionaries foresaw the destitution of the Christians, but their liberality, extended without exception to all creeds, exhausted their supplies. The Burmese intercepted all their convoys and they themselves were in danger of famine owing to the excess of their ravages. The forces sent against them were invariably dispersed and frequently returned without striking a blow.

A Siamese Prince who had been exiled to Ceylon, was deeply moved at the misfortunes of his country. He forgot the fact that he was an offender. He was powerful enough to raise an army whose services he offered to those who had driven him forth.

The Siamese court, too proud to accept assistance from an exile, rejected his offer with scorn, and instead of considering him as a defender of their country, they sent expeditions against him with varying success.

This course was highly unwise as it caused dissension in the army just at the time when the Burmese ranks were being augmented by numerous Siamese deserters.

In the month of March the Burmese army had advanced to within two leagues of the town. The progress of the army was arrested by the death of the commander from quinsy. It was considered expedient to conceal the fact of his death from the soldiery, but the news leaked out owing to dissensions among the chiefs who all were ambitious of command.

But soon reunited by the prospect of loot, they advanced to plunder the richest and most celebrated temple near the city.

They were in hopes of finding the base of the image which was of solid gold, but the King of Siam had taken the precaution of having this object of popular worship removed to the palace.

The Burmese, incensed on finding that their booty had been carried off, revenged themselves by pulling down the temple and constructing a building devoted to profane uses on the site. The other pagodas in the vicinity of the town were not spared. They were built of brick and surrounded by ditches which seemed to protect them against the assaults of the enemy. The Christian churches were constructed merely of planks and stakes which acted as fuel to the flames. But in spite of their defenceless condition, they were held by the vigilance and courage of their defenders, and the enemy were unable to set foot in them until after the Chinese and Siamese had experienced several defeats.

On September 7th, 1766, the enemy seized a strong position about a quarter of a league distant from the town, and from this point a park of artillery commanded the shore and thus rendered them masters of the river.

The danger became more imminent and the Christians whose heroic valour had been proved in the former revolution became the last resource.

The defence of the bastions was entrusted to them and they were supplied with thirty pieces of artillery and ammunition for the same. Six thousand Chinese were appointed to defend the Dutch compound and large temple in the immediate neighbourhood, and, as a special favour they were presented with the sum of ten thousand livres.

Among the Christians were eighty soldiers available for the defence of various posts exposed to the assaults of the enemy.

This brave array had had no military training whatever, and, gun and sword in hand, they would have been objects of laughter to a European soldier.

But in spite of their awkwardness, they formed the flower of the Siamese army. The first few days were occupied in skirmishes, shortly afterwards but the enemy united their forces and seized five large temples which became so many fortresses from whence they bombarded the outposts and especially the Church of St. Joseph, the roof of which was riddled without causing any casualties.

On the 8th of December it was reported that the Burmese were preparing for a fresh assault. The Christians made sorties from the church and at the sound of drums and trumpets engaged the enemy to the discomfiture of the latter as they were conquered by fear rather than by arms. This initial victory inspired them to take the offensive. They made an attack on some Burmese entrenched in a pagoda and returned with an elephant as a trophy of their victory.

The Portuguese, at a distance of about two leagues from the dwelling of the Bishop of Tabraca, gave also signal proof of their courage. They sabred a crowd of Burmese who had attempted to storm their college. The Burmese, driven back in confusion, retired full of admiration for the handful of Christians whom they feared considerably more than the 50,000 Siamese who had neither the daring to make an attack nor the courage to follow up their retreat.

Although the Christians showed greater personal valour than the rest, their lack of military training caused the loss of the French quarter. The pickets were sound asleep when the Burmese fired the upper part of the building where the Bishop lived. The Christians crowded into the church for shelter and the shrieks of the women and children gave indications of danger more terrible in the darkness.

A Christian who had become separated from his friends was massacred on the spot. The others made a stubborn defence, and although they had been taken by surprise, they appeared to be invincible. The enemy, repulsed on all sides, made an attack on the Dutch quarter. The reputation of the bravery exhibited by the Dutch had attracted many Siamese and Chinese to their quarter, thinking that they would be safe there. All assisted in the common defence. They built walls of the remains of the destroyed pyramids. The Chinese found a quantity of money there but the Christians received only

some pieces of lead as their share.

The Siamese authorities had abused their power by the confiscation of quantities of rice which had been seized to ensure themselves against the threatened famine, and, owing to their thought for the evils of the future, were a prey to the evils of the present. Food was unobtainable at any price, and the poor people awaited death to put an end to their sufferings. An epidemic more deadly still caused fresh ravages. The streets and public places were strewn with corpses, which were devoured by ravenous pariahs, as the fear of contagion had prevented their burial. This scourge came only to an end with the ruin of the country. The sentinels let themselves down from the walls by ropes and preferred to risk falling into the hands of the enemy than to await a lingering death in the midst of suffering.

The Burmese turned their arms against the Dutch compound, which was defended by the Portuguese and Chinese. The attack was fierce and the defence, stubborn. But finally the compound was taken and reduced to ashes after an eight days' siege marked by many casualties. The church was respected for two or three days and the missionaries were able to collect together their property.

This show of moderation was merely a trick to force the surrender of the Bishop and his flock. The Burmese leader was unwilling to shed blood to no purpose. He assured him that if he would surrender, all his property would be respected and that only the weapons would be taken.

Negotiations were started, and the Bishop went in person to the Burmese leader's hut. He was received with every mark of honour and the general was lavish in promises which however were not confirmed by any documents. He added that it was his intention that night to fire the Christian quarter as a warning to them to seek refuge elsewhere. He assigned a temple to the Bishop for a dwelling place and guards were given for his safe keeping. Nothing could be done but to submit to these conditions as it was impossible to obtain any better terms.

It was lucky that these conditions were accepted. The general carried out his threat and the whole of the Christian quarter was reduced to ashes together with the church.

The soldiers entered the seminary, and violating their oaths, plundered everything that they had promised to respect.

The missionaries and their converts were carried off to the hostile camp. A Prince of the old family of the King of Ava was the commander of the camp to which they were assigned, and he had the generosity to supply them with victuals. A large number of female Christians were stationed near them so as to escape the insults of the soldiery. Advantage was taken of the absence of their importunate guardians to marry the girls to the young Christians as it was necessary to save these virgins from the lust of the brutal soldiery who, as I have said previously, respected the marriage tie. The Bishop suspected of possessing great wealth, as he had distributed alms with no niggard hand, was sent to the lofty tower occupied by the general where under the pretext of rendering him honour they thought they would be able to discover the place where he had concealed his treasures. The other Christians were tortured and robbed of their money and the more money a man had, the more he was suspected of having concealed. The state of poverty to which they were thus reduced rendered their faith all the more lively, and, despoiled of their earthly possessions their only hope lay in a heavenly reward.

The town, ready to fall into the hands of the Burmese, would have been buried under its ruins had not a parley been arranged in order to treat with the besiegers, already with torches in their hands. The Burmese proud of their superiority replied that they demanded unconditional surrender and that they were determined to take advantage of the rights of the conquerors.

These harsh terms were rejected and hostilities recommenced.

On the 28th April 1767 the town was captured by assault. The treasures of the palace and the temples were nothing but heaps of ruins and ashes. The images of the gods were melted down and rage deprived the barbarian conquerors of the spoils that had aroused their greed. To avenge this loss, the Burmese visited their heavy displeasure upon the towns folk. They burnt the soles of their feet in order to make them reveal where they had concealed their wealth, and raped their weeping daughters before their very eyes.

The priests suspected of having concealed much wealth were pierced through and through with arrows and spears and several were beaten to death with heavy clubs.

The country side as well as the temples were strewn with corpses, and the river was choked with the bodies of the dead, the stench of which attracted swarms of flies causing much annoyance to the retreating army. The chief officers of state and the royal favourites were loaded with chains and condemned to slavery in the galleys. The King, witness of the unhappy fate of his court endeavoured to escape, but he was recognised and slain at the gates of the palace.

The Priest King, torn from the silence of his retreat, was taken prisoner together with all the Royal family, and, all, through fear of torture confessed that they had much wealth concealed. When the greed of the invaders was satisfied and the country was full of dead and dying, the the victorious army set out for Pegu. The King of Siam was taken with them. The Bishop of Tabraca was included in the national disaster and was transported on shipboard. The detachment in charge of him was commanded by a man who was by no means a barbarian.

His valour gained for him the governorship of Tavoy, a position of trust which justified the discernment of his master.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISFORTUNES OF THE EUROPEANS AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

Perceiving that the country was laid waste, the houses pulled down, the Royal family led into captivity, and the people scattered abroad, husbands separated from their wives and parents from the children; the Europeans, accustomed to regard their rulers as protectors, were plunged into a state of fear.

But the Siamese, who from time immemorial have crouched under the rod of tyranny and have toiled on behalf of merciless extortioners, were pleased in that by a change of masters they might meet a deliverer.

They had no regrets at leaving a land where bonds had been their portion and as they had never tasted the sweets of liberty, were less sensitive to the humiliation of slavery.

Unpatriotic citizens as they were, the sight of their erstwhile insolent tyrant, now condemned to slavery quite made up for their own degradation.

The Christians on the other hand are accustomed to live in countries under the protection of the law. The scourge of war makes no alteration in their fate, and the harshest of conquerors can only keep his self respect while respecting the rights of nations. He can never deprive individuals of their freedom and if a conqueror appropriate their private possessions he is to be considered merely as a bandit.

The Bishop who had been well treated on shipboard, had been able to maintain by his virtuous example, the ascendancy that moral worth invariably exercises over the most corrupt natures. He beheld sixty three Christians pass before him whom the Burmese had pressed into their service. Many of them perished from the toils of the voyage and the survivors were marshalled under the banner of the conqueror. The remainder of the converts were entrusted to the care of M. Core a French priest. They were obliged to set out on April 25th without having been able to collect the necessary articles for a long voyage. The party consisted of three hundred, excluding children. Women were ruthlessly torn from their husbands whose troubles they had shared.

They were given an inadequate supply of rice, and their inhuman captors preferred to destroy food for which they had no use rather than to overload their slave galleys.

A Chinese priest frightened at the dangers to which the newly wedded brides were exposed, separated himself from M. Core's party in the hope of finding a Chinese vessel. But hardly had he started out when he was attacked by a gang of Burmese bandits and those who tried to defend themselves were slain promptly. He endeavoured to take shelter in the depths of the forests with four of his disciples but they were pursued and robbed. They were obliged to wander without a guide in the trackless jungle that offered no sustenance, and were forced to eat grass like the beasts of the field. Afterwards they were found by a Christian who offered his services as a guide.

The Burmese captain, who was in charge of the French, sent an interpreter with an armed force to compel them to rejoin, and above all, to bring back the newly married women. They were carried off with violence. This deputy was by no means so gentle as his superior, and in executing the order he had received, he exceeded his powers.

Hardly had they marched a league, when a gang of Siamese dacoits appeared on the bank of the river and captured his spoils.

When the leader of the gang recognised his daughter, he wept and embraced her, and asked by what turn of fortune she had appeared in so sorry a plight. The daughter explained that she had become a Christian and gave the reasons for her marriage. The recital of their woes spurred on the dacoits and falling upon the Burmese, they cut off their heads.

They wished to retain the women, but all refused the assistance that would have delivered them from slavery and preferred to share the horrible fate of their husbands, rather than to break the sacred marriage bond. The father, unable to dissuade his daughter from her purpose, gave her a supply of food for herself and her friends, and all went to join M. Core at a spot lower down the river.

After the meeting the zealous missionary, fearing to see them exposed to such dangers, conducted them towards the sea which was only a few days' march further on. For the space of a month this colony lived upon shell-fish, leaves and roots, and waited in the hope that a ship might appear to take them to Kancao on the Cochin Chinese coast.

A Chinese junk appeared in the offing but the niggardly captain, hearing that they had no money, refused to give them a passage. At last on June 7th, they saw a small Chinese derelict floating down the river. The ebb of the tide was drawing the boat out to sea, but at last it ran aground on the bank just at the spot where the Christians were assembled.

This unlooked-for assistance was of no use to them. They had neither sails nor tackle, nor provisions. But they were able to turn the greed of the Chinaman, who had refused to give them a passage, to their advantage. Seeing the vessel which they had just obtained, he suggested that they should hand it over to him and that he on his part would conduct them to their destination. Fifty three accepted this condition but the rest decided to remain and hardly had their friends set sail, when a dissension broke out among them and the party broke up. It was known that afterwards they all perished of hunger and privation.

After a perilous voyage, the ship reached Kancao on the the 28th of June, whence sometime later the Christians journeyed to Cambodia, where they were cordially received by the Cochin-Chinese.

The Bishop, who still remained on his ship was impatient for the moment of departure to meet his flock of whose fate he was ignorant. The Portuguese, who up to that time had remained with him, were ordered to go on ahead and to march with the van of the army. They had much to suffer from the insolent behaviour of the Burmese, and, rendered desperate by insults resolved to turn against their oppressors. They seized some weapons, and, under cover of the darkness, slew every Burman they could lay hands on. After this massacre they captured an elephant and some horses wherewith they hoped to rejoin their friends, but a deep river lay between. Several were able to gain the opposite bank, some were drowned but the majority waited for the fate they expected to overtake them.

Several Burmese, who had escaped from the Portuguese, brought the news of the massacre to the camp.

The commander, justly enraged, ordered that all the Portuguese should be arrested, as he considered that all the Christians had had a share in the plot. Suspicion would have been followed by revenge, had not the pilot Jeanchi taken steps to restore calm. He explained to the commander that the massacre had been due to the insolence of the soldiery towards the women who had been instrumental in furnishing the Portuguese with arms that the other Christians all considered him as their protector, and that the French especially were desirous of opening up trading stations under his jurisdiction. The commander was mollified by these explanations, and to show there was no ill feeling, sent the Bishop a supply of provisions and even gave him ten baskets of rice in excess of the usual dole which served as the sustenance for several Portuguese women who were too weak to follow with the army.

The 6th of June, was fixed for the departure of the rest of the forces. The Burmese before embarking destroyed the town of Michong that they had previously built.

They arrived in port on the 16th of June, and continued their journey by land, and, as they were obliged to wait for the artillery, they constructed huts of the materials of their now useless vessels. After a halt of eight days the march was begun.

The Bishop, although in bad health, had to follow on horse-back. The journey, through a country destitute of houses or inhabitants, was extremely arduous. The route lay across forest clad mountains, and through miry valleys interspersed with ponds and streams, which latter, on account of their sinuous course, had to be crossed several times by fords where shallow, but in places where the waters were deep, they were obliged to cross on bridges made of a couple of bamboos.

The beasts of burden died on the way and the progress of the army was thus considerably delayed, owing to the lack of transport available for the commissariat and baggage.

At last Tavoy was reached where famine caused them new suffering. A basket of rice, the usual monthly rations for one man was sold for 25 or 30 piastres. The aborigines were seen to devour corpses. The bishop gave his pastoral ring to an Armenian who had generously provided for the Christians.

Everything seemed hopeless and all waited for certain death, when an English ship laden with rice appeared in the Tavoy river followed a few days later by two others of larger size and laden with a similar cargo.

The bishop went on board the ship and was received by the English captain with all the characteristic open-heartedness of his nation. The Captain, Rivers by name invited him to remain on his ship and the bishop consented only on condition that all who had accompanied him should be included in the invitation.

While the ship remained in harbour they had no further anxieties, and the generous Englishman provided for all their requirements until October 26th when he set sail.

The French bishop was weary of captivity so much the more so as he met with no results of his zeal. He made use of a Malabar convert who stood highly in the governor's favour and by his good offices obtained permission to embark for the Coromandel Coast with three pupils and a Chinese servant on a French ship named the 'Hector.' Owing to the calms, the voyage was slow, but on his arrival at Pondicherry he learned that a Malay potentate had become a vassal of the King of Burma, hoping to obtain the necessary assistance to keep certain territories spared by fire and war.

The bishop decided to return to France to seek a remedy for such ills. M. Lau and all the members of the council who took a keen interest in the progress of the faith in the Indies gave him a passage on a ship which arrived at l'Orient on October 30th 1769.

Since his return he has retired into the seminary for Foreign Missions where busied with the losses sustained by the faith, he implores assistance to reassemble his scattered flock. His demands are supported by Religion and Policy and we think that the success of his enterprise will be assured under more favourable auspices.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION OF 1767.

After the departure of the Burmese army from the kingdom they had just conquered, the Siamese who had been scattered and had been wandering in the forests returned to their capital.

Stirred by thoughts of revenge for what they had suffered, they made ravages every where. Every Burman that they could discover was slain. But the blood of their oppressors was of no avail as a remedy against the famine with which the country was smitten.

The price of rice had risen to such an extent that it had ceased to become a marketable commodity. Wild roots and bamboo shoots were the staple articles of diet, and many were attacked by a peculiar disease. The sufferers lost their memory and power of speech, and became mad with lucid intervals, which augmented the horror of their condition. Necessity that knows no law obliged them to violate all conventions.

They took up arms against their gods whom they accused of having betrayed them. The pagodas were plundered and the images destroyed in order to get at the silver inside them. These acts of sacrilege gave them command of that was useless wealth as they could not purchase anything with it. Five earthenware jars full of gold and silver were taken from one temple alone. The roof of one of the most temples supplied gold, sufficient to fill three boats.

The superstitious Siamese made loud outcries at the scandal of the theft which brought into circulation all the gold and silver that the Burmese their conquerors had taken away. It is not astonishing that so much wealth was forthcoming; since devout persons, in consequence of their belief in transmigration, had buried their treasures in the images of their gods, trusting to discover it in a future state of existence.

The Siamese, although united by desire of revenge, were split into factions for the leadership.

The eyes of the nation were fixed upon Phya Tak, a Siamese officer, born of a Chinese mother. A politician and a warrior, he paved his way to power by affecting its disdain. He was elected to the leadership by the unanimous voice of the whole nation. At first he took the unpretentious title of "Defender of the Nation," and, disguising his ambitions under the cloak of moderation, he wished to appear merely as a citizen in order to be King in reality.

Having attained to the supreme power, it was his policy to contract alliances, as he was sure that the hearts of the nation were apt to pass rapidly from love to hatred. He had learned by experience that the priests, in the abuse of their power over the unlettered mob, were wont to foment sedition and to influence popular feeling. He conceived a violent dislike to them which he took no pains to conceal, and considered that the respect they enjoyed was a slight on his authority. He therefore wished for the extermination of these individuals who, poor by profession, enjoyed the fruits of the labour of others without doing anything in return.

A high-priest who was greatly revered, was accused of incontinence. Phya Tak summoned him before his tribunal and condemned him to trial by fire. The soles of his feet were burned by the glowing charcoal, and that was sufficient proof of his guilt. He would have been sentenced to death had not powerful friends obtained his pardon on the grounds that his death would cause a scandal, and that if their servants were done away with the gods would lose their prestige.

Phya Tak raised all those who had been his partisans to the highest positions in the State.

A foe to the Burmese, he inflicted severe punishment on those who favoured them and who stirred up rebellions in the kingdom.

In 1769 he showed his generous spirit towards his countrymen. The drought had caused a great famine, one of the usual events a war brings in its train. Work was suspended and the farmers could do but little.

Destructive rodents had devoured the rice as soon as it had reached maturity, seeds had been destroyed in the earth. They were unable to procure the "ignam" a species of truffle or potatoe of such size that a single one is sufficient for one man. Swarms of insects, attracted by the corpses, darkened the air and waged a ceaseless war against the living.

Under these unhappy conditions Phya Tak showed his generous spirit. The needy were destitute no longer. The public treasury was opened for the relief. In return for cash, foreigners supplied them with the products that the soil of the country had refused. The Usurper justified his claims by his benevolence. Abuses were reformed, the safety of property and persons was restored, but the greatest severity was shown to malefactors. Legal enactments at which no one complained were substituted for the arbitrary power that sooner or later is the cause of rebellions. By the assurance of public peace he was able to consolidate his position and no one who shared in the general prosperity could lay claim to the throne.

At the end of 1768 a bastard Prince who had been exiled to Ceylon, reassembled his supporters and set up his authority in various parts of the country. Phya Tak led an expedition against him and gained a brilliant victory. The Prince fell into the hands of the conqueror who ordered his execution as, a punishment for having proved the weaker party.

In the same year he led an army against Porcelon and Ligor, two towns which had not fallen under the Burmese rule. The governors of these towns, taking advantage of the troubled state of the country, had set themselves up as independent rulers. Thus it was that the Empire, delivered from a foreign yoke was harassed by domestic tyrants who attempted to destroy all that the enemy had spared; in fact the whole kingdom was in a state of turmoil.

It is not known whether the expedition was successful. It was reported but not confirmed that the two towns were captured.

At the first news of the Siamese revolt the King of Burma sent orders to the governor of Tavoy to overrun the country again, and to press the inhabitants of the town into his army to effect the entire ruin of the country.

These people, outwardly subservient, had disguised their hatred against their recent oppressors. The general took only a few Burmese with him as he had put his trust in the Siamese whom he imagined were reliable. He soon found out his mistake, for, on sending them against the town of Beancham which they captured, they closed the gates against him and swore they had taken up arms only to use them against their oppressors. They opened fire upon those who had regarded them as comrades in arms.

The general, betrayed by his untrustworthy allies, if it is possible to apply this appellation to the avengers of their country's wrongs, found himself surrounded by enemies.

The very countryside turned against him and refused to supply his wants as the Burmese had destroyed all the fruit trees. The beasts of burden, finding no fodder in the plains, had strayed to find pasturage elsewhere.

At length the army was reduced to rations sufficient for three days only. It would have been folly rather than heroism to advance further. The general considered that his duty lay in the preservation of the lives of those committed to his care. A retreat was made, which was by no means a disgrace, as it was caused by dire necessity.

On his arrival at Tavoy he informed his master that his expedition had been a failure owing to the defection of his troops.

The King of Ava, smarting under the humiliation of defeat in a land that had been the scene of his triumphs, determined on taking vengeance with the utmost severity. But while preparations were being made for another expedition that he had intended to lead in person, his plans were altered owing to complications with China which had arisen as follows.

After the Burmese had laid waste the kingdoms of Pegu, Siam and Aracan, they had invaded Laos and Cassaye, (the latter being part of Bengal), rather as dacoits than as conquerors. They changed these happy and populous lands into arid deserts and gloried in the spoliation of what might have been preserved. The ease with which their early conquests had been effected had caused them to turn their arms against China, which offered a richer prey to their greed. They had no grounds for hostilities whatever, but those whose creed is 'Might makes Right,' are always ready to transgress all laws to obtain their desires. The Burmese declared war on the Chinese on the pretext of taking vengeance on a small nation whom they called barbarians and who were less powerful than they. This obscure race was perfectly contented to live as best it might in the forests that lay between Ava and China. This savage tribe whose sole asset was its independence, seemed never, owing to the fact of its poverty, to have been a prize for the ambition of a conqueror.

The Kings of Ava had always stood as its protectors and in return exacted a small tribute. But the Cassians, poor and proud, seeing all the neighbouring kingdoms agitated by home and foreign wars, wished to dispense with having to pay a tribute which was more humiliating than burdensome as it was an indication of their dependent position. In 1749 they had declared that they no longer needed protection, that their forest, were their ramparts and that their courage had taught them daring to fear nothing. For some time they enjoyed their independence, but when the Kingdom of Ava regained its pristine glories, they found that the Burmese harassed them without intermission, and their lands, that hardly gave them a bare means of livelihood, were laid waste by repeated frays. To escape the domination of Burma, they besought help from their neighbour, the Emperor of China, who alone could protect them, and to whom their defence was a matter of importance as they formed the only barrier between his territories and the barbarians.

While the hosts of the Burmese were overrunning the Kingdom of Siam, another swarm of these savages was let loose in the Chinese provinces. They captured several important positions without meeting any serious opposition and the inhabitants were put to the sword. It is not a matter for surprise that their conquests were so readily accomplished. The Chinese are wont to conquer their neighbours by diplomacy rather than by the force of arms. They make use of their superior skill to subdue them by artful promises. The art of war is yet in its infancy among the Chinese who are cunning diplomats, but cowardly soldiers. They are skilful in the art of smelting metals and have plenty of artillery, but they are hopelessly ignorant of its proper use in warfare. Their chief weapons are but swords, lances and arrows, and their knowledge of military tactics is lamentably weak.

The Burmese captured a vast booty. They disposed of the wealth of a country whose inhabitants are renowned for their ability in agriculture and commerce.

Their manufactures and products have attracted the trade of all nations. The natural fertility of the soil of the country has been greatly increased by the toil of the cultivators.

The mountains, which in most countries of the world appear to be barren, produce abundant harvests in this favoured land. The Burmese invasion was a cause of other troubles to the country. Many of the Chinese adopted the customs of the barbarians and became brigands. The roads were infested with thieves and murderers both of home and foreign origin who fearlessly plundered unwary travellers.

At the reports of these disasters, the governor of Canton raised a force for the deliverance of the country from so terrible a scourge. But on receipt of the news of his march, the Burmese returned

home to dispose of their plunder and to seek for reinforcements.

Shortly after this, the Chinese gained a slight success near the river, but the victory was followed by a crushing defeat, their land force was cut to pieces and 100,000 men were taken prisoners to Ava whence they were apportioned to hard labour in the various provinces. The Chinese force must have been very considerable, as the bulk of the men fled. It is surprising that the Viceroy of a single province could have raised so large a host, but it is no longer a matter of wonder when we remember that the country has a higher birthrate than any other, and that perhaps the Chinese are the only nation where a system of absolute government is not an obstacle to the increase of the population.

The defeat of the Chinese was easy to repair; the Emperor assembled an army of 500,000 men who were to overrun the country of their foes. The King of Ava, too weak to oppose any resistance, mustered all the available troops from every province to the capital.

The inhabitants of the lands bordering on Chinese territory abandoned their possessions and the country became a desert, laid waste by its inhabitants who wished to deprive the enemy of all means of sustenance. In the beginning of 1769 we had no reliable information of the movements of the enemy who were unable to march on Ava owing to fatigue and scarcity, and we have only had news up to October of this year 1771.

CHAPTER XII.

ADVANTAGES THAT MIGHT ACCRUE FROM COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH SIAM AND THE NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS.

There is no doubt that owing to the ill-luck experienced by the French in Siam at the end of the last century, no new trading stations have been formed in that country. The ministers have invariably turned deaf ears to the suggestions of the missionaries, and consider that their business consists more in the saving of souls than in dabbling with commerce and politics.

But if we bear in mind the advantages that Europeans of other nationalities have obtained, we must acknowledge that the French allowed themselves to be rebuffed by the initial obstacles, and that they took no notice of sources of wealth which did not present themselves on the spot.

The King of Siam had granted permission to the French to open a trading station; the French merchants were held in high estimation and were more favoured than those of other nations. Two cities had been ceded without reservation to Louis XIV. in return for the military help sent for the defence of the kingdom. The revolution that occurred during Faulcon's tenure of office obliged the French to leave a country to which they had been summoned as its defenders, and from that time onwards, but few French vessels entered the ports of Siam.

Formerly the Council of Pondicherry had sent several ships to Siam in the course of each year and one vessel had always been bound for the port of Mergui alone. They were exempt from ordinary taxation and the French missionaries, who were respected for their rectitude, were the only foreign judges who were able to give a decision in cases between Europeans and Siamese.

The English had been for more than a century in Siam without any trading station or representative. Some of them carried on certain profitable amount of trade.

The Dutch had gained the commercial supremacy. Their factory was the finest and most beautiful building in the kingdom and they enjoyed many privileges of great value.

The King of Siam, by a policy detrimental to his interests, but as a boon to his subjects, reserves the monopoly of foreign trade. Thus trade is not in a flourishing condition as the interested despot fixes the price of merchandise at his own sweet will.

Since the last revolution the system of government has been entirely changed, and today it would be an easy matter for the French to regain their commercial supremacy by the establishment of a trading station at Mergui as in former times, or at some spot near the capital. The station could be protected by a fortress as was formerly the case at Bangkok the foundations and ruins of which remain to this day.

A wide and deep river forms a defence to the approaches and it would only be a matter of 12 leagues

from the sea. The French could rebuild this fortress for the following reasons, (1) Compensation is due for the losses suffered in 1680. (2) The site had been granted to them without reservation. (3) The Siamese Government is still in debt to the India Company, and lastly owing to the fact that a weak minded nation, who tremble at the sight of an armed Frenchman, could easily be imposed upon.

Since the retreat of the Burmese, the kingdom of Siam has been governed by several petty chieftains who are at perpetual strife with each other. Bangkok and Mergui have their rulers. The French minister might make arrangements with one of these usurpers, who might feel flattered to be under French protection, and, in return might well grant a piece of land on which to build a fortress for the protection of commerce.

Such a fortified trading station would be handy as a port of call for Pondicherry in connection with commerce with China.

The country produces all sorts of building materials, brick-clay, cement, and shell-lime.

All the neighbouring nations would crowd to the new mart, many wandering Christian families, homeless since the Burmese invasion, would take refuge there, and the Chinese who equip vessels at a cheap rate, would send at least forty ships per annum. They would hasten to bring their merchandise in the hope of a brisk trade. The India Company would be spared the expenses that are incurred in having to seek trade-openings further afield, and that absorb so much of its profits.

The Mahomedan descendants of the Arabs, Moguls, and Persians have had commercial relations with the capital for a considerable time, and to renew them, they are only waiting for a establishment of a depôt by which trade may be expedited. The foundations would be easy to lay and by the re-establishment of the college that the French missionaries had formerly in the kingdom and which enjoyed the highest respect, the success of the former project could be ensured. The old King when he was informed that Christianity inculcates obedience to rulers, had always extended a cordial welcome to the missionaries.

These men had not left their country to seek their fortunes. Their disinterestedness was favourable to the Company who trusted them, but not as paid agents for their share of the profits, nor for whatever they could appropriate. It would be of great advantage that a well ordered society should be established in this foreign country so as to become familiarised with the manners, customs, vices and virtues of those with whom they dwell. The knowledge of the principal Eastern languages is also an important matter so that the French merchants need not be at the mercy of untrustworthy interpreters. The natural history of this country tells us of the productions that are of commercial value, and even if such productions as agate, diamonds, pearls, perfumes dye-stuffs and scented woods, which are known to be found in the country, could not be discovered in paying quantities; great advantages could be gained by the trade with the neighbouring nations for which this kingdom is, geographically speaking, the meeting place.

A short sketch should be given of the peoples of the Indo-Chinese peninsula in order to lead to the better understanding of the advantages that would accrue from the establishment of trading stations as above mentioned. The northern part of the peninsula includes nine kingdoms, viz., Asem, Tipra, Aracan, Pegu, Ava, Laos, Siam, Cambodia, and Cochin-China.

The Kingdom of Asem is almost unknown owing to its situation lying beyond the usual routes favoured by travellers and to reach it, a considerable détour is necessary.

It is one of the richest countries of Asia and has no need of any of the produce of its neighbours to whom it supplies a large quantity of metals. In this country are mines of gold silver, lead and iron.

As the inhabitants are free from taxation, the King holds the monopoly of the mineral products, and, mindful of the well-being of his subjects, employs slave-labour only in the mines. This is the only country in Asia, where humanity is not crushed by the weight of despotic power.

A creature differing somewhat from our ordinary silkworm produces silk from which a glossy fabric of inferior quality is produced. Gum-lac is the most valuable product of the country and is of the finest quality produced in the East. There are two varieties. The red is used as a dye-stuff, as a varnish for articles of furniture and for wax. Silver is the currency of the country.

The inhabitants are of sturdy build, but the women and are somewhat snub-nosed. Both sexes are practically naked, and cover their private parts only. They wear blue caps trimmed with pig's teeth. Their bracelets, which display a certain amount of taste, are made of coral, yellow amber, and sometimes of tortoise shell or sea shells. Poverty, tyranny and oppression are unknown. Every man is master of his own property and has several wives, each of whom has her appointed household duties. Although four-footed animals are plentiful, dog's flesh is the favourite dish. They grow many varieties of

vines and the grape is used for the preparation of brandy only. They extract salt from the green scum of stagnant pools and they obtain it also from the leaves of a tree known as Adam's fig tree. The leaves are burnt and an intensely saline residue is obtained from the ashes. They have a secret process of extraction by boiling and straining the mother liquor through a linen fabric. They manufacture gunpowder of the finest quality and Eastern peoples ascribe the glory of the invention of this agent of destruction to them, but what is more extraordinary this country has been engaged in no war for 500 years. The secret has passed to the Peguans, who in turn handed on to the Chinese, who pose as the inventors, as doubtless they were the first nation to employ it in warfare.

The kingdom of Tipra produces nothing that excites the curiosity of the traveller or the greed of the merchant. A gold mine is situated in the country, but the metal is of rather poor quality, and is exchanged for silver in China. There is also plenty of silk, but of very coarse quality and is used for common purposes only. The inhabitants are addicted to intoxicating liquors. Instead of figures, they calculate with pebbles that have the appearance of small agates. They rarely journey from their own country and have no commercial relations with other nations who know them by name only. The kingdom of Aracan has so extended a coast line that it seems to invite all commercial nations to trade. The climate is good, plague and other infectious diseases are unknown. The rich and fertile plains produce all the necessaries of life. Many tribes live in the pleasant valleys which afford pasturage to all sorts of wild and domestic animals. Horses are rarely seen. Horned buffaloes are employed for agricultural operations. Their anger is aroused at the sight of red. They let those whom they wish to attack pass quietly by and then gore them from behind with their murderous horns. These animals, intractable, by nature are obedient only to the native in charge of them, and gather around him at the sound of the horn by which he calls them.

The winter, so to speak, as it is the rainy and stormy season, begins in April and finishes in October. There is no other season but summer during which abundant crops of beans, grain and fruits are produced; but neither wheat nor rye can be grown. The capital gives a good idea of this kingdom. It is several leagues in extent, its population is equal to that of the largest towns in Europe, and it contains 600 temples. The magnificence of the King's palace shows that gold is plentiful. The Hall of Gold is thus named as it is covered with the precious metal from roof to floor. A hundred ingots of gold each weighing 40 pounds are fixed to the throne, which itself is of massy gold. There are in addition seven golden images of the size of an ordinary man. They are hollow inside, but the metal is two inches thick. They are of immense value owing to the emeralds, rubies, sapphires and diamonds which are set in the forehead, arms and girdles of these vain images. In this hall there may be seen a square stand made entirely of gold upon which is a golden cabinet inlaid with precious stones. The King owns two rubies, each as long as the little finger, and at one end of the size of a hen's egg. These rubies have been the cause of desperate conflicts between the neighbouring Kings owing to the superstition attached to these stones that the possessor will be arbiter of the fate of the others. The King wears them on the day of his coronation only. The people, contented with the products of their land, cannot understand why men risk their lives in the pursuit of wealth. They take up arms for war only, and never for trade, which is carried on solely by foreigners from all parts of the world.

The Mahomedans, especially, carry on a great trade in elephants which they export to the Coromandel Coast, to Golconda and to Persia from whence they import fabrics, silks and spices.

The most plentiful articles of commerce of the country are timber, lead, tin and ivory. It is worth while to make a few remarks on the manners and customs of a nation with which commercial relations could well be established. The Aracanese have broad and flat foreheads which results from a peculiarity of taste rather than from a freak of nature, as the work of nature is marred by the application of a leaden plate to the infant's forehead.

Their nostrils are large and open and the lobes of their ears are so long that they nearly reach down to their shoulders. Their dress consists of a cotton shirt that covers the arms, chest and abdomen. They wear, in addition, a long trailing garment, and so many other articles of attire that when they are fully dressed they look more like rolls of wadding than men. Their hair is piled on the back of their heads in the fashion of the Dutchwomen. The women have no other head gear than their coiffure which is kept in place by clasps, and this style of hairdressing is very effective. Their dishes are not appetising to European ideas. They eat rats, mice, snakes and all sorts of humble creatures. They are also fond of fish,—the staler, the better. Their principal beverage is pure water or a liquor extracted from the trunk of a certain species of palm tree. Female chastity commands no respect whatever. Husbands prefer to risk becoming the fathers of other peoples children rather than to take a virgin to wife. As a rule the Dutch sailors are paid well for their services in this matter.

The King, shut up in his palace, passes a lazy life with the Queen and his concubines.

Every year each of the twelve provincial governors selects a dozen girls of the same age in his

district, and exposes them to the ardent rays of the sun in order to induce perspiration.

They are then wiped dry with pieces of fine linen which are sent to the Court so that the odour may indicate those who are most worthy to enter the harem. Those who are refused admittance become concubines of the courtiers who receive them as a pledge of royal favour. It is said that the King's body guard consists of concubines who receive a certain amount of military training.

The King takes the following pompous title.

"Emperor of Aracan, possessor of the White Elephant and of the Two Rubies, Lawful heir of Pegu and Burma, Lord of Twelve provinces of Bengal, Disposer of Kings who place their heads beneath the soles of his feet."

The liberal arts are utterly ignored if one can judge by the scanty progress therein made. Medicine, especially, is only a fraud founded on superstition. The priests known as "Raulins" are summoned to the bedsides of the sick. They breathe over them and mutter mysterious incantations. A sacrifice of fowls, pigs or fat beasts is offered to the god of the four winds. This sacrifice must be repeated four times to prevent the death of the patient. The Raulins, however, devour the sacrifices offered to their gods.

In severe illness their fertile knavery prescribes a strange remedy by which the Raulins gain no small advantage. The wife, children or the relations of the patient bedeck an altar on which is placed an image, and place it in a well furnished room wherein are assembled the priests and relatives as for a grand banquet. The Master of the Ceremonies dances and hops about until he is exhausted. A rope is then fastened to the ceiling and the performer supports himself by it and jumps higher and higher until he falls down in a swoon which is considered to be a divine trance. Everyone pretends to be envious of his good luck, as they are sure he is enjoying a tête à tête with his god. The priests, who solemnly preside at this fantastic ceremony, anoint the sick man with oil and perfumes, and, if he happens to die they never blame themselves. They say that his death is a blessing from the gods who have taken him from this vale of tears to the mansions of the blest.

Their gross superstitions are seen to best advantage in their funeral rites. Whilst the priests are chanting prayers and burning incense, the friends and relatives of the deceased thump copper vessels in order to scare away black cats, for if by ill luck one of these animals were to touch the corpse, the soul of the deceased would be exiled from the heavenly abode where it would have its fill of pleasures of all sorts and would be reincarnated in mortal shape.

There is a certain sect of priests who believe that they share in the power of the gods. They are summoned to a grand banquet by the relatives of the deceased, and if they refuse the invitation, it is a sign that the soul of the dead man has been cast into the nethermost hell. Hired mourners are engaged to make a loud outcry. The dead whose relatives have not been able to honour with a funeral pyre, are exposed at the water's edge, and are carried away by the stream. Sometimes the corpses are devoured by birds of prey, which latter having always plenty of available foodstuff increase and multiply and even attack buffaloes and oxen.

Sometimes they hasten the death of their friends and relations when they seem to be suffering from the pains of old age or from some incurable malady. This action, which is a crime among civilized nations, is regarded by them as an act of piety, as they say that it is cruel to let those for whom happiness is waiting in Heaven, suffer here on earth. These peoples are sunk in the lowest depths of idolatry. Their temples are built in pyramidal shape and contain a large assortment of idols. They have gods of the house whose images they brand on their arms and shoulders with a hot iron. The barking of dogs, the bellowings of bulls, the howls of wild beasts, the songs of birds are considered as omens of coming events which the priests interpret to their own advantage. They celebrate a feast of the dead at which their fanaticism is pushed to its cruellest limits. One of their idols is dragged on a heavy car and is accompanied by Priests dressed in white. The fanatical devotees cast themselves under the wheels, and their blood is held to be a most pleasing offering to the god. Others are fastened by iron hooks to the car and, covered with blood, they are placed in a temple where they become objects of public worship. It is a matter of congratulation to all those on whose garments a drop of their blood falls. These holy madmen are worshipped as martyrs. There are three grades of priests. The head priest, who lives in the island of Munay, has control of public worship. His commands are very rarely infringed. The respect he inspires almost approaches to adoration. The King, absolute as he is, never disputes the precedence of the head-priest on ceremonial occasions and never covers himself before him. All the priests are vowed to perpetual celibacy, and should one of them break his vows of chastity, he is at once disgraced and expelled from the priesthood. Although they all obey the same head priest, they do not conform to a universal rule of life. Some live in their own houses at their own expense and are not a burden on society. Remote from the stresses of the world and despising mundane joys, they are unnoticed by the public and make their dwelling among the rocks or in deep forests or in deserts.

When they are obliged to appear in public, they are of humble mien and with eyes downcast, but this show of modesty is but a clever method of attracting attention. Other, more happy and sociable, live in fine palaces in the idle enjoyment of the multifarious gifts that the King and the Princes proffer to them in profusion in order to gain the favour of Heaven.

The education of the young is entrusted to these idolatrous priests, as if men whose sole functions seem to be prayer and ascetism, could have the necessary abilities for the upbringing of magistrates, warriors, artists or statesmen.

There are hermits as well, a variety of wild men whose sanctity is in proportion to their eccentricities. They, like the priests are divided into classes, and all renounce the pleasures of life.

Although Europeans have had considerable intercourse with the Kingdom of Ava, it is really a country about which very little is known. The majority of those who have given descriptions of this land have been either soldiers or traders, whose aims have been the acquisition of wealth rather than the desire to make accurate observations. All travellers agree that the fertile soil produces an abundance of rice and fruits, and that mines of lead, copper and silver exist, but that the natives have not sufficient skill to work them. In Ava, the capital of the kingdom, there is a considerable trade in musk, and in rubies and sapphires of the finest quality. The natives are quite successful in working these mines. Trade would flourish if public peace so necessary to industrial occupations, were not so frequently disturbed by various revolutions.

The form of Government is despotic. The King who should be merely the administrator of the law has usurped the rights of making, and breaking the law at his own pleasure.

Each province has its deputy at the Court under whose protection it resides. This delegate has the right of representing the needs of his fellow citizens and as the King is always well posted in state affairs, oppressors are speedily brought to justice and punished. The following are the titles assumed by the King.

"King of Kings who should be obeyed by everyone. Friend and Relation of the gods of Heaven and Earth, who from their regard for him preserve the animals and govern the seasons. Brother of the Sun, Cousin of the Moon and of the Stars. Absolute Master of the ebb and flow of the Tides. King of the White Elephant and of the Twenty Four Umbrellas." The arrogance of the Monarch is such that on rising from table, he orders that a trumpet be sounded to announce the fact to the other Kings of the earth that they have his permission to take their repast. Foreign ambassadors as well as his own subjects must prostrate themselves before him and even the elephants are trained to crouch down when he passes.

The military forces do not draw their pay from the public treasury. Each provincial governor has certain lands in his province, the produce of which is devoted to the support of the soldiery in time of peace, and in war time he supplies them with arms, food, and clothing. Officers are distinguished from the rank and file by the magnificence of their pipes which have certain joints to indicate the rank.

The Kingdom of Jangoma is situated on the north of Siam. It is not easy to define its boundaries accurately as they have changed owing to revolutions and political events. The country is governed by the priests whose power should be limited by law since the inhabitants style themselves "free-men," a title which servile and degraded races ought not to assume. Few details are known of the country and its inhabitants and we can only draw our conclusions from certain Chinese accounts and Siamese traditions. The following is all that is at present known to us on this matter.

The inhabitants are a well-built and vigorous race. Owing to the heat of the sun they wear scanty raiment consisting of a thin loin cloth. They go bareheaded and have never used shoes. The women are as voluptuous as the Peguans, but are much more handsome and are greatly in demand for the harems of pleasure loving Kings. Although the soil produces every necessary and even some luxuries of life, corn cannot be cultivated. But instead of bread, rice cakes form the staple article of diet. Besides necessaries of life the country produces musk, pepper, silk, gold, silver, copper and gums. It is true that certain travellers say that the bulk of these products come from China. But it would be less costly for a company established in Siam to procure them from Jangoma, rather than from the remotest East, and more so as this nation having had no commercial relations is unaware of the advantages of its geographical position.

We have very little information about the customs of the country, but it is known that the devil plays an important part in the beliefs of the inhabitants. The sick promise him sacrificial offerings and if he condescends to restore them to health they celebrate their recovery by a great feast to which all their friends and relations bring gifts of fruits to propitiate the evil spirit whom they look upon as the author of all diseases.

They are quite sure that the devil has no ear for music, as it is by instrumental efforts that they endeavour to drive him out of the house. The same motive, doubtless prompts them to summon priests to chant round the bedside of the sick man, who encouraged by their dismal voices expects a speedy relief from his pains. Death, which is a cause of mourning to men of other races of the earth, is for this nation a festal and delightful event. There seems to be a total lack of regret for the departed or at least they skilfully disguise their feelings in the matter. The corpse is borne on a reed litter by sixteen men to the place of cremation. The friends and relations, preceded by a band, follow in the procession. Quantities of presents are offered to the idolatrous priests who like birds of prey, live on the spoils of the dead. When the corpse has been cremated the funeral party returns to the house and the next two days are spent in feasting and dancing. After this, the widow bedecked with the trappings of woe proceeds to the cremation ground. All groan loudly and weep as they pick up the bones left by the flames. As a sign of mourning they merely get their hair cut.

Laos, which signifies thousands of elephants, derives its name from the numbers of these animals living in the forests of that country.

The climate is so mild and the air so pure that we are told that men of a hundred and even a hundred and twenty years still retain the full powers of their manhood. The bounties of nature are manifest in the plains and valleys and even the hilly districts. The watercourses which receive the mountain torrents, distribute the water evenly over the land and there are neither marshes nor stagnant ponds. The eastern bank of the river is the more fertile, the animals on this side are larger and finer, and the trees are more lofty. Here is grown the best rice of the East. The ground on which it has been sown, becomes covered with a sort of foam after the harvest and the heat of the sun converts it into solid salt.

Benzoin and lacquer of the best quality are found in the country, and from the latter Spanish wax is made.

Although ivory of superior quality is abundant, they consider rhinoceros horn to be of more value, as it is supposed to have the property of rendering the possessors lucky. The people of the upper classes as they happen to become more prosperous, discard the horn they possess so as to buy another which is reputed to be more efficacious and none of their valuables is guarded with greater care.

The flowers that stud the plains nourish swarms of bees which supply honey and wax. Tin, lead and iron mines are an important asset to the country. Gold and silver are found in the rivers whence it is extracted by means of iron nets.

Musk, which is one of the chief articles of commerce, is not a product of this country, but a composition of ambergris and the secretion of a species of cat, which gives off an agreeable perfume is used instead. In the forests are plenty of wild animals, but cultivation is carried on by the help of buffaloes and oxen. The rivers teem with fish, some so large that two men can hardly carry one. The poor live on salt fish and rice. Although there is no salt water in the country, they find splendid rubies. Doubtless the foam that covers the fields after the rice harvest supplies the lack of salt for the formation of this precious stone in the bosom of the earth.

The Chinese carried on a considerable trade with Laos before the Tartar invasion. They brought velvets, silks, stuffs, carpets, horse-hair, cottons, gold, silver and porcelain which they bartered for ivory, opium and drugs.

In the province of Laos from whence the kingdom takes its name, there is a deep mine whence rubies and emeralds are extracted. The King possesses an emerald of the size of an ordinary orange.

Commercial relations, if established in this country, would be assuredly fruitful for the reason that the Laosians are the most upright and honest people in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Not that they desire to possess every curious article of foreign origin they may see, but they prefer to be importunate in their demands for it rather than to attempt to gain possession of it by violence. The greatest praise that can be bestowed upon them is to remark on their fidelity to their pledged word. Robbery and murder are rarely heard of on the main routes, as the townships and villages are held responsible for any insults offered to travellers in the vicinity.

Their virtues are not unmixed with vices. By nature incorrigible idlers, they work only when absolutely obliged to. Arduous toil disgusts them, and destitute of perseverance, they cannot fix their attention for long on a single object and never examine anything more than superficially. Unbridled in their desires for the opposite sex, they seem to live merely for reproduction.

Sorcery and magic are the sources of many crimes and superstitions, but it is a weakness of the oriental mind never to undertake any important matter before having consulted and paid highly for the services of their duly qualified humbugs. The purity of the air tends to make the people long lived, and

although the country is not very large, an army of 500,000 fighting men could easily be raised and it would not be difficult to raise a large force of centenarians, all healthy and vigorous. The inhabitants are less temperate than in other Eastern countries. They take four meals a day. Rice, fish and buffalo meat form their staple articles of diet. They rarely eat veal, beef or poultry. Birds are roasted with their feathers which impart a disagreeable taste to the flesh.

As a rule the magistrates and the higher officials do not take more than one wife, but this moderation is due to motives of economy. They wish to give the impression that they are so busy with state affairs that they have no time to give to their own pleasures.

However they keep large numbers of concubines which make up for the fact of their only keeping one wife. Marriage is a life-institution, but divorce is so common that marriage appears to be but a passing fancy. When a woman is convicted of adultery the husband can inflict whatever punishment he thinks fit.

Funerals are occasions of festivity rather than of mourning. The priests are well paid and are magnificently entertained. They contribute tears and funeral dirges and point out the road to the heavenly mansions to the spirit of the deceased. In the grave are placed offerings of money. It is to be presumed that the priests, as owners of the graves put the wealth buried by ignorance into circulation again. It should be noticed that the trade of this country has suffered from the various revolutions. In former times its products were taken to Siam, but since the Burmese invasion, they have been diverted to Pegu. The hatred inspired by the continuous state of hostility between these two nations has driven trade to Cambodia where the Laosians find a ready market for their gums, lacquer and other articles.

This ignorant nation boasts that it taught the Siamese the art of writing on palm leaves; the language and the characters are similar, but the Laosians cannot pronounce the letters R. and L. It is said that in the olden time, their mode of worship was unmixed with superstitious beliefs. They had no temples but worshipped a Creator god who ruled the world, and who could only be pleased by the practice of virtue and not by sacrifice and ceremony. They believe that after the lapse of a certain number of centuries, the universe will be renewed. This idea of a Periodical Great Year has been adopted by nearly all the nations of old time.

Commercial intercourse with the Chinese has altered these simple beliefs.

They had priests who became legislators and who, in order to avoid the risk of having their arguments refuted, produced books written in foreign characters. As their teachings were not understood, they appeared to be highly mysterious and were greatly respected, and it was no difficult matter for these cunning impostors to attribute a divine origin to their doctrinal hypotheses. Their learned men are divided into three classes. Some teach how the universe and the gods have been created, but they base their arguments on fables and not on facts. Others who are styled 'the enlightened' reconcile all embarrassing questions and contradictory statements.

The new doctrine proclaims the eternity of Heaven and sixteen worlds, and that, in the highest of them, the lucky inhabitants taste of perpetual felicity unmixed with sorrow. These worlds are liable to destruction and renewal and they reckon 18,000 years since the renewal of the actual earth. They grant the existence of a hell, but the priests never mention the torments prepared for the wicked, lest they should intimidate the feeble minded. Polygamy is the reward hoped for in the next world by the righteous, but as this doctrine is somewhat distasteful to the women, they are told that those who lead a godly life will be changed into men. The same reward is promised to all those who bestow their wealth on religious objects, by the assurance that the donor will have as many women as could be purchased by the treasure they have laid up in heaven.

The priests, sworn to celibacy, console themselves with the belief that after death they will have the power to create a number of women with whom they may do as they please. They practise chastity during their lifetime with the sole idea of satiating their vicious desires in the next world, and that which is regarded as a virtue in Heaven is considered to be a vice on earth. Their monasteries are schools of debauchery or are filled with men of the lowest class. Puffed up with the dignity of their office they compel such a respect that the chief of the nation himself can refuse to grant it at his peril only.

Their cells are separate and that of the abbot is magnificently appointed. Gold and silk and articles of luxury are everywhere apparent. Seated on a dazzling throne the abbot receives the worship of his underlings and of the devout public.

I shall not enter into details of their mode of life as I should then be obliged to repeat what I have already remarked about the priests, but I ought to mention certain customs which seem to justify the opinion of those who maintain that Christianity in its early forms was established among these people.

On the fourteenth day of every month they are obliged to assemble to make a public confession of their sins. A humble avowal is sufficient to gain absolution, and as the penances are not painful, backsliders are frequent. They frequently employ holy water of which they always keep a supply handy. They consider that it is a highly efficacious remedy against the severest diseases.

The priests, in fact, consider it as an article of trade; and barter it for valuable liquors. The altars are adorned with flowers, and illuminated by torches. They also make use of rosaries, the beads of which are often of diamonds or rubies to assist the ignorance of those who are unable to read their prayers and hymns. They observe an Easter and a Jubilee. During those solemn occasions, all work is forbidden, and in consequence this time of rest is given up to debauchery. The preachers mount on pulpits whence they announce rules of conduct of a fairly pure and stringent nature, which however are broken by most people. The rich purchase indulgences, but the greedy priests only grant them for a limited period, and on expiration of the term, a new permit to transgress the laws must be purchased. Only the very poor need despair of the attainment of eternal felicity. The wealthy expend vast sums on these impostors who in return agree to expiate their peccadilloes.

The hermit priests live in dark caverns, in the midst of the forests, where in solitary retirement a large colony grows up around them in proof of their libidinous habits. It must not however be inferred that there are not some melancholy individuals who disgusted with life, bury themselves in these subterranean abodes and give themselves up to prayer and contemplation. A life of asceticism is by no means wearisome in tropical climates, where laziness is regarded as a variety of annihilation. Their occult researches have undoubtedly resulted in the discovery of certain tricks by which they impose on popular credulity. All of their mystic rites seem to have been modelled on or derived from the doctrines of Pythagoras or of the Priests of Egypt. Magic was the foundation, of these doctrines, and traces of such practice are visible in the writings of Apulius, Iamblichus and Porphyry.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is known to few travellers, who having made a short visit there have given us very vague accounts. It is to be hoped that the Missionaries who have planted colonies there will give us information as to the possible advantages to be thence derived. Their scrupulous accuracy pays greater attention to that which is useful to us rather than to embellishments.

It is known that this country, protected by a mountain range, is watered by the great river that traverses the country. Its equatorial situation must of necessity give it a torrid climate, and in order to avoid the burning heat only the banks of rivers or lakes are inhabited. Travellers have much to suffer from the attacks of insects.

This country, one of the most fertile of the Indies produces corn, rich harvests of rice, vegetables of fine quality, and oil which commands a high price. Seafarers of all nationalities have landed to take in supplies. Besides these important products, sugar and indigo of good quality are produced, which form leading native industries. The country is well wooded and fruit trees are plentiful. Sapan, sandal and other rare woods occur in the forests. All sorts of drugs, opium and camphor are abundantly produced. An extremely transparent variety of crystal is found in the rocks. This happy land produces amethysts, rubies, topazes, chrysolites, agates, bloodstones and other precious stones. Raw silk and ivory are very cheap. An ox weighing 500 lbs costs only a crown, and 150 lbs of rice can be bought for eight sols. Everyone is allowed to hunt elephants, and tigers and lions are found in the forests as well as most of the wild beasts which appear to flourish only in the African deserts.

The coast line 140 leagues in extent has only five or six safe anchorages for vessels. The most noteworthy port is opposite to the Siamese coast and has a great trade in lac, gums and ivory. The harbour of Pontameas would attract a great number of foreign ships but its trade has greatly fallen off since it was demolished in 1717 by the Siamese. The other harbours are but little known. The sea lying between this kingdom and that of Siam is dotted by numerous islets which render navigation dangerous. The two largest, although fertile, have been laid waste because the pirates who infest these seas have seized the results of the work and industry of the inhabitants. It would be an easy matter to set up an advantageous trading-station in Quadrol island where there are many natural sandy harbours. There is as well a group of eight islands having a good anchorage; Pulocondor is the only inhabited member of the group. This island is called the island of Orleans by the French and is about three leagues long and one and a half wide.

The harbour is commodious and the anchorage easy. The sea abounds with many species of fish, and turtles, the shells and oil of the latter being valuable articles of trade. It is a land of monkeys and lizards some of which are ugly and covered with scales. Their bite is fatal. Others have claws and their tails, seven or eight feet long, are triangular in shape. They are good to eat. Flying squirrels and rats having ears shaped like those of human beings are to be seen. Most of the trees are balsamic, one species yielding gum has the bark and leaves like that of a chestnut tree. Oil is extracted by making an incision in the trunk and applying heat. There are many wild fruit trees bearing appetising looking

fruits, but of insipid taste and frequently poisonous. A botanist could make a fine collection of plants and flowers unknown in other climates.

There is only one village inhabited by about 400 persons; frequently it is deserted as the inhabitants take up their abode in spots where they can satisfy their needs. The Cochin Chinese send the Christians to this island. It was captured by the English who set up a trading post in 1702. The governor had hired Macassar mercenaries and had promised to terminate their engagement after three years. He did not keep to his agreement and he kept them to strengthen the growing colony. This breach of trust ought to have made him wary, but he forgot that his example might cause his betrayal. As a result these savages, who although being rigid observers of treaties, thought they had a right to exact vengeance, and all the English were massacred the same night.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is inhabited by Portuguese, Japanese, Cochin-Chinese and Malays of whom some are passing traders, but others have become residents. The Portuguese have no priests and their religion is a mixture of idolatry and Christianity. They are in receipt of a small subsidy from the King, which together with the spoils of the chase forms their means of livelihood. The men are well built, and the women are distinctly handsome, but their lack of modesty counterbalances all the advantages they might otherwise derive from their personal appearance. These people never risk the perils of the sea in order to gain wealth, but they see the ships of all nations coming to their harbours for the purchase of the natural products of the land which are plentiful. They dig a fair quantity of gold and manufacture fabrics of as good quality as those of Holland. Their skill in embroidery is well known. The Dutch used to have a trading station and they had estimated that by the export of black lacquer, deer-skins, oxen and buffaloes to Japan, a profit of from 40 per cent to 70 per cent could be gained. But they met with opposition from the Portuguese who were jealous of their prosperity, and, on account of the various revolutions which have disturbed the peace of the kingdom, they have been obliged to forego all the advantages that they had hoped to gain. For these reasons, the different European nations have had no desire to form trading stations in these parts.

The religion is somewhat similar to that of Siam. They grant the existence of several heavenly abodes for the souls of the departed. In some of these heavens they are regaled with the finest liquors and the most delicious viands, and the senses are stimulated by all manner of delights. Women always young and beautiful, reciprocate the passion they inspire.

There is another heaven specially reserved for the solitary priests who have lived apart from the world. Their felicity consists in the utter absence of sensation, a sort of annihilation which is considered the height of bliss by lazy folks. The gods abide in the highest heaven and the privileged persons who imitate their virtues partake of their happiness. They also grant the existence of thirteen hells to which evil-doers are consigned according to the heinousness of their offences.

The priesthood contains many members and is divided into several classes, of which the first takes precedence even of the King himself. The second class consider themselves as his equals, and as the general belief is that they share the perfection of the deity, a profound respect is paid to them although the majority of them are of the lowliest origin. Their chief is known as the King of the priests and in certain districts he has supreme authority.

There are two ranks of nobility. The governors of towns and provinces, the ministers and judges are drawn from the first rank and are distinguished by a golden betelnut box. The nobles of the second rank have silver boxes.

The King is absolute. He can dispose of the goods of his subjects or rather slaves as he pleases. Children have no right of inheritance and whatever the King condescends to leave them is regarded as a personal favour. Although this Kingdom is of large extent it can scarcely put an army of 30,000 men in the field. This petty king is as proud and luxurious as the greatest rulers of Asia and it is this idea of imaginary greatness that frequently renders him insolent towards foreigners.

The country of Champa has a short coast-line with many commodious bays and harbours. Travellers have never penetrated the interior. No other town is known but Feneri, which used to be the royal residence before the country fell under the rule of the Cochin-Chinese, who, flying from Tartar tyranny were welcomed by the people whose rulers they have become. Their weapons are muskets, pikes and sabres in the use of which they show great skill. They are gentle and affable especially to foreigners. They show great respect for law from the King down to the lowest of his subjects. Their code is severe and the slightest faults do not fail to be punished. The people are not allowed to possess silver, and anyone convicted of its possession is severely punished. Gold is an article of trade and copper coin is the only currency. All callings are sold at a price and the consideration they enjoy is proportionate to the price. Whoever has sunk his fortune in the purchase of an office soon recovers his losses by means of exactions which are not punished, so as not to intimidate those who may wish to become office-holders. Liberty of worship is enjoined by the laws but most of the people are either Mahommedans or

followers of Confucius; there are also idolators, some of whom worship reptiles and the lowest animals, while others regard the sun and moon as the creative powers.

The Mahomedans of this country do not observe the Koran strictly. They eat pork and are so hospitable that they have no shame in prostituting their wives to their guests. They however make an exception in the case of the principal wife whom they cannot repudiate unless she has been convicted of adultery.

The Chinese come annually to trade in tea, porcelain, silk and various commodities which they barter for scented woods and for gold which is of finer quality than the gold found in China.

No country has had greater commercial intercourse with Siam than Cochin-China, a name signifying Western China given to it by the Portuguese in contradistinction to China proper. The country is easy of access, the harbours are numerous and commodious and a depth of 80 fathoms is common in the bays. The country is densely populated and there are many towns and cities. Its fertility is due to the periodical inundations which leave a fine alluvial deposit on their retreat, and the heat of the sun brings the vegetable products to maturity early and imparts a fine flavour. There is a certain species of tree grown here known as the 'indestructible' as the timber never rots either in water or in the earth. It is used for ship's anchors. The mountains where this tree flourishes also produces various kinds of scented woods and all manner of flowers and perfumes. In this country are quarries of marble of various kinds and numerous gold mines. The inhabitants have learnt the art of smelting metals from the Chinese but they have not divulged the secret to them of casting iron into cannon and mortars. On the mountains are many rhinoceros of a larger size than any others in the Indies. Trade with the interior is considerable, merchants resort to the fairs at which all kinds of merchandize is offered for sale. The silk produced in this land is not of the first quality, but it is so plentiful that it is used for making ropes and sails. The land tortoises furnish oil. A considerable trade is carried on in pepper, sugar, honey and wax. The Chinese and the Japanese have the commercial supremacy. These foreigners are not subject to the laws of the country, they are magistrates who adjudicate all commercial disputes that arise between the traders of their nations. The impressions of the Cochin-Chinese given to us by travellers are partly unfavourable, and partly favourable. The Dutch who have suffered ill usage at their hands accuse them of faithlessness to their promises, of arrogance in their demeanour, and of treachery. Others who have been well received by them praise their kindness towards foreigners, their commercial rectitude and above all their respect for the duties of hospitality. In spite of these conflicting opinions, all modern travellers concur in the view that their manners are as simple as their customs. Their gentleness of character saves them from acts of violence that in an instant ruin the impressions derived from years of exemplary conduct.

Their diet is simple, the sole articles being rice, fish and vegetables. Their usual beverage is a kind of tea that differs from the Chinese variety. They mingle sugar derived from a certain tree with their drinking water which thus acquires a pleasant taste and odour. They have a few wines, but prefer strong liquors to wine which they nevertheless use in moderation at marriages and other solemn festivals, which are the only occasions of excess. Although dependent on neighbouring nations, they allow their hair to grow long as a sign of their freedom. Their grandees keep up splendid establishments and wear robes embroidered with pearls which they prefer to diamonds. The women are veiled, but uncover their faces in salutation. Their medical men are dressed in black and wear a mitre shaped headdress. They trim neither their beard nor their nails as a sign that they are less desirous to please than to instruct. They know that respectability is well assured by the adaptation of strange habits.

Their houses have no other ornamentations than paintings and gilded sculptures. Marriage ceremonies, funeral rites and festivals are similar to those of the Chinese from whom they are descended, but in this, their new country, they have extinguished the torch of the liberal arts which illumined the land of their origin. It is not that they are without seats of learning, but such as they have are schools of error in which under the pretext of studying astronomy, they devote themselves to all the lies of astrology in order to seek for revelations of the future. They predict eclipses without being able to calculate their exact time, extent and duration and, regarding them as omens of serious evil, employ thousands of weird methods to counteract their supposed malign influence.

The King and all the chief officers of state as well as the learned, follow the doctrines of Confucius, which they have received from their ancestors. They have neither temples nor priests, but all pay deep respect to the great god Tien. The common people, plunged in the depths of the darkest idolatry, give themselves up to the most vulgar superstitions. They have bonzes who are divided into several classes. Some of them live on the produce of the land and waters assigned to them; others, subservient to a chief, live on the alms of the people; a more certain source than the hard won produce of the ground. If we can judge by the filthy state of their temples, most of which are in ruins, it seems that the priests and their devotees are the only persons who are attached to their religion. The foreign missionaries

have made great conquests for the faith in these parts and it merely needs a greater number of workers to gather in an abundant harvest.

Those who believe in metempsychosis are loth to kill either the most dangerous animals, or the vilest insects, but by a strange contradiction as is usual in erroneous doctrines, they sacrifice swine to their gods and to the spirits of the departed. They believe that souls which do not pass into other corporeal forms are changed into demons, fairies or goblins. Thus it is that the fear inspired by these malign creatures gives credence to thousands of fables.

The law is no respecter of persons. The King a severe and upright judge passes sentence on the guilty, but his representatives in the provinces are more lenient, as they are amenable to bribery. A woman convicted of adultery is trampled to death by an elephant. A first act of theft is punished by the loss of a finger, the second by the loss of an ear, and the third by death. This graduated system of punishment should be a lesson to those nations generally whose laws inflict the same penalty on one, who by a passing weakness has committed some crime, or on another who is a hardened criminal. False witness is punished according to the nature of the charge brought. When the King pronounces sentence he is mounted on a fine elephant and petitioners may only approach within eighty paces of the royal presence.

This Prince is wealthy for the reason that many of his neighbours pay a high price for his protection. He derives a considerable revenue from the elephants, wax, and ivory produced in his country; the tribute paid in scented woods and gold dust by his vassals forms another source of income. Besides the tribute exacted from the vassal states, there is a general poll-tax, and every man from the age of 18 to 60 has to pay about fifteen livres. This tax is less derogatory than the forced labour of eight months to which every slave or subject is liable. The grandees are obliged to offer valuable gifts on certain days of the year to the King, and these would exhaust their resources if it were not for the gifts which they in return extort from their inferiors to replace the losses caused by these forced benevolences.

At the death of each land-owner, the King takes possession of the landed property and leaves only the money and personal effects of the deceased to the heirs. The tariff dues on foreign merchandise are still another source of revenue.

The Government of the Kingdom of Cochin-China is purely military. The weapons of the country are muskets, bows and daggers. Drill is performed in silence. The leader directs all the evolutions by motions of his baton, and if he makes a mistake he is reduced to the ranks. The Court is an example of Asiatic pomp. The first dignities of the state are conferred on eunuchs, as it is supposed that as they are unable to beget children, they will be all the less avaricious.

This policy has not succeeded in Europe, where experience has shown that celibate ministers have accumulated vast wealth. The heir-presumptive to the throne has command of the navy, and of his private body guard of 5,000 men. The younger son is commander-in-chief of the army. He has also a body guard of 2,000 men. A standing army is maintained as a protection against rebellions.

Crimes against the King's person are cruelly punished. The guilty party is tied up to a post and each soldier cuts off a piece of his flesh until nothing but the skeleton remains. The severity of the code in force proves that the nation is prone to crime. The law endeavours to deter crime by the threats of severe punishment. The soldiers are clad in satin and the uniforms of the officers are of velvet and silver.

There are military schools in which children are trained at the public expense. The spirit of emulation is fostered by rewards which pander to the growing mind. They receive silk dresses and other accoutrements that flatter their vanity. Those who take no advantage from their lessons are dressed in linen.

Christianity has made great progress in this land, but has had much to fight against. The ignorance of the idolatrous priests, and the foolish nature of their doctrines, have been favourable to the progress of Missionary enterprise.

CHAPTER XIII.

The intercourse between Siam and Tonkin requires special notice. The exact extent of Tonkin is not known accurately, but all travellers agree that it is a more densely populated country than France, and some imagine that it is of equal extent.

Although situated in the tropics, it enjoys a climate of perpetual spring, and the air which by rights should be burning hot is cooled by the South and North winds which blow alternately for 6 months each in the year. The rainy season begins in April and lasts until August. At this season the leafy trees have their branches weighed down by masses of fruit, the countryside luxuriates in vegetation and promises a rich harvest of rice. There is neither corn nor grapes, but nature supplies their lack by other products. It is true that at times the land is stricken with sterility. The floods destroy the young crops and the drought changes the fertile earth into arid dust.

A range of inaccessible mountains seems to act as a line of defence against foreign invasion. These mountains are clothed with forests containing many fruit trees and inhabited by tigers, deer, and elephants. The interior of the country is occupied by rising ground. The plains are watered by numerous rivers and canals form cheap and facile means of communication. Although the country has so many products of commercial value, the inhabitants give all their attention to fishing.

Kankao is the chief town, and many travellers have compared it favourably with the most populous cities of Asia. There are no imposing edifices with the exception of the royal palace and the arsenal, in other respects it is a confused collection of wooden huts. The foreign trading establishments are the only brick buildings. The ruins of an ancient palace, destroyed during the civil wars, are still visible and the relics point to the pristine glories of the city. The arsenal is a building that would command admiration in Europe. It is furnished with artillery, ammunition and all kinds of warlike stores.

Here the physicist would be struck by the phenomenon of the tides, as the sea ebbs and flows only once in the 24 hours and is only appreciable at the first and last quarters of the moon.

The products are similar to those of other countries of the Indies, but the fruits are finer and more delicious than those of any other Asiatic country. The oranges are large and luscious, but the use of the citron is unsafe as it supplies the mordant used in the dyeing of cotton.

Cultivated fruits include sweet potatoes yams, bananas, mangos, limes, cocoanuts and pineapples. The elephants are the largest and most active of those found in Asia. Temperance is a national virtue and their staple articles of diet are merely rice, vegetables, roots, and salt fish. They observe festivals at which game of all sorts is eaten and especially at weddings and funerals they indulge in all manner of good cheer. They devour horseflesh buffalo and goat meat, dogs, rabbits, rats, frogs, shell fish and all kinds of fish. For dessert they have the most excellent fruits, the odour and colour and taste of which are pleasing to all the senses. Cleanliness is noticeable in all their dishes. The tables and crockery as well as they themselves are perfumed. In formal feasts the guests keep profound silence, and speech before the conclusion of the repast would be considered impolite. This restraint during their meals might be attributed to their voracious appetites. Their usual beverage is a kind of tea with which on festal occasions they mingle arrack. They manufacture strong drink from rice and other vegetables.

The Tonkinese have flat oval faces. Their teeth, naturally white, are blackened so as to avoid the reproach that they resemble those of dogs or elephants. Though of a swarthy complexion they are fairer than the other inhabitants of the Indies. They have long thick black hair. They are active and cunning and seem adapted by nature to be an accomplished race; but idleness, the vice of the climate is a check to industry and renders them poverty stricken. Their insensate passion for gambling reduces the wealthiest to beggary. Having lost all their money, jewels and other possessions, they will wager their wives and children and even their horses to which they are greatly attached.

The dress of the Tonkinese consists of a long robe reaching to the heels. The grandees are dressed in silk or English cloth. The populace and soldiery wear robes of cotton stuff reaching to the knees. Fishermen and workmen, who are obliged to spend their time out of doors, wear hats made of straw or leaves. The King is the only person permitted by law to wear shoes. The common people go bare-foot but this is no discomfort in a land where the soil is sandy. This custom is in vogue in Abyssinior and in all warm countries and only foreigners find that it is distasteful. They however wear sandals as do the officials and the learned men affect the same fashion. The latter allow their nails to grow long as a sign of their rank. Men and women used to be obliged to wear their hair bound up, as a mark of their vassalage, during the time when this kingdom was a dependent state of China, but at the present time they wear it loose over their shoulders. The nation has borrowed its arts, science and etiquette from the Chinese. Their language which is monosyllabic, greatly resembles Chinese, and inflexions of the voice determine the signification of the syllables. The Tonkinese have many guttural and dental consonants which are very difficult to be pronounced by foreigners. Their writing is in vertical columns, they make use of similar writing implements to those of China and they use silk or the bark of trees instead of

paper. They have no taste whatever for art and science. It is true they have poets and musicians who are fairly successful in imaginative works. They have also made a certain amount of progress in morality for which they have adapted the maxims in the books of Confucius. They have teachers for all branches of accomplishments but no school for scientific knowledge, and they have only a very slight acquaintance with mathematics.

The healing art is very imperfectly understood in Tonkin, experience is their only guide, and the doctors combine their profession with those of surgeon and apothecary. Their medical books on the preparation of drugs are most vague in their principles. Cupping glasses and caustics are used in obstinate cases only. The usual medicaments are made from gums, roots and herbs. They cure fever, eruptions, jaundice and small-pox by dieting and infusions. Certain diseases are attributed to fogs and exhalations. Astrology bars the way to medical progress, certain days are supposed to be unlucky, and on these days the patient is allowed to suffer rather than that medicines should be administered. Their skill in the arts is shown by their articles of lacquer ware, porcelain, and in the smelting of metals.

The rivers and canals by which the country is intersected are favourable to internal trade. Each town has its fairs and markets to which many foreigners are attracted. But there is very little maritime commerce, for the reason that their ships are too small to brave the dangers of the stormy seas. Foreign imports are saltpetre, sulphur, cloth, all sorts of woollen goods, spices, lead and guns. Foreign currency only is used and no race is more skilful in the art of money changing, as they are able to appreciate or depreciate the exchange values at their pleasure.

Trade would be in a flourishing condition if the Tonkinese were as active as they are industrious, but, sunk into the slough of idleness, they divide their time between sleeping and eating. When they are not actually eating, they smoke, dance or sing. By a cowardly policy, the government puts obstacles in the way of industry, the vassal States of the Empire are excluded from any participation in sources of wealth. The rapacity of the tax-gathers is an effectual check to competition, as people are not anxious to spend their energies on work, the fruit of which is reaped by others. The Tonkinese by nature a suspicious and distrustful race are somewhat chary of the overtures of foreigners and being too fearful of danger are unable to gain any advantage. The legislative code of Tonkin has been borrowed from China, and the administration of the law is in the hands of corrupt persons who sacrifice the innocent poor to the guilty rich. Each provincial governor is judge in his own province. Polygamy is the rule all over Tonkin and no woman can boast of the title "wife." The bonds of these unions or rather of this concubinage, are easily broken. The man gives the woman a writing of divorcement which restores the woman to all her rights. The woman cannot obtain divorce no matter whether she have just grounds or no, and if she is convicted of adultery she is condemned to be trampled to death by elephants. Her paramour dies by another form of torture. The eldest son, after his father's death, receives the whole of the estate and the paternal authority on condition that he provides for his brothers until they are married. The daughters have no share in the heritage. Other laws are similar to those in force in other countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Their love of display is noticeable in their marriage feasts. Actors of both sexes perform dances to the accompaniment of a big drum, and the performance is followed by a concert given by hired musicians. Few ceremonies take place without a show of cock-fighting on which considerable wagers are laid. Girls are married at the age of sixteen and seventeen years, and parental consent is required to make the union legitimate. The brides see their husbands on their wedding day for the first time and priests are excluded from the ceremony and the festivities.

Their funeral rites are the works of superstition, astrologers are appointed to indicate the place of burial and the corpse is kept for several months until some favourable omen indicates a suitable spot. During this delay the relatives of the deceased offer the usual food to the corpse as if it were still alive. It is kept in a room illuminated by torches. Incense and gilt paper on which are painted figures of various animals are burnt in its honour and the relatives pay it a daily visit and prostrate themselves with every appearance of woe.

Those who accompany the funeral procession are dressed in coarse garments and walk barefoot. They support themselves with sticks and their slow tottering step is a sign of their grief.

The nearest relative throws himself on the ground at intervals and the corpse-bearers tread him under foot. The corpse is dressed in rich attire and, as a safeguard against poverty in the next world, a piece of gold and some pearls are placed in its mouth. On certain days in the year offerings of food and incense are made at the tomb that the dead may not lack support.

Although many festivals are celebrated, it seems that they are all due to religious influences. The most noteworthy is the feast of tombs, which is celebrated on the anniversary of the death of the persons in question and bountiful feasts are offered to them. The King and the nobility celebrate their birthdays with great pomp, and their marriage days with dances, concerts, and theatrical performances. At a certain festival, the King followed by all his court, blesses the produce of the soil.

He drives the plough and makes several furrows as a tribute to agriculture. There is another ceremony at which exorcisms are made to rid the land of evil spirits. New year's day is an occasion of great rejoicings. Booths are set up where men and women perform dramatic pieces and sing to the accompaniment of the orchestra. Everybody appears to be mad with joy and no business is transacted. All work is at a standstill, the halls of justice are closed and the seal of state is put away in its case. Criminals have no fear of punishment during the feast. The license which reigns supreme during this season exposes the women to outrage and they never appear unless with an ample guard.

The Monarch has but a semblance of real power, the commander-in-chief is the real ruler and it is the latter whom the Europeans regard as King. He has a large body-guard and is attended by a corps of 300 elephants, whereas the actual king, buried in the obscurity of his palace with his wife and children, is served by faithless menials who act as spies on his movements. It is surprising that the commander-in-chief allows the existence of this phantom ruler, but the Tonkinese have such veneration for the master that it would be a dangerous matter to attempt to supersede him.

The commander-in-chief has usually a force of 150,000 infantry and from 10,000 to 20,000 cavalry under his orders. Recruits are eager to join the colours, but at the sight of the enemy their courage evaporates and, as bravery is not one of their characteristics, they are more ready to dig entrenchments than to make sorties therefrom. The commander has no great confidence in his men, at least if we can form an opinion from a letter written to the commander of the Dutch forces in the Indies.

"I have," he remarks, "300,000 infantry 10,000 cavalry, 2,000 elephants, 30,000 musketeers and 1,000 pieces of artillery at my disposal, I beg you to send 200 men and 3 ships to assist me." After such a pompous display of the numbers under his command, one cannot fail to draw the logical conclusion.

The majority of the military positions of trust are confided to eunuchs, enervated by the luxury of court life. Ability is not the road to success, although the posts are not obtainable by bribery, all of them are put up for sale to the highest bidder, because in a kingdom of vast extent in which the eye of the ruler is unable to penetrate the remotest parts, the grandees are always the sharers of intrigue and never of the worth that hides itself in the shade.

The whole strength of their united navy would be unable to hold its own against one of our warships.

Their men-of-war are flat vessels about 70 feet long, and 10 amidships and can be used for coast defence only. The soldiers who are the rowers are directed in their movements by the sound of a drum.

The soldiery, scattered over the kingdom, is supposed to protect the roads, but often by attacks on travellers, abuses the trust of the governors to whom it is subordinated. In time of peace the soldiers are armed with clubs which are formidable weapons in their hands and they break the legs or thighs of those who resist or try to run away.

All civil disputes are summarily disposed of by the magistrates. The offender is obliged to offer meat and drink to the other party in the suit so that their differences may be forgotten over the feast. The creditor is absolute master of his insolvent debtors whom he can treat with every indignity. Criminals are punished in proportion to their crimes. Theft is not punished by death, but by the loss of a limb or of some part of the body. Murderers are condemned to death by decapitation. They are led to the scene of the crime or to their house as a place of execution. If there are several criminals, there are several executioners who on a given signal decapitate their victims simultaneously. The Tonkinese are the least cruel people of the Indies in the punishment of guilty persons. By law life may be bought at a price, and only the poor actually suffer the extreme penalty.

Although the eunuchs are objects of popular scorn, they have considerable power, and as their misfortune smooths the path to honours, it is often the case that self mutilation is practised by ambitious men of advanced age without fearing the pain and *sequelae* of the operation. Their surgeons perform the operation skilfully, and they have a method by which many accidents are avoided. The patient is thrown into a deep sleep which lessens the shock of the operation, and experience has shown that the torpid state induced, is a protection against fever and inflammation which so often occurs after such operations.

At the age of 18 years every man is subject to a poll-tax in proportion to his wealth. The magistrates, soldiers, and learned men however are exempt and it is the poor man that bears the brunt of the taxation as is usual in most countries. The taxes are collected after the harvest and the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the kingdom are forced to bring a certain quantity of fodder for the King's elephants and horses to the store houses in the capital. Every man is in addition obliged to work for six months on public works for which he receives food but no salary. So great is the degradation of human nature in these climates that the inhabitants, less privileged than animals, seem only to exist on the

earth for the purpose of watering it with the sweat of their brows.

The grandees and the learned follow the doctrines of Confucius, but its precepts are too simple to be adopted by the common people who can only behold the workings of a deity in the marvellous. The principal belief is that of Fo which is divided into various sects, the most widespread of which was founded by a China man named Lauro who is revered as one of the greatest wonder-workers of the East. His followers give out that his mother carried him in her womb for 70 years without having lost her virginity. He boasted of his intimacy with spirits who revealed the secrets of the future to him. The priests, brought up in ignorance and superstition, attract the minds of the populace by their fables and wonders. They live in extreme poverty as they have none of the grandees for their disciples, and the bounty of the common people is their only source of revenue. A certain number of priests boast they can cure the most stubborn forms of disease by means of charms. When summoned to the patient they make their appearance in a most extraordinary manner in order to render the performance more imposing. They make their exorcisms to the accompaniment of drums, and trumpets. They jump about in the sick room until the fate of the patient is decided either for death or life and whenever the result proves the useless nature of their performance, they have plenty of excuses ready for their non-success.

In Tonkin the gospel-harvest has been more fruitful than in any other of the lands of the Indies. The scorn of the great for the idolatrous priests has contributed to the success of the Missionaries, who have more than 200,000 converts in this kingdom of whom more than 15,000 are under the charge of a French Missionary recently elevated to the rank of Bishop of Agathopolis and who is assisted in his duties by three French priests and four Chinese converts.

I must here recapitulate the causes that ought to be favourable to the success of this undertaking. The aim of the Seminaries of the Foreign Missions is the establishment of a clerical order in all countries of the world. Sacred history tells us that the Apostles and their successors ordained priests among all nations that they converted. People are always more ready to give credence to their fellow citizens who are well known to them rather than to foreigners whose motives are often to them questionable. The native priests know the language better, are better preachers, make themselves better understood and are more readily listened to in the explanation of the mysteries of religion. Knowing the manners and customs of the country they are acquainted with the best methods of combating the natural inclinations of the people and know how to gain their confidence. All the local superstitions are well known to them, and it is easy for them to point out their absurdity and falsity. With all these advantages they can fight against error and triumph over ungodliness. The hierarchical order established by the seminary, can alone inculcate a perfect type of Christianity that will have no further need for foreign intervention on its behalf.

Besides these general reasons there are particular reasons for the Indies. The toils and dangers incurred in penetrating those distant lands, the study of the Indian languages so difficult to learn and to pronounce, the climate often deadly and always unpleasant to foreigners, and the expenses of travelling, render the Indies inaccessible to most of the priests and members of religious societies who are zealous of making conquests for Jesus Christ. The incessant wars that lay waste all the countries of the Indies do not allow the missionaries to go from one country to another when needed to do so by the church. Princes and people cannot understand their dogmas and worship. The idolatrous priests cannot behold their gods trampled underfoot without becoming enraged against men whom they consider impious and sacrilegious. It is in these times of stress that the flock has the greatest need of its pastor. Besides this in this Indies the foreign priests can render no services to those who groan under the sword of persecution. As soon as they appear, their complexions and facial characteristics betray them and as soon as they are recognised, they are haled off to durance vile.

These eastern lands are of such wide extent and so densely peopled that all the priests and members of the religious societies of Europe would hardly be sufficient to instruct such vast multitudes.

For these reasons the sovereign Pontiff has decided to appoint Vicars-apostolic in order to form a national clergy for which the interests of Religion and Politics demand the lasting prosperity.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM ***

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