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SIAM:

ITS
GOVERNMENT, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c.

BY
Rev. N. A. McDONALD,
For ten years a Missionary in that country.

PHILADELPHIA:
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To the Memory
Of the Founder of Milnwood Academy,
REV. J. Y. McGINNES,

Who had the cause of Foreign Missions very much at heart;

AND TO ALL WHO HAVE BEEN PUPILS OF THAT INSTITUTION, THIS LITTLE VOLUME

Is respectfully dedicated, by one of the earliest
Students of the Institution,

The Author.

[Illustration: The present King of Siam.]

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PREFACE.

In giving these pages to the public the author has no ambition to make a book. Having been invited by the Principal of Milnwood Academy, at Shade Gap, Pa., to deliver in that Institution a series of lectures, or talks, on Siam, its government, manners, customs, &c., a few friends have requested that they be reduced to paper and published, which is his only apology for giving them to the public in book form. A few additions have been made, and the facts are narrated as seen and understood by the author. In a few instances, to refresh his memory, he has referred to articles on Siam, published in the *Bangkok Calendar* and elsewhere. The work is intended chiefly for a class of readers who may not have access to the more pretending works recently published on that country.

N. A. M.

Shade Gap, Pa., April, 1871.

SIAM.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHY, Etc.

On my "overland" journey from Siam to the United States, through France and England, many persons were accustomed to accost me saying, "Pardon me, Sir, but what nationality is that young man who is with you?" referring to my Siamese boy. That boy, Sir, is a Siamese. "A Siamese! Well, I must confess my geography is a little shaky,—I scarcely know where Siam is,—but I remember now that is where the Siamese twins came from." Referring, of course, to those unfortunate beings who by some "lusus naturæ" are inseparably connected together, and have been obliged to spend a long life in that condition, and who have consequently become almost the only means by which their native country is known to a vast majority of Europeans. When I, in 1860, determined to go to Siam, I found it next to impossible to gather from books any reliable information concerning it, and consequently took shipping at New York almost as ignorant of the country to which I was going, as I was of the moon. Fortunately however, some of our party were returning, and before we arrived at our destination I was pretty well prepared for what I was to encounter. Geographies are nearly silent in regard to Siam, from the simple fact that geographers themselves know nothing about it. It is also to be regretted that, until very recently, chiefly all the books concerning Oriental countries were written by mere cursory travellers, whose knowledge of the countries through which they passed, or at which they touched, must necessarily have been limited, and the chief object of many of them appears to have been to make a readable book, oftentimes at the expense of truth.

You will naturally ask, where is Siam? At the extreme point of that vast continent extending from the snows of Siberia to the Equator, and terminating in the long narrow Malay peninsula, is the little island of Singapore, separated from the mainland by a narrow strait. The island is about twenty-five miles long, and about fourteen miles broad, and commands the entrance of the China sea. The English, who have ever had an eye to strategic points, and especially in the East, took possession of it in 1819, being then little more than a Malay fishing village, and a nest for pirates. The present town of Singapore, well laid out and neatly built, and situated on the southern extremity of the island commanding the anchorage, contains perhaps one hundred thousand inhabitants, whilst the principal English merchants live in palatial residences on the hills in the rear of the town. The government of the island, together with Malacca, Penang, and Province Wellesley, has lately been transferred from the Indian Government directly to the Crown. It is a beautiful little island, with a genial climate, and I know of no place in the East where I would rather live.

Leaving Singapore, and passing through the strait, up the peninsula, over the lower part of the China sea, and up the gulf of Siam about eight hundred miles, you come to the kingdom of Siam, sandwiched between Cambodia on the east and Burmah on the west, extending from about latitude 4° to 22° north, and from longitude about 98° to 104° east; consequently there is neither frost or snow, but perpetual summer reigns. The leaves fall and are replaced by new ones, whilst those who are daily witnesses to it scarcely notice the change.

The climate of Siam is genial and healthy, but the constant heat is trying to the constitutions of Europeans, who require a change at least once in ten years. The seasons are two, the wet and the dry. From November to May scarcely a cloud obscures the sky, and no rain falls except perhaps a shower in January. The Siamese look for a shower in that month, and are disappointed if it does not come. They think it necessary for certain kinds of fruit which is just then forming, and they also think it indicative of a good rice season. I have, however, in ten years, seen January pass several times without the expected shower. From November to February the weather is delightful, being the cool season, but the thermometer is seldom lower than 64°. March and April are the hottest months, but the thermometer does not rise as high as might be expected in such a climate. I have never seen it over 98°, but on account of the long absence of rain, the ground in most places becomes dry and parched, and the rays of the sun, reflected from the heated earth, give the atmosphere a kind of bake-oven feeling, which is oftentimes hard to endure. From November to May the wind blows constantly from the northeast, and is called the "northeast monsoon." From May till November again, is the wet season, the wind blowing constantly from the southwest, and is called the "southwest monsoon," the rain falling in copious showers almost every day. The showers come in a kind of rotation. If there is one to-day at a certain hour, there will be one to-morrow an hour later. The showers are copious indeed, and sometimes one would think the "windows of heaven were opened." The lightning is vivid, and the thunder oftentimes terrific.

Whither the name Siam came, or whence it is derived, it is now impossible to tell. The Siamese themselves know nothing of it, only as it is applied to their country by Europeans. The name they apply

to their country is "Muang Thai," the free country, in distinction from those countries which are tributary. The name Siam, however, is now coming into common use, and is sometimes inserted in public documents.

The geology of Siam is simple, the lower portion near the gulf being an alluvial deposit, the result of the annual overflowing of the rivers, which takes place at the close of every rainy season. The water from the copious rains rushes down from the mountains up the country, and overflows the lowlands, enriching them and causing them to produce abundant crops of rice. The mountains are volcanic, and some of them have the appearance of having been thrown from a distance and set down in their present positions.

Many of them are barren of almost everything green, presenting to the eye but little that is attractive, but others, especially in the North Laos country, present scenery indescribably grand. In many places, especially along the seacoast, the old granite, the foundation of all things, geologically speaking, comes to the surface, and even projects out in bold bluffs and headlands. The rocks on many of the mountains present the appearance of having at one time been lashed by the waves of the sea, and there is abundant evidence that much of the lower country has been redeemed from the sea at no very remote period.

The country is drained by three streams of considerable size, which empty into the gulf. The principal one is put down on our maps as the Menam, but called by the Siamese Menam Chow Phya, Menam being the generic name for river, meaning mother of water, and Chow Phya being the specific name for that particular river. Were it not for a sandbar at its mouth, it would be navigable for the largest class of vessels to Bangkok, but on that account the largest vessels are obliged to anchor in the roadstead outside. The Bampakong on the east, and Tacheen on the west, are also streams of some importance. Besides these, there are also a number of smaller streams.

Bangkok, the capital of the kingdom, is situated on both sides of the Menam Chow Phya, about twenty-five miles from its mouth. It contains about four hundred thousand inhabitants, and has been called the Venice of the East, from the fact that much of the city is floating on the river in the form of floating houses. These floating houses are a kind of nondescript affair, and it is impossible to give one who has never seen them any idea of them. The following description, by the oldest missionary in Siam, and published in the *Bangkok Calendar* of 1866, though quite too elaborate for easy reading, is as good as anything that can be given, and I shall insert it "in toto."

"Our friends in the western world have heard a good deal about the floating houses of Bangkok, but they universally speak of being unable to understand, after all that has been written, what kind of things they are. If the descriptions that have been given of them could have always been accompanied by good photographic pictures of the same, our friends would have had much less difficulty in understanding them. But such pictures are too expensive to procure for illustrating 'The Bangkok Calendar,' which never pays for its cost, and hence we must do the next best thing, and that is to descend into quite minute detail, if we would make our friends who have never visited Bangkok understand such unique structures as the floating houses of the city. And as these houses form a large part of the dwellings and mercantile shops of this great metropolis, being the most conspicuous of all buildings (the temples only excepted) as you pass up and down the Menam Chow Phya, the 'Broadway' of Bangkok, they seem to demand a minute description in 'The Calendar.' These floating houses are moored on both sides of the river for a distance of nearly three miles. Their size, on an average, is about forty by thirty feet on the base; in height, eight feet to the eaves, and fifteen feet to the ridge of the roof. As this base could not be covered by a roof of only two sides, and make it sufficiently steep to shed rain well, without being too high for safety on the river in time of a squall, the natives divide the area to be covered into two nearly equal parts, and put a two-sided roof over each division, thatched with the attap palm leaf, (*cocos nipa*.) The two eaves that thus meet in the middle of the house have an eve-trough common to both of them, which is always seen in the house about eight feet from the floor, passing uniformly in the direction of the river. Hence nearly all these floating houses appear to be double, standing sidewise to the river, the ridge of the front being a little lower than the one behind it. There is always a narrow verandah four or five feet wide attached to the front division, which is covered with an extra roof of attap leaves, extending from under the main point roof, with a more gentle slope than the front roof, and then, in front of these, there is usually a small bamboo float from three to five feet wide. This is sometimes extended the whole length of the house, and sometimes only from three to ten feet. The eve of the verandah is not more than six feet above the floor. From this there is often suspended a bamboo mat, or some other material more tasty, for a screen from the glare of the river. The ends of the two double roofs are all furnished precisely alike with a peculiar kind of moulding made of a thin plank tastefully curved at the bottom, like the written capital A, and put up edgewise at the extreme end, to constitute a neat finish for the thatching. The triangular area made by each double roof at the ends is generally closed with attap thatching; sometimes with bamboo matting, sometimes with wooden pannelled work, sometimes with a regular clap-boarding, and rarely with

woodwork radiating from the lower side of the triangle upwards.

"These floating houses are always divided into two main rooms—the front and inner one. The floor of the latter is about one foot higher than the front. There are narrow passages five feet wide at the right and left of these rooms, which are simply enclosed verandahs, with each an attap roof, leading to a narrow room of the same width and kind in the extreme rear. The front room is used for the purpose of a variety-store, and the inner one for a bed-room.

"In it you will generally find the family idol-altar, if the occupant be a Chinese. It is often used for putting away lots of goods, a few samples of which are daily exposed for sale in the front room. These exhibitions are made on a kind of amphitheatre-formed shelving facing the river, so that every article can be seen at a glance by passers-by in boats. The whole front is exposed to view in the daytime, not by opening all the doors and windows, but by taking down much of the front siding, which consists of boards varying from ten to twelve inches in width, standing up endwise, and fitted into grooves above and below. These boards are slid out early every morning, one by one, and laid away out of sight under the floor, in a place reserved for them during the day. Early in the evening each board is put in its place for closing up the front of the shop, leaving not the least door or window by which one may have direct access to it. But there is a small door in front of each of the narrow passages in the extreme rear.

"This narrow room is commonly used for the purposes of a cook-room. The fire place is simply a shallow wooden box filled with clay. There is no chimney or stovepipe attached to any of them. In the place of one they make a scuttle hole in the thatched roof only six feet above, and this has a trap door made of the same material as the roof, which can be closed in rainy weather. Even in the best weather only a part of the smoke escapes through the opening, while the remainder finds its way out in all quarters. Consequently this little cook-room is always a very smoky place, and is blackened with soot to a greater or less extent, as are also many other parts of the establishment.

"Some better-to-do occupants of these floating houses have a small bamboo caboose, moored at one end of the dwelling house. The floating houses are usually enclosed with teak boards standing up endwise, and permanently fixed into grooves above and below. Sometimes the siding is made of bamboo wattling.

"It remains to be shown the mode of buoying up the floating houses above the water, which being quite unique, deserves a particular description. In the sills of the house are framed five rows of scantling, four-by-six inches or larger, which descend into the water five or six feet. These are so arranged that they divide the whole area underneath the sills into four equal parts, or, as the Siamese say, *hawngs*, or sections, for filling with bamboo poles. The first object of these five rows of *legs*, bounding as they do the four equal divisions, is to prevent the bamboo poles from rolling out sideways under the pressure of the superincumbent house; and the other is to render it quite convenient to exchange every year old and rotten bamboos for new ones. Now a new set of bamboos will serve well the purposes of a buoy only about two years; and to save the trouble of exchanging all under the house at once, the natives manage to exchange only half of them annually, so that the house is not for a moment left without enough to keep it well out of the water. This is done by removing all the bamboos from one or two of the divisions which have been in use two years, and filling their places with new ones. The divisions which have bamboos of one year's service remain undisturbed until next year; when their time has expired, they too are cast out to give place to others. Thus there are always left two divisions of the last year's bamboos to serve in conjunction with two divisions of new ones. The annual cost of new bamboos for a floating house of medium size is not far from forty *Ticals*, and the number of bamboo poles required is from five to eight hundred.

"As these floating houses are generally moored close together, standing end to end, in an even line in the direction of the river, it becomes necessary that the house which is to be replenished with bamboos should be moved out a little in front of its neighbor's, thus making room for sliding out the old bamboos from either end, and sliding in new ones to fill their places. There are men who follow this business as their profession, and do it very dextrously. One day is quite sufficient to accomplish the whole work for any house. The bamboos, it scarcely need be said, are slender poles, from three to four inches in diameter at the butt-end, and not more than half that size at the top. They are from twenty-five to thirty feet in length. The top ends of the poles are always the ones that are pushed under the house, and consequently are hidden, while the butt-ends are always external, forming an even surface at each end of the house. The poles being about three-fourths the length of the house, the smaller extremities consequently overlap each other from eight to ten feet, and make an equal thickness of buoying material beneath the middle of the house, with that of each end.

"A house newly buoyed up looks quite tidy and dry, its floors being from three to four feet above water. The houses are kept in their places, forming a regular line with their fellows, thirty feet or more from shore, by means of three or four teak posts or piles, driven at each end into the soft bottom of the

river six or eight feet; and these are made mutual supporters of each other by lashing a bamboo pole across them all near their tops. The house is then fastened to these posts by means of bands or hoops encircling very loosely each post, so that they shall readily slip up and down as the tide raises the house or causes it to settle down. For this purpose it is indispensable that there be no notches or knots on the posts that shall cause the hoops to catch on them. Such a notch would cause the post to be drawn up out of its place in a flowing tide, and would sink it deeper in an ebbing one. While sitting in these houses you will often hear a crack, and consequent sudden sinking of the house, caused by the sliding of a hoop out of the place where it had been caught on the posts. Where the water is unusually deep where a floating house is moored, and the bottom of the river unstable, you will see the tops of the mooring posts made fast by a cable to something firm on shore. Sometimes the whole gives way notwithstanding, and then the house is adrift at the mercy of the tide. The writer was once in a floating house that had got adrift in the night time, and floated down the river many miles before it could be made to submit to the power of the ropes and cables, with which we endeavoured many times in vain to stop her downward way. She would snap our stoutest ropes, as Samson did all the instruments with which his enemies bound him. These floating houses are often moved from place to place, and it is no uncommon thing to see one floating up or down the river with the family in, and everything going on as regularly within as if it was snugly moored."

The buildings on shore belonging to the chief princes and nobles, are built of rough brick and stuccoed inside and out. The style of architecture is a kind of Siamo-Chinese. The next best kind of house consists of posts sunk into the ground, which constitute the frame work, whilst the sides are made of boards wrought into a kind of pannel work. This is called a "*ruen fa kadan*," or weatherboarded house. These are the houses of the poorer princes and nobles, and the better class of the common people. The houses of the poorer classes of the common people are made on the same plan, only the sides are constructed of bamboo wattling. These are called "*ruen fa tak*," or open-sided house.

The river is the "Broadway" of the city, whilst canals form the principal cross streets or avenues. Chiefly all travel in the city, and indeed everywhere in Siam, is done in boats. If a person wishes to go to church, to market, to call on a friend—in short, any where, he goes in a boat. The rivers are the great avenues of trade, whilst the whole country near the Gulf is intersected by a network of canals. But in those portions distant from the rivers or canals resort must be had to ox-carts and elephants.

Siam is the genial land of the elephant. He roams wild in her forests, but those which have not at least been partially tamed are now becoming scarce. He constitutes in the northern provinces the chief beast of burden, and one of the special uses to which he is put, is drawing timber from the forest to the bank of the river, where it can be formed into rafts and floated to market. I have seen a huge elephant with his tusks and trunk roll a large log up a declivity more quickly and dextrously than a dozen men would have done it.

Siam has also been denominated the land of the "white elephant," from the peculiar reverence shown for that animal. There is, however, no such thing as a white elephant. The standing color is black, but occasionally one is found which by some freak in nature is a kind of Albino, or flesh color. He comes as near the color of a badly burned brick as anything else. The Siamese do not call him a white elephant, but a "*chang puak*," a strange colored elephant. From time immemorial the Siamese have considered this strange colored animal the emblem of good luck, and the king, who has had the greatest number of them, is handed down in history as the most fortunate monarch. A certain king had at one time three of them. The king of Burmah sent an embassy, asking one as a special favor, which was emphatically denied. At this the king of Burmah took umbrage, and sent an army and took the whole of them. When one is found in the forest, word is sent immediately to the capital, and preparations are made for conducting him to the palace with the greatest honors and religious ceremonies. He is enthroned in a palace within the walls of the king's palace, and is henceforth fed on the luxuries of the land. He seldom, however, lives long, being killed with kindness. He would be much happier and his life would be considerably prolonged by allowing him to roam in his native forest. The finder of such an elephant too, is generally handsomely rewarded. Some travellers have stated that the white elephant is worshipped, but I have never seen anything of the kind, nor do I believe it. He is, however, held in peculiar reverence, because he is considered the emblem of good luck. The flag of the country is the flag of the white elephant. I am told that some Frenchman has lately written a book, in which he states that he has in his possession a hair from the tail of the white elephant of Siam, which he obtained at great sacrifice, and even risk of his life. The hair he may have, but the rest is imaginary.

The present population of Siam cannot be much short of eight millions. The Siamese proper are evidently an off-shoot from the Mongolian race, but by what admixtures they have arrived at their present status it would be difficult to ascertain. Some one has given the following description of them, which is substantially correct. "The average height is five feet three inches, arms long, limbs large, and bodies inclined to obesity. The face is broad and flat, the cheek bones high, and the whole face assumes a lozenge shape. The nose is small, mouth wide, and lips thick, but not protruding. The eyes are small

and black, and the forehead low. The complexion rather inclined to a yellowish hue. The whole physiognomy has a sullen aspect, and the gait sluggish." The Siamese, as a general thing, do not tattoo their bodies as many eastern nations do.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOVERNMENT.

Siam proper is divided into fifty-eight provinces, which are each presided over by a Governor appointed by the Central Government at Bangkok. There are also several Malay states down the peninsula, and six or eight petty Laos kingdoms north of Siam proper which are tributary to the king of Siam. These Laos kingdoms pay a small annual tribute, and the King of Siam claims the prerogative of nominating a successor to the throne, when a vacancy occurs. This successor is taken of course from their own princes, but receives his insignia of office from the King of Siam. Aside from this, each of those kings is absolute in his own dominions. All the tributary states, however, are virtually under the Protectorate of the King of Siam, he being *Lord* paramount, or Suzerain.

The civil government is divided amongst the three principal ministers of state, *Chow Phya Pra Kalehome*, *Chow Phya Puterapei*, and *Chow Phya Praklang*. The *Kalehome* has special charge of the provinces to the west and southwest, and is *Prime Minister*, having charge of everything pertaining to army and navy. *Puterapei* has charge of the provinces to the north, and is over everything that pertains to habitations and dwellings of the people. The *Praklang* has charge of the provinces to the southeast, and is over all foreign interests, all vessels of trade foreign and domestic, and has charge to a certain extent of the treasury, hence the name *Praklang*. This was the arrangement under the late reign, and I presume it is very little changed, if any, as yet under the present.

The king is an absolute despot. No hereditary aristocracy or legislative assemblies control his will. There is an aristocracy or nobility, it is true, but their power is not felt only as instruments in carrying out the will of the king. The people exist for the monarch, and not the monarch for the people. The laws, as a general thing, are laws of the king and not of the country. The old adage, "New kings make new laws," is often literally true in Siam, providing the new sovereign is so disposed. He is absolute master of the persons, property, liberty and lives of his subjects. In speaking of him they do not say he rules or governs, but he "eats the kingdom," which is too often literally true. Almost any man in the kingdom is liable to be drafted at any time to do king's work, and the descendants of captives of war, such as Cambodians, Peguins, Burmese, &c., are obliged to render three months service, or its equivalent, to the government annually. The person of the king is held in extreme sacredness and reverence, and in addressing him the same titles and attributes are applied to him which are applied to *Budha*. For one of his subjects to inquire after the king's health would be an almost unpardonable offence, as it is presumed that the king never takes sick, or dies, as common people do. Some of these absurd ideas appeared in the late reign to have become obsolete, but are evidently being renewed again in the present. Formerly the king was both a monopolist and a trader, claiming exclusive right over such commodities as tin, ivory, cardamums, eagle-wood, Sapan-wood, gamboge, &c., but when the late king entered into treaty relations with the western powers, this monopoly was in a great measure yielded.

It is strange to say that this monarchy is not hereditary—that is, not in the sense that that term is understood in Europe. There is what is called the *Senabodee*, or Royal Counsellors, consisting of the chief ministers of state, who during the life of the king are merely silent counsellors, but upon his death their power becomes manifest, and upon them devolves the responsibility of selecting a successor, and governing the kingdom until such successor is chosen. The successor must be a prince of the realm, but not necessarily the eldest son of the late king—indeed, not necessarily a son of his at all.

The death of the late king occurred about nine o'clock, P. M. The Prime Minister was immediately summoned to the palace, who convened the *Senabodee*, and before midnight the succession was determined, and everything going on smoothly. They chose in this instance the eldest son of the late king, *Somdetch Chowfa Chulalangorn*, a boy about sixteen years old.

His coronation took place on Wednesday, November 11, 1868, being the day decided upon by the Brahmin astrologers as the one most propitious. At this coronation there was a slight innovation upon the usual Siamese custom. No European had ever before witnessed the coronation ceremonies of any king of Siam. The late king, after his coronation, wrote a private note to some of his European friends,

stating that he would have been glad to have had them present, but "state reasons forbade it." The number of Europeans present at the coronation proper of the present king were few, consisting of the consuls of the different treaty powers, with their suites; the officers of H. B. M.'s gunboat Avon, and a few others. The writer held at the time the seals of the United States Consulate, and was the only representative of our government in the kingdom, and consequently received an invitation, which might not have been accorded to him as a mere missionary. The company of Siamese present was equally select, consisting only of the chief princes and nobles of the kingdom.

The hour named was six o'clock, A.M., but owing to some delay it was nearly eight when we passed into a small triangular court, facing one of the doors of the inner audience hall. In front of the door of the hall stood an elevated platform richly gilded, and upon that platform was placed a very large golden basin. Within that basin was a golden tripod, or three-legged stool. Over the platform was a quadrangular canopy, and over the canopy was the nine-storied umbrella, tapering in the form of a *pagoda*. Over the centre of the canopy was a vessel containing consecrated water, said to have been prayed over nine times, and poured through nine different circular vessels before reaching the top of the canopy. This water is collected from the chief rivers of Siam, and at a point above tidal influence, and is constantly kept on hand, in reservoirs near the temples in the capital. In the vessel was placed a tube or syphon, representing the pericarp of the lotus flower, after the petals have fallen off. At a flourish of crooked trumpets, resembling rams' horns, the king elect descended from the steps of the hall, arrayed in a simple waist-cloth of white muslin, with a piece of the same material thrown over his shoulders, and took his seat upon the tripod in the basin. A Brahmin priest approached him and offered him some water in a golden lotus-shaped cup, into which he dipped his hand, and rubbed it over his head. This was the signal for the pulling of a rope, and letting loose the sacred water above in the form of a shower-bath upon his person. This shower-bath represents the *Tewadas*, or Buddhist angels, sending blessings upon His Majesty. A Buddhist priest then approached and poured a goblet of water over his person. Next came the Brahmin priests and did the same. Next came the chief princes, uncles of the king; next two aged princesses, his aunts. The vessels used by these princes and princesses were conch-shells, tipped with gold. Then came the chief nobles, each with a vessel of a different material, such as gold, silver, pinchbeck, earthenware, &c. Then, last of all, the Prime Minister with a vessel of iron. This finished the royal bath. He then descended from the stool in a shivering state, and was divested of his wet clothes, and was arrayed in regal robes of golden cloth, studded with diamonds. In the south end of the audience hall was an octagonal throne, having eight sides, corresponding to the eight points of the compass. He first seated himself on the side facing the north, passing around toward the east. In front of each side of the throne was crouched a Buddhist and a Brahmin priest, who presented him with a bowl of water, of which he drank and rubbed some on his face. At each side they read to him a prayer, to which he responded. I was too far off to hear all, but the following is said to be a translation of it.

Priest. "Be thou learned in the laws of nature and of the universe."

King. "Inspire me, O Thou who wert a law unto thyself."

P. "Be thou endowed with all wisdom and all acts of industry."

K. "Inspire me with all knowledge, O Thou, the enlightened."

P. "Let mercy and truth be thy right and left arms of life."

K. "Inspire me, O Thou who hast proved all truth and mercy."

P. "Let the sun, moon, and stars bless thee."

K. "All praise to Thee, through whom all forms are conquered."

P. "Let the earth, air, and water bless thee."

K. "Through the merit of Thee, O Thou conqueror of death."

He was then conducted to the north end of the hall, and was seated upon another throne. The insignia of Royalty were then presented to him. They were handed to him by his uncle, Prince *Chowfa Maha Mala*. First came the sword, then the sceptre, then two massive gold chains in a casket, which he suspended around his shoulders. Then came the crown, which he placed on his own head, and at that instant the royal salute proclaimed him King, under the title of *Prabat Somdetch Pra Paramendr Maha Chulalang Korn Kate Klou Yu Hua*. Then came the golden slippers, the fan, the umbrella, two large massive rings set with huge diamonds, which he placed on each of his forefingers. Then one of each of the Siamese weapons of war were handed him, which he received and handed back. The Brahmins then wound up with a short address, to which he briefly responded. He then distributed a few gold and silver flowers amongst his friends, and the Europeans then withdrew to breakfast, which had been prepared

for them. It may be asked why the Brahmins officiate so much when Siam is emphatically a Budhist country. I have asked several well-informed noblemen for the reason, but have as yet been unable to ascertain the true reason. No one appeared able to give any true reason. There are a number of Brahmins in the country, but their existence is scarcely ever noticed except on some such occasion as the above.

At 11 o'clock, A.M., the new king appeared for the first time before his whole Court. The outer audience hall was richly decorated and spread with rich Brussels carpet. When the Foreign Consuls entered in a body the whole Siamese Court was prostrate on their knees and elbows on the carpet. Very soon the king entered, arrayed in regal robes, and wearing his crown, and seated himself upon the throne. The whole Court simultaneously placed the palms of their hands together, and then raising them up to the forehead, bowed their heads three times to the floor. The chief ministers of state then formally delivered over their several departments to the new monarch, to whom he briefly responded. Senhor G. F. Vianna, Esq., Consul-General for Portugal, his being the oldest consulate, then on behalf of the consuls present read a short congratulatory address, which called forth another brief response, and the audience retired.

The public audiences of European ambassadors and officials are extremely ridiculous. I have been present on several such occasions, both as Vice-Consul and as Interpreter to others. The King is seated upon his throne, and the whole court resting on their knees and elbows before him, with their "beam ends" turned up to the gaze. All communication must be held through the Court Speaker. When I went as Interpreter, the communication was given me in English, which I rendered into Siamese to the Speaker. He would then commence by ascribing to the King a long "rigmarole" of titles and attributes, at the same time apparently so much afraid that he scarcely knew what he was doing, and by the time he was ready to deliver my communication he had forgotten about half of it. When he received the King's reply, he had to repeat the same nonsense, and by the time he was ready to give the message to me there was but little of it left. Had I not been able myself to catch it directly from the King's lips, the interview would have been most unsatisfactory.

The present King is about sixteen years old, and is apparently a sprightly, good-looking boy. His father, some time before his death, had employed an English governess for the palace, and the present king, in common with all the royal children, received from her some knowledge of the English language, and probably a smattering of some of the sciences; but when he ascended the throne, instead of employing for him a tutor capable of instructing him in the sciences, and the different forms of government, everything of the kind was abandoned, and he was allowed to give himself up almost wholly to women, which is likely to destroy in a great measure any original talent he may have had. It is now difficult to tell what he will be by the time he arrives at an age suitable to assume the responsibility of the government. He is also at present very much secluded from Europeans. His father, vain of his knowledge of English, and the advancement he had made in the sciences, which, to say the least, was truly commendable, was very fond of European society, and was accessible at almost any time by the better classes of Europeans in Siam, but the son, for reasons best known to those in authority, is at present cut off from all such intercourse. I have also been informed that he has removed from the palace the fine European furniture placed there by his father, and is replacing it with Chinese furniture, which looks like a step backwards.

The government at present is in the hands of His Excellency *Chow Phya Sri Surywongse*, with the title of Regent. He was Prime Minister during the late reign, and consequently chief of the *Senabodee*. He is also a man of undoubted ability, coupled with the usual oriental shrewdness and low cunning, and is with all extremely selfish and moody. His love for Europeans and western civilization is not very great, only so far as he can use them to his own advantage; he is however, too shrewd a man to do anything which would interfere with the European trade, or violate the existing treaties. The country is perhaps better governed now than ever it has been before.

His younger half-brother, *Chow Phya Bhanuwongse*, is Minister of Foreign Affairs. He is a free, affable, gentlemanly man, and is perhaps more free from that extreme selfishness which constitutes so large an element in Siamese character, than any man in the kingdom. He has been to Europe, and has profited much by the trip. His eldest son is now in King's College, London. The Foreign Minister is, however, too near the shadow of his greater brother to act out his natural character, especially in his official capacity.

During the last and present reigns, Siam has been the mildest and best heathen government on the face of the globe. Oppressions from high quarters are very rare. Petty officers sometimes take advantage of their positions to "squeeze" the poor. Redress for such grievances can always be had by appealing to headquarters, but there are usually so many unchained lions in the way that such a course is seldom resorted to.

There is also a Second King, which is merely a nominal title without any of the responsibility of the government. He is surrounded by his court, and has nearly all the honors of the First King shown him, but has nothing to do with government except amongst his own personal adherents. Even at the death of the First King he does not assume, even temporally, any authority. He may be chosen First King. A few instances are on record in which this has been the case. The son of the late Second King now occupies the second throne, under the title of *Krom Pra Raja Bowawn Sahthan Mongkoon*. This prince is better known to Europeans by the name of George Washington, a name given him when a boy, either by his father, or by some of the American missionaries who taught him English. His father is said to have manifested a great love for the memory of Washington. The Second King is now about thirty-five years old, has a pretty good knowledge of English, some knowledge of the sciences, western civilization and governments, is polite and gentlemanly in his manners, and apparently very friendly to Europeans. He is also well liked by all Europeans. The commander of one of our United States war vessels, after an audience with the Second King, remarked to me on retiring from the palace, "That is the man who should have been First King." The title of Second King appears to have been originally established to satisfy the disappointed one of two rival princes.

The Siamese have an excellent code of civil and criminal laws, if they were properly enforced, but, unfortunately, the Judiciary are so corrupt that justice is seldom meted out, the one paying the largest bribe generally gets the case. The Lord Mayor's and Sub-Mayor's Courts are the chief criminal courts in the city. There are also within the palace walls several other courts, chiefly for civil cases, and presided over by the chief Ministers of State. There is also an International Court, established by the late King, for the investigation of those cases in which both Siamese and the subjects of treaty powers are involved. Besides these, every prince of rank is vested with judicial powers, and can hold court at his own palace. The courts in the provinces are presided over by the provincial governors, but those governors have not the power of life and death unless delegated to them, in a special emergency, by the King. The judge of any court is vested with full powers to investigate and decide any case, subject, however, to an appeal to the King. There is, however, seldom such an appeal, as, in other instances of oppression, the unchained lions in the way are numerous. There are associate or assistant judges, but they are simply for the investigation of minor cases. The judge places his mat down on the floor in one end of the court-room, upon which he places a three-cornered pillow, and then places himself in a reclining position. The litigants are crouching around him, presenting their cases, and the whole thing frequently turns into a general conversation and brow-beating. There is nothing like a jury. The witnesses are taken out to a Buddhist temple, where the following ironclad oath is administered to them. "I, who have been brought here as a witness in this matter, do now, in the presence of the sacred image of Budha, declare that I am wholly unprejudiced against either party, and uninfluenced in any way by the opinions or advice of others; that no prospects of pecuniary advantage or advancement to office have been held out to me. I also declare that I have not received any bribe on this occasion. If what I have now to say be false, or if in my further averments I shall color or pervert the truth so as to lead the judgment of others astray, may the Three Holy Existences before whom I now stand, together with the glorious *Tewadas* of the twenty-two firmaments, punish me. If I have not seen, and yet shall say I have seen; if I shall say I know that which I do not know, then may I be thus punished. Should innumerable descents of Deity happen for the regeneration and salvation of mankind, may my erring and migratory soul be found beyond the pale of their mercy. Wherever I go may I be compassed with dangers, and not escape from them, whether murderers, robbers, spirits of the earth, woods, or water, or air, or all the divinities who adore Budha; or from the gods of the four elements, and all other spirits. May blood flow out of every pore of my skin, that my crime may be made manifest to the world. May all or any of these evils overtake me within three days, or may I never stir from the spot on which I now stand; or may the lightning cut me in two, so that I may be exposed to the derision of the people; or if I should be walking abroad, may I be torn in pieces by either of the supernaturally endowed lions, or destroyed by poisonous serpents. If on the water of the river or ocean, may supernatural crocodiles or great fish devour me; or may the winds and waves overwhelm me, or may the dread of such evils keep me a prisoner during life at home, estranged from every pleasure. May I be afflicted with intolerable oppression of my superiors, or may a plague cause my death; after which may I be precipitated into hell, there to go through innumerable stages of torture, amongst which may I be condemned to carry water over the flaming regions in wicker baskets, to assuage the heat of *Than Tretonwan*, when he enters the infernal hell of justice, and thereafter may I fall into the lowest pit of hell; or if these miseries should not ensue, may I after death migrate into the body of a slave, and suffer all the pain and hardship attending the worst state of such a being, during the period measured by the sand of the sea; or may I animate the body of an animal or beast during five hundred generations, or be born a hermaphrodite five hundred times, or endure in the body of a deaf, dumb, blind, and houseless beggar every species of disease, during the same number of generations; and then may I be buried to narok, and there be crucified by Phya Yam."

They have also a way of extorting confessions from criminals, which is terribly severe. The first way is by the use of the lash or ratan. He first receives ninety stripes, and then, if he don't confess, he is

allowed a respite of a few days and receives ninety more; and if he stills holds out, he is allowed another respite, and receives ninety the third time. Any one who can endure three times ninety without confessing is presumed to be innocent. They have also other modes, by putting split *bamboos* on their fingers, something like the thumb screw of old. Persons often confess when they are innocent, from fear of the torture.

They punish with death murder, highway-robbery, and treason. Their mode of execution is decapitation. The criminals are brought out in chains, and a clamp consisting of two bamboo poles is placed on the neck. He is then made to sit down on the ground, the one end of the clamp resting on the ground. They then most generally drug the criminal, so as to produce stupor, amounting oftentimes to unconsciousness, and also stop up their ears with soft mud. At a signal the executioner runs out with a sword and cuts off the head. He generally does it very neatly with one stroke, but I have known one or two instances in which the executioner, to give him nerve, took quite too much liquor, and made wonderful hacking of it.

Corporal punishment with the *ratan* is very common—so common that there is little or no stigma attached to it. I have known high officers to be severely thrashed. On public occasions I have seen those in charge of certain things, who displeased the King, taken out and thrashed. They were made to lie down on their face on the pavement, and a man stood over with a *ratan* and put it down in no light manner, the victim crying, "Ooey! ooey!" at every stroke. So you perceive that it may in some respects be called a *ratan* government.

The revenue of the country is derived from various sources. Certain things are sold out by the government to the highest bidder, who, when he receives it, has full control of the whole matter. He sub-lets again to other minor parties and retailers, and has full powers to punish all those who violate the right which he has so dearly purchased. These are called *farms*. The most lucrative is the opium farm. There is also the spirit farm, that is liquor distilled from rice; the gambling farm; the rice farm; the cocoanut-oil farm, and some others. There is also a tax on fisheries, on trading-boats, on fruit orchards, on shops and stores; an export duty on rice, and an import duty of three per cent, on all goods imported. There is also a triennial poll tax of about two dollars on every Chinaman in the kingdom, which amounts to a large sum every three years.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGION.

The religion of Siam is Buddhism. It would however be impossible on an occasion of this kind to give any extended outline of Buddhism, and besides this the principal works on that subject in the English language are dry and uninteresting to the general reader or listener. Any translations from the Buddhist classics must also be necessarily stiff, and many of the names unintelligible, unless accompanied with explanations; I shall only, therefore, give as brief an outline as I can of the Buddhist faith, and describe, as nearly as possible, the manner in which it is practised in Siam.

Buddhism arose from a man of royal blood called Gautama, but by the Siamese, *Somanakodome*. His father ruled a small kingdom in the province of Oude, near the Himelaya mountains. Gautama died probably about 534 B.C., and is supposed to have been nearly cotemporary with the prophet Daniel. Becoming disgusted with the luxuries and pleasures of courtly life he adopted that of a hermit, and like all hermits became an enthusiast, and fancied that he had found the only true road to all good, and thus leaped from the circle of eternal transmigration into a "sublimation of existence that has no attribute and knows no change."

The late king of Siam speaks of the founder of the Buddhist faith thus: "Budha was a man who came into being on a certain time, by ordinary generation; that he was a most extraordinary man, more mysterious and wonderful than all heavenly beings, because he made vast merit by the use of his body, his words and his will. He reigned as king twenty-nine years, (meaning doubtless that he lived in princely state until twenty-nine years old); that he then practised the most severe asceticism, and with the greatest assiduity for a period of six years, when his mind became so sublimated and refined that he habitually numbered and measured every thought he had, fixing his mind upon that single object, to the utter exclusion of every other care, and that consequently he attained to the highest perfection, not knowing anything alike of happiness or sorrow, being in a middle state between the two; and as a result of this, he then had power to remember many of the transmigrations of being through which he had

come, and could see with angelic eyes distinctly all the various and numberless transmigrations of human, angelic, and animal being throughout the universe; and thence onward to the time of his death he gave his mind entirely to the destroying of sin in his own body and soul, and became the most pure and spotless, not only externally, but also in all the secret recesses of his life and soul, and thence is worthily denominated Arahang. He then saw by his own power alone, that all the forms and bodies which merit and demerit have caused to come into being, and all other things which exist without any cause, are altogether illusive, unreal, unsubstantial, and evanescent; without a maker, proprietor, or lord, and that hence is he also *Samma Sampootó*. This says he is the sacred Budh, whom others before us have thus eulogized as having come into the world, and lived in it, and is commonly called according to his family name, *Gótama*. He spent forty-five years in publishing the way to holiness and substantial and eternal peace, and then extinguished his life, and departed into Nipán."

The pantheism of Brahminism had by long operation produced that sluggishness of mind—its legitimate fruit—and confounded the Deity with his works, and making it appear that the aggregate of creation is itself God. In opposition to this, Buddhism produced the doctrine that all forms are mere illusions, and that will, purpose, action, feeling, thought, desire, love, hatred, and every other attribute that can be predicated of the mind, is unstable, and unreal, and therefore cannot be associated with perfect peace. A state of "sublimation of existence above all qualities," is the only thing that is real and substantial. Budha has attained to that state which is called in the Pali *Nirwana*, but by the Siamese *Nipán*. The literal meaning of the word is, "absence of all desire," which involves an absence of thought, and may hence be called a state of dreamless perpetual sleep. To attain to that state the Buddhist dogma, that all things which appear in creation are illusive, and unreal, and consequently unsubstantial, must be firmly fixed upon the mind. This lesson, however, can only be learned by the most studious application of the mind, and moral discipline by self-denial during a period of at least 100,000 transmigrations. To our mind Nipán is nothing but annihilation, but Budhists will not admit it to be such, but maintain that Budha has a perpetual existence there, Nipán is the Buddhist's highest idea of happiness. Omnipotence may be attained by perfect virtue, abstinence, thought, and meditation.

Fatality is the cause of creation. The universe came into existence by the inherent force of fixed and invariable laws, which brings the worlds out of chaos, and conducts them on by gradation to a state of high perfection, and then downward again by the same gradation to dissolution, and then back again, upward and downward in a series that had no beginning, and will have no end. If any Siamese in the kingdom be asked who made the world, he will invariably answer "pen eng," it made itself.

The teachings of Budha appear to have been transmitted by tradition for about four hundred and fifty years after his death, and were then committed to writing by the authority of a Buddhist Council.

The Buddhist system of the universe is found in a book called the *Trei Poom*, or a book settling all questions about the existence of the three worlds. The *Trei Poom* of the Siamese was originally translated from the Pali. The work was doubtless originally written in Ceylon, and carried thence to all Buddhist countries. The Rev. Dr. Bradley, the oldest missionary in Siam, has prepared an abstract from the *Trei Poom*, and published in the *Bangkok Calendar*, from which I shall make a few extracts on the present occasion.

The universe consists of an infinite number of systems, called by the Siamese *Chackrawan*. Each *Chackrawan* has a sun, moon and stars revolving around the top of a central mountain, called *Kow Pra Men*, which extends above the surface of the ocean about 840,000 miles, and the same distance into the ocean. It forms a perfect circle, having a circumference equal to 2,520,000 miles. Parallel to the circle it describes, and at a distance of 420,000 miles, is the first of seven circular mountains, being variously distant from each other. Their depth in water is the same as their height above it. The names, height, circumference, &c., of these mountains are all given, but would occupy too much space to enumerate here. Between each of the seven mountains is a sea called *Seetawtara Samoot*. The width and depth of each is as the distance between the mountains which bound it, and the depth of the mountains below the surface of the water. The water is exceedingly refined and light. The fish that live in those seas are wonderful for variety and size, being many thousand miles long. Parallel with the circle described by the seventh mountain, and 5,513,650 miles from it, is a circular glass mountain, called *Kow Chakrawan*. This mountain forms the horizontal boundary of the system. Its height is 820,000 miles, and its thickness 120,000. The circular area which this mountain encloses is 12,034,500 miles in diameter. The circumference of the mountains on the outside is 136,035,500 miles. The water on both sides is 820,000 miles deep. The width of the ocean between it and *Kow Asa Kan* is 3,513,650 miles. Within this vast expanse of water are situated the four grand divisions of the populated plane or surface of the *Chackrawan*. These are called *Taweeps*, which, for want of a better term to express them, have been translated continents. These all have their appropriate names. The first, in its horizontal contour, is shaped somewhat like the face of a man, and hence is inhabited by mankind with faces like itself. The second has a form like a half-moon, and is inhabited by an intelligent race with semi-circular faces. The third is a perfect square, and is inhabited by square-faced beings. The fourth is circular, and

is inhabited by beings having faces like the full moon. The distance from each *Taweep* to *Kow Chakrawan* is 2,798,600 miles. Each Chakrawan system is underlaid by a body of water independent of their oceans. The distance from the surface of the earth to it is 260,000 miles, and the depth of it is 480,000 miles. Underlying this body there is a stratum of air 960,000 miles in depth, and thence downward there is nothing but an open and utter void.

Each Chackrawan has attached to it, somewhere in the subterranean regions, eight chief hells, called by the Siamese *Narok*, meaning worlds of utter misery. Each of these hells has attached to it sixteen smaller ones, making one hundred and twenty-eight in all. Outside of these there is another range of purgatories, forty to each chief hell, making in all three hundred and seventy.

Each Chakrawan has attached to it six inferior heavenly worlds, called *Tewalok*, situated above each other, and at immense distances apart. The first is situated on the top of the first of the seven circular mountains, and the second on the top of *Kow Pra Men*. The others have no terrestrial foundation, but are suspended in open space.

These Chakrawans are far more innumerable than the particles of matter which compose the earth. A mighty *Prom* once desired to find the limits of these systems. He was so powerful that by one step he could cross a Chakrawan as swiftly as an arrow crosses the shadow of a palmyra tree at midday. He travelled from one Chakrawan to another at that rate for one thousand years, and then onward ten thousand more, and then one hundred thousand more, until he was convinced that it was impossible to find the limit, or to express their immensity in numbers.

The Budhist decalogue consists of ten commandments, viz.

I. From the meanest insect up to man, thou shalt kill no animal whatever.

II. Thou shalt not steal.

III. Thou shalt not violate the wife of another, nor his concubine.

IV. Thou shalt speak no word that is false.

V. Thou shalt not drink wine, nor anything that may intoxicate.

VI. Thou shalt avoid all anger, hatred, and bitter language.

VII. Thou shalt not indulge in idle and vain talk.

VIII. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

IX. Thou shalt not harbor envy, nor pride, nor malice, nor revenge, nor the desire of thy neighbor's death or misfortune.

X. Thou shalt not follow the doctrines of false gods.

All who are habitually engaged in killing animals, stealing, committing adultery, drinking ardent spirits and getting drunk, will sink to the lowest hell. There are, however, five crimes which are especially damnable, viz., murder of father or mother, murder of the highest order of priests, called *Arahang*, wounding Budha's foot, so as to make it bleed, (supposed to refer to the renouncing of the Budhist religion,) and persuading priests to follow false doctrines or practices. Those committing such sins go down to the very bottom of the lowest hell.

No new souls are ever made, the universe is ever stocked with intelligent beings, and has been from eternity. These are continually transmigrating from one state of being into another. All depends upon merit and demerit. Every action and thought have their consequences, either in the present or some future state of existence. Evil actions produce evil consequences, which will eventually become manifest, and cause a future birth, either in hell or in some inferior animal. Hence, in speaking of the future, the Siamese always say "*tam boon tam kam*," according to merit or demerit. An amount of demerit may be cancelled by a corresponding amount of merit. We have had cooks in our employ who have been obliged to kill animals such as chickens, &c., and who, after leaving us, have entered the priesthood to atone for their demerit.

Over four hundred millions of the human race hold the Budhist religion in some form or other. There is no people, however, who excel the Siamese in devotedness and fidelity, and can show so many gorgeous temples and monasteries. The government and the religion are so inseparably connected together, that it is impossible to see how the one can be overthrown without the other. It is a mutual union of Church and State. No one can hold any civil office whatever under the government, who has not spent at least three months in the priesthood.

Budhism was brought from Ceylon to Cambodia, and thence to Siam, and probably arrived in Siam about the fifth century of the Christian era. The Siamese know of no other religion having existed amongst them.

They make merit in Siam in different ways. One prolific source is the building of temples or monasteries. These temples oftentimes cover acres of ground, and besides the regular temple or shrine of the idols, have houses or dormitories for the monks, and other outbuildings. The temples are gaudy, but not magnificent, grand, or massive. They are all accompanied with spires or pagodas, which frequently reach a great height. The temple building proper is filled with idols which are hideous in their appearance. Some are sitting, some standing, and some are in a reclining posture. There is one temple at the old city of Audia, said to have twenty thousand idols in it, and the estimate cannot be far in excess of the real number. There is one reclining idol in Bangkok, about one hundred and seventy-five feet long, eighteen feet across the breast; and the feet of the idol are six feet long. It is made of brick and mortar, heavily overlaid with gold, and cost probably about \$3,000. When the King wishes to make merit, he builds a temple costing perhaps \$100,000. When any of the chief princes or nobles wish to make merit they do the same. The temples built by the princes and nobles are all given to the King, and then formally dedicated. These are called "Wat HLuang," or royal temples, from the fact that the kings visit them once a year, and distribute presents to the priests. The common people also join together, and build temples, which are called "Wat Ratsadon," or the people's temples. They are the same as the others, only not so grand, and the kings do not visit them. There are in the city of Bangkok alone about one hundred and twenty temples.

Another prolific source of merit is by entering the priesthood. It is the highest ambition of every mother to have all her sons take holy orders in the priesthood, at some time or other during life, but generally in the prime of it, as they thus not only make merit for themselves, but also for the parents. It consequently becomes an ambition to have as many sons as possible. The advent of a son is hailed with delight, whilst that of a daughter is rather an occasion of lamentation. The first question asked on the advent of a little stranger is, "pen pu chai rú pu ying?" is it a boy or a girl? When our first child was born, and our Siamese friends came to see the little white stranger, finding it to be a girl, the only congratulations they offered were, "tempte Maú tempte," too bad, Doctor, too bad. The shortest time any one can remain in the priesthood is three months, and as much longer as they choose. I have met men who had been in the priesthood over forty years. I have met them also who had been in it a number of times. It is no uncommon thing for a man to leave his wife and family for a short time, and enter the priesthood.

The ceremony is very simple, consisting of asking the candidate a few questions as to his motives, shaving his head, and bathing him copiously with holy water, and clothing him with yellow robes. They have also the order of *nains*, or novices, consisting of those too young to take full orders. The clothing of the priests consists of a yellow robe resembling somewhat the old Roman toga, with a scarf of the same material, or something richer, thrown over the shoulders. But as Budha was clothed in rags, they must imitate to some extent his example, they therefore take the new yellow cloth, tear it in pieces, and then sew it together again. This is done by the women, and is also a source of merit.

The priests go out early in the morning for their daily food. At every house is stationed some member of the family, with a basin of boiled rice, and a large brass spoon in it. When a priest comes along he uncovers his vessel, and receives a spoonful of rice, and then passes on to the next house. Some also give fish, fruit, and other things to eat with the rice. When sufficient rice is collected for the day, they return to the temples and take the morning meal. The next meal is eaten just before noon, and nothing more until the next morning. It is considered very sinful for a priest to eat after noon. The people also frequently meet together at the different temples, and make feasts for the priests, and give presents to them.

There are in Bangkok alone over ten thousand priests, and all that vast army can be seen starting out early every morning in search of their daily food.

It must cost Siam annually nearly \$25,000,000 to keep up the priesthood alone, and supposing the population to be eight millions, which is perhaps an over-estimate, it will make on an average of over three dollars for every man, woman and child in the kingdom. Now, if every man, woman and child in the evangelical Christian Church would average three dollars per annum, there would not be so many starving ministers, and the Boards of the Church would not be compelled so frequently to go a begging. The world too, at that rate, would soon be evangelized. If the heathen can do so much for a false religion, what should Christians not be willing to do for the holy religion of Jesus, to which they owe everything they have, and are, and hope to be?

Any violation of the laws of chastity whilst in the priesthood is most severely punished. The culprit is publicly whipped with a ratan. He is then paraded for three days around the city with a crier going

before, proclaiming his crime, and is then condemned to cut grass for the king's elephants for life, and his posterity after him, to the most remote generation. The other offending party is condemned to turn the king's rice-mill for life, and her posterity after her to the most remote generation. In consequence of the severe punishment, *slips* of that kind whilst in the priesthood, in proportion to the numbers, are much less frequent than among the Christian ministry. Sodomy, however, and other unmentionable crimes, are fearfully prevalent.

The priests are the only persons in the kingdom who are not obliged to crouch before the king. The king himself crouches before the high-priest. When any one meets a priest, he places the palms of his hands together and raises them to his forehead in reverence.

The duty of the priests is to take care of the religion, recite prayers at funerals, weddings, &c., and preach when called upon to do so. The people frequently invite the priests to their houses to have preaching. The sermons consist chiefly of exhortations to make merit, and are generally in such lofty words and terms, taken from the Pali, that the common people do not understand them.

The Siamese also make pilgrimages to *Prabat* and other sacred places. Prabat is a beautiful little volcanic mountain about eighty miles north of Bangkok. The rocks appear to have been thrown up in a plastic state, and in cooling down left innumerable little holes or crevices in the solid rock. One of these, about six feet long, is imagined to be the impress of Budha's foot. They have accordingly bricked it up, and have overlaid the wall with gold leaf. They have also erected over it a beautiful little temple, whose floor is covered with silver cloth, and whose walls are heavily covered with gold. Vast multitudes flock thither during the months of January and February of every year, to make their offerings at that sacred shrine. The principal offering is gold leaf, which they paste on the inside of the footprint. There are at least \$5000 expended there annually in gold leaf alone. The little caves also, with which the mountain abounds, are filled with idols, and every prominent point is capped with a *pagoda*. At the foot of the mountain is rather a hideous idol, at which all pilgrims dismount from their elephants, and make an offering before ascending to the more holy place. The offering consists chiefly of a twig from a tree, or a few flowers. The tradition is, that whoever refuses to make this offering will die before leaving the place. They were very much surprised that we refused at least to dismount. They told us that Sir Robert Schomburgk, the English Consul, who had visited there the previous year, had also refused to dismount, and that he himself had not died, but a favorite dog he had with him on the elephant had died before he left the mountain. Sir Robert however, had a different theory in regard to his dog, and blamed some one for administering to him a dose of poison. Many of the most intelligent princes and nobles have no faith in Prabat, but still assist in keeping up the delusion.

There is also a short distance north of Prabat a very lofty rock called Pra Chei, or sacred glory, where Budha is said to have once taken shelter from a shower of rain, and departing, left his shadow. Multitudes also flock thither to worship. We arrived there about ten o'clock at night, and upon ascending a long flight of steps, found numbers bowed before the rock and pasting gold leaf upon it. When we told them that we could see no shadow, they attributed it to a want of faith.

The Siamese are also very much tormented with the fear of spirits, both good and evil, and use every means to propitiate them. Witchcraft is also very much feared. Wizards and witches are believed to have power to put into the stomach of any one a piece of buffalo meat, or other substance. A very disgusting circumstance of this kind occurred near our premises. The father of a certain family took sick and died. The family believed some foul play had been exercised in his case, and when they came to burn the body, a small portion, perhaps the heart, did not consume as rapidly as the rest. This was taken at once to be the buffalo meat, and was taken home and eaten by the family. The whole family ate of it, except one little girl who was absent in the family of a missionary. The belief is that if they eat of it, they can never be affected the same way.

It is just to state that there are two schools of Buddhism in Siam. The late king, whilst a prince and in the priesthood, studied astronomy, and became too intelligent to believe the teachings of the Buddhist books in reference to the system of the universe, and accordingly undertook to reform Buddhism, by discarding from the sacred books all those things which conflicted with modern science, and especially in reference to astronomy. Many of the most intelligent princes and nobles went with him. A vast majority, however, swallow the whole of the Buddhist teachings.

The greatest champion of the New School was Chow Phya Thipakon, late Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was in some respects the greatest thinker in the kingdom. He was the only man in the kingdom who, as yet, has ventured to write a book, and have it printed wholly by his own workmen. It consists of several hundred pages, and was lithographed throughout, which must have taken considerable pains and labor. The title is "Kitchanukit," a book explaining many things. He commences by rather ridiculing the elementary system of education practised in the temples, and tries to stimulate the natives to better things. He also takes up the different systems of religion throughout the world, so far as his knowledge

extends, and compares them with his own. He confutes, in his own way, the elementary religious tracts published by the missionaries, and the evidences of Christianity. He maintains his belief in his own system, and gives a few arguments in favor of the transmigration of souls. He also gives a number of illustrations and anecdotes bearing on that subject, of which the following is a specimen: "Another instance is that of the child of a Peguan at Paklat, (a town near Bangkok,) who, as soon as he had learned to speak, told his parents that he was formerly named Makran, and had been killed by a fall from a cocoanut tree, and as he fell, his axe fell from his hand and dropped into a ditch; and they seeing that his story coincided with something that had happened within their knowledge, tried the child by making him point out the tree, and he pointed out the tree, and his story was confirmed by their digging up the axe from the ditch."

Although the book evinces some thought and considerable knowledge, it is infantile when he attempts to grapple with the great truths of Christianity. H. Alabaster, Esq., for ten years Interpreter to H. B. M. Consulate in Siam, has translated portions of the book, accompanied with remarks of his own, and published it under the title of "The Modern Budhist."

It may be asked, what is the effect of such a system of religion upon the morals of the people in comparison with those of eminently Christian countries? There are many kinds of crimes in which Christian nations far surpass them, such as those daring and dark outrages perpetrated in our large cities, the recital of which shocks our sensibilities every time we take up a morning paper. But heathen morals have ever been the same, and the description which Paul gives of the heathen of old, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is a complete description of the heathen of to-day. There is a rottenness about everything, morally speaking, which we do not find in Christian countries. It would be impossible on an occasion of this kind, and before a mixed audience, to give you any idea of the prevailing state of morals. I am not one of those, who, like the English governess in the *Atlantic Monthly*, would consider Budhism a shadow of Christianity, and "thank God" for it. It is eminently the offspring of Satan, as all its bearings and workings on the heart and morals will abundantly show. I have seen none of those glorious death-bed scenes which she describes, and think they are rare. A Siamese man lived neighbor to us for ten years. He could sit in his own door and hear the gospel preached in our mission chapel. He was an excellent neighbor, and was to all appearance a moral man. He had observed, as nearly as possible, all the tenets of his religion. He had made merit in every possible way. All his sons had entered the priesthood. He was about seventy years old, and his death-sickness came. The future was all dark to him. He struggled with, disease and death for a number of days. One of our native church members called to see his old neighbor, and ventured to speak to him about the approaching change. The old man was unwilling to give up, and answered, "Mai yak tai," I do not want to die; "Klua tai," I am afraid to die; and then summoning all his remaining strength exclaimed, "Ch? mai tai," I will not die. Still he had to die, as millions of his race have done, without one ray of light to illuminate the soul, and no faith in Jesus opening up to him the glories of the eternal world.

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATION AND LITERATURE.

The education of the Siamese is necessarily limited and the standard low, when compared with that of European countries. The temples or monasteries are the common schools of the country. Every priest can take to the temple with him as many pupils as he can teach, so that at almost every temple can be found a nice collection of boys, making a very respectable school. These boys besides being taught the rudiments of their own language, and the tenets of the Budhist religion, act also as servants to the teacher, propelling his boat when he goes out on the river, and doing other like menial turns for him. They live on the surplus rice which is left, after the priests are satisfied. Every pupil is taught to hold his teacher in special reverence, which lasts through life. The males are all thus gathered in when boys, and taught to read and write their own language, and the simple rules of arithmetic, as the Siamese knowledge of that art does not extend beyond the simple rules. It is consequently rare that a male can be found who cannot read and write his own language, and on the other hand it is just as rare that a female is found who can. No provision has yet been made there for the education of females. Indeed the feeling in high quarters has hitherto been against it, but not near so strong as in India, and many other places, but that feeling is now happily passing away. It used to be said that if woman could read she would become too tricky for man. The females, amongst the common people especially, are the drudges, and become wives and mothers so early, that there is but little time for their education. Some

of the women of the higher classes have in some way learned to read, and the missionary ladies have managed to teach some few others to read, whilst employed in their families, but aside from these few exceptions the great mass of the women are ignorant of letters. The late king made one or two spasmodic efforts to have the women of the palace taught English. Soon after he ascended the throne he employed some of the missionary ladies to go to the palace regularly and teach, but soon became alarmed lest they should teach too much religion, and requested them to stop. A few years previous to his death also, he employed an English governess in the palace, who, after about three years rather arduous labor succeeded in giving the women and children of the palace some knowledge of English, and perhaps a smattering of some of the sciences. The higher order of education amongst the males consists of a correct knowledge of their own language, and a smattering at least of the Pali or sacred language. Some few who remain sufficiently long in the priesthood make considerable proficiency in the Pali. Their standard of education is also rather depreciating than rising. Missionaries now find it difficult to secure a young man sufficiently educated to make a good teacher. One reason of this is that since the country has been opened to foreign commerce, opportunities to make money are more common than previously, and young men do not now remain sufficiently long in the priesthood to become good scholars, but leave it to go into business.

The Siamese language proper is monosyllabic and rather poverty-stricken. It has however, been enriched from time to time from the Pali, and from the languages of the surrounding nations, and by a few words from the Chinese. Titles of nobility and distinction are all taken from the Pali. Many of the words used in addressing the King, and others high in authority, have been transferred from the Pali, and some few from the Sanscrit. The late King professed to be proficient in the Sanscrit, and some of their learned men now make pretensions in that way. It is doubtful, however, whether the late King, although the most learned man in the kingdom, had anything more than a smattering of Sanscrit, and I do not suppose there is any one now in the kingdom who knows anything about it worth naming.

The Siamese alphabet consists of forty-four consonants, with several vowel-points, diacritical marks and abbreviations. The alphabet is divided into three classes, and there are also seven tones, so that words beginning with a certain class of letters are spoken with a raised tone, whilst others are spoken with rather a depressed tone. Some of the consonants too, are spoken with an aspirate, whilst in others the aspirate is withheld. This putting on the tone and the aspirate in certain instances, and leaving them off in others, makes it very difficult for one not born to it to acquire the language correctly, "*Kai*," with an aspirate, means an egg, but by leaving off the aspirate it is a chicken. Although spelled somewhat differently, the sound to an unaccustomed ear is exactly the same. In these things foreigners make some ridiculous mistakes. You have all probably heard of the missionary lady somewhere, who, whilst in her garden, told a servant to bring her a knife, as she thought, but was surprised to see him coming out with a table on his head. I once heard a missionary, otherwise good in the language, but who could never manage the aspirates and unaspirates correctly, announcing to his audience that there would be services at such an hour in the Siamese language, but unfortunately he left off the aspirate, and announced that there would be services in the *dead language*. Still the audience understood from the connection what he meant.

The literature of the Siamese is very meagre. They have a history of their country which commences in fable, but after a few pages are passed, it becomes a correct and reliable history of the kingdom. It is written in a condensed style, and couched in good language. They have also tolerably reliable histories of the neighboring countries, such as Cambodia, Pegu, and Birmah. They are exceedingly fond of fiction, and have a fabulous history of China, which has been translated into Siamese, and is very popular. The Regent and Foreign Minister have both been recently engaged in translating additions to that fabulous history. If they would take as much pains in translating the histories of the different countries of Europe and of America, their people would soon become well informed in regard to the great transactions of the world. The remainder of their literature consists in vile and disgusting plays, in which they take great delight, both in reading and seeing them performed in their theatres. They are also very fond of a kind of jingling verse, and will listen for hours to the mere jingle, caring little or nothing for the sense, of which it is generally devoid.

CHAPTER V.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

The principle clothing of the Siamese consists of a waist-cloth called a "*pa nung*," corresponding to

the *sarang* of India. It is about two-and-one-half yards long, and one yard wide; is placed around the waist, neatly tucked in, the two ends brought together, twisted, and brought back between the legs and tucked in behind. Formerly this was the only clothing worn, except a scarf thrown around the shoulders in cool weather. The King formerly used to receive foreigners whilst dressed in that style. Since the influx of foreigners however, they have adopted a neat jacket with sleeves, and cut to fit tight to the skin, and buttoned up in front. Those of the higher classes are made of silk, but those of the common people are nothing but common white muslin. The "*pa nungs*," also, of the better classes are made of silk, whilst those of the common people are generally cotton. The attire of the females is pretty much like that of the males, except when they wish to dress, they have a neat yellow silk scarf which they fold gracefully over the shoulders. The Siamese display excellent taste in the selection of colors and figures, and have no love for the gaudy in the way of clothing, like the Malays and some other eastern nations. Shoes are seldom worn. The better classes have sandals or slippers, but very likely a slave will be carrying them after the owner, and when worn, are always thrown off before entering a house. Occasionally however, you can see some young fellow rendering himself ridiculous in a pair of European shoes and a European coat.

The males shave the head, except a tuft on the top, which resembles a shoe-brush. The females do not shave the head, but clip the hair as closely as possible, leaving the tuft similar to the males, and a small love-lock in front of each ear.

They have a universal and disgusting practice of chewing the areca nut. The nut of the areca palm is possessed of astringent properties similar to the bark used in tanning. In connection with this nut they use the leaf of the seri vine, which has a kind of pepperish taste. They take white stone lime while yet unslaked, and mix with it the powdered turmeric root, which turns it a crimson color. They take the seri leaf and put on it a quantity of that red lime in the form of paste, and then a portion of the areca nut, the leaf with the lime on it, and some fine cut tobacco, are all put into the mouth together. The saliva arising from such a mixture is a kind of blood-red color, and is very copious. Their houses and walks have frequently a very disgusting appearance, from large deposits of that red saliva having been spit out of the mouth upon them. This process turns the teeth black, and indeed destroys them, as the lime adheres to the teeth and destroys the enamel, and finally they drop out by wholesale. Those who have no teeth to chew the mixture, carry with them a small mortar, and pound it all up together before putting it into the mouth. Both sexes are addicted to this practice, and an exception can rarely be found.

Black teeth are an element of beauty, and besides the chewing of the areca nut, they resort to other means of coloring. When cautioned against thus destroying the teeth, they invariably reply that "any monkey can have white teeth." They never go anywhere without the box containing the ingredients for chewing. The poorer classes carry their own, but the rich have theirs carried after them by a slave. A man's rank is indicated somewhat by the number of slaves that follow him, and the golden box containing the areca nut, &c., and a teapot, are the insignia. When one person calls on another, almost the first thing done is to set out the tray containing the chewing material, and not to do so is considered almost an insult. The males are also all inveterate smokers from infancy.

In going anywhere together, they never walk side by side as we would do, but one after the other, according to rank or age. The husband also always goes before, and his wife or wives walk behind. It is also contrary to Siamese custom to have any one pass over their head, and consequently they will not occupy the lower story of a house when persons are above them on the next story. When the King goes out on the canals in his boat, all the bridges have to be drawn, lest his sacred head should pass under where some person had walked. No greater insult can be offered than to take a man by the tuft of hair on his head. It is the same as spitting in a man's face with us.

Like all heathen, and I am sorry to say too many Christians, they are very fond of jewelry, especially the women. Their fingers are frequently nearly covered over with rings; gold chains are also thrown around the neck and shoulders, and a neat gold pin through the lobe of the ear. Children wear anklets and bracelets. Those of the rich are of gold, and quite heavy; some are of silver, and those of the poorer classes are brass. I have seen some of the children of princes and nobles with several hundred dollars worth of jewelry on in the form of anklets, bracelets and gold chains, and aside from the jewelry the body was perfectly nude.

The people are very much attached to the customs of their ancestors, and what their fathers have done they must do, how absurd soever it may be. "*Pen tumneum Thai*," it is Siamese custom, is sufficient reason for doing anything.

The principle food of the Siamese is rice and fish. Fish are very abundant and cheap, and become a wholesome diet for that climate. It is contrary to their religion to take animal life, and they never kill any animals for their own consumption, but they do not scruple to eat anything killed by another, if

they can only roll off the responsibility of killing it. They buy pork and fowls which have been killed and dressed by the Chinese. They also eat animals which have died. When warned that perhaps the animal died of some bad disease which may prove injurious to them, they will answer that it can't stand the fire; if there is anything of the kind, it will depart when the meat comes in contact with the fire. They also live largely on vegetables and hot peppers. The rice is boiled, and dished out into a large basin or platter, and placed on the floor. The meats and vegetables which have all been cut up fine before cooking, are also dished out into small bowls and placed near the rice. Those about to eat seat themselves around, tailor fashion, in a circle, each with a bowl in his hand. He takes some rice from the large dish into his own bowl, and then uses his fingers dexterously. When he wishes any of the accompaniments he dips his fingers into the common dish. When there is anything like soup or gravy, they have a common spoon, and each one takes a spoonful into his mouth, and then passes the spoon to his neighbor, and it thus goes around. They eat with apparent ease and enjoyment, rolling up a ball of rice in the fingers, then throwing the head a little back, and the mouth wide open, it disappears without difficulty. They have never attempted to improve upon the fingers. The Chinese invented the chop-sticks, and are apparently well pleased with the result, for they never attempt to improve upon them; but any one who has ever seen a Chinaman slabbering and blowing over his bowl of rice, with a pair of chop-sticks, could not but wish to see him back again at the more primitive fingers. The Siamese think we eat with difficulty, and rather pity us for having so much ceremony. A missionary and his wife were out on a mission tour, and came to a village not frequented by Europeans. They stopped at the village and partook of a meal. They of course had a table, and table implements with them on their boat. The natives flocked around to see the foreigners eat, and one old woman, after watching eagerly for a time, turned away with a sigh, remarking, "*Kow kin yak tedio*," they eat with great difficulty.

Some of the princes and nobles have secured table furniture, and can imitate European style very nicely, and some of their dinners given to European officials are quite creditable; but when alone, they go back again to their own mode.

They have their own ideas of politeness in their social intercourse, and are very strict in carrying them out; but in their intercourse with foreigners they frequently try to imitate our customs, and as a general thing spoil both. When a man meets a superior, he either prostrates himself on the ground, or squats down, places the palms of his hands together, and raises them up to the face. When equals meet they do not say "Good morning," as we would do, but "Pai nai,"—where are you going. The other will give an evasive answer, saying, "O, I am not going anywhere, only up here a little ways."

Their household furniture is generally meagre, consisting only of a few cooking utensils, and mats and moscheto bars for sleeping. There was a while that some of the higher classes manifested a desire for European furniture, and bought it up very readily, but perhaps on account of a nod from high quarters, there appears to be a reaction in that quarter.

The people are generally indolent, and lazy, and very much addicted to gambling, which is, perhaps, the ruling vice of the country. At every gambling house groups of men and women may be seen sitting from morning till night, and from night till morning, intently gambling. They will gamble away everything they have, and incur large debts; and then sell their wives, children, and even themselves into slavery, to pay their "debts of honor." They have different kinds of games, but that on which they stake most is a Chinese game called *po*, and is a kind of dice.

They are exceedingly fond of theatricals, and every prince and nobleman, who can afford it, has a theatre of his own. No festival of any kind can be held without theatricals. Their plays are generally some fictitious love tale, or history, and some of the actions of the actresses are most lascivious and vulgar, but perhaps not more so than the exhibitions of the stage in Europe and America to-day.

They are also very fond of bathing, which is perhaps very conducive to health in that climate. They bathe regularly at least three times a day. They always carry a cloth with them for bathing purposes. Both sexes meet together at the common bathing place, and they slip off the regular cloth and don the bathing cloth so dexterously that nothing amiss can be noticed in the transaction, and then plunge into the river, both sexes being expert swimmers. Notwithstanding their frequent ablutions, however, cleanliness is by no means a national virtue, and some of their habits are extremely filthy.

There are some things in which "Young America" might well pattern after the Siamese. One is extreme reverence and respect for age. The aged receive that reverence justly due to them in Siam, perhaps more than in any other country. Another is love and reverence for parents. The parent may sell a child into slavery, which is frequently done, still when the child grows up, he never loses respect for that parent. When a child too, commits a crime, and tries to evade the law, the authorities at once lay hold upon the parents, which is sure to bring the culprit back to give himself up.

Although the Chinese have more natural stability of character than the Siamese, and are in many other respects superior to them, still the latter are in many respects the more hopeful people. A

Chinaman knows everything, in his own estimation already, and is unwilling to learn from any one; whilst the Siamese will pick up all the information they can from others. Whatever they can get of European arts and sciences, without acknowledging the authority, and especially without costing them anything, they have no scruples about receiving.

CHAPTER VI.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

It has long been the custom amongst the Siamese to ascribe honor and glory to their princes and lords, in proportion to the number of wives they have, and can maintain.

The king has generally one whom he constitutes his Queen Consort. A young princess of the highest rank that can be found in the kingdom is selected. She however is not certain of promotion until after she has lived with the king for a time, and has succeeded in gaining a large place in the royal affections. When this is sufficiently accomplished, the king appoints a day for her exaltation. Three days are usually devoted to the purpose. The chief officers of the palace, the chief scribes, and the chief princes and nobles of the kingdom are present. The principal ceremonies devolve upon the priests, of whom there are quite a number present, both Buddhist and Brahmin. The princess is copiously bathed in pure water, in which the leaves of a certain kind of tree, supposed to possess purifying and healthful influences, are put. Most of the time is spent in feasting, but on the third day she is placed on a small throne under a white canopy, where she is bathed with holy water, the priests reciting prayers the while. She is then conducted to a place where the wet clothes are laid aside, and she is arrayed in queenly costume, jewels, and diamonds, and then displays herself to those in attendance. Instances have occurred when the king had two Queen Consorts. In such cases one is called the queen of the right hand, and the other the queen of the left hand.

It has only happened about twice in Siamese history, that the king has taken a foreign princess for his Queen Consort. This can happen in one of two ways. The foreign prince wishing to secure the friendship and alliance of the king of Siam, makes the first advance, offering his daughter to the king of Siam. If, after having received testimonials of her beauty and worth, the king is favorably disposed, he sends an embassy to formally ask her of the father. The other way is, that the king of Siam is the first mover in the matter, and makes the first overtures.

In addition to his Queen Consort the king can have as many inferior wives, or concubines, as he wishes. These are called "*Nang-ham*," literally, a woman forbidden—that is forbidden to go out of the palace. Although women as a general thing in Siam are not in any way secluded, still these inferior wives are rigidly confined within the palace walls. During the late reign however, much more laxity in this respect was displayed, than in any former reign. They cannot go outside of the palace walls without a royal permit, and that only on special and extraordinary occasions. The king seldom seeks an inferior wife, but they are presented to him by princes and nobles wishing to gain the royal favor, and thus they consign their daughters to a life oftentimes worse than exile for that purpose. It is said that the late king never left home but he returned with some new accessions to his harem, and that they became so numerous that he oftentimes had to refuse them.

The better classes amongst them procure wives something after the following manner. There is nothing like courting amongst the young folks, as we understand that term, unless it is done by stealth, which is almost impossible, from the fact that the mothers exercise the strictest vigilance over their unmarried daughters. In this respect American mothers might often profit by the example of these heathen. Girls become wives there at the early age of fourteen, and an old maid is quite a curiosity.

Although young men in search of wives are not allowed the privilege of courting, still they keep their eyes open, and when one sees a young lady he fancies, he takes the proper steps to secure her. He makes the matter known to his parents, if he has any; they employ an elderly lady who is denominated a "*Maa su*," and who is acquainted with and respected by the young lady's parents. This "*Maa su*" goes to the house of the young lady's parents, and by a series of nice insinuations, or otherwise, finds out how such a match would take, and returns to report progress. If indications are favorable, the parents of the young man then select a number of elderly persons of both sexes, who are respectable, and intimate with both families. These they invite to their house, and hold a consultation, and after the matter is thoroughly discussed and the match decided to be a favorable one, a propitious day is chosen, and the elderly persons repair to the house of the young lady's parents. These of course divining their

object, receive them kindly, and according to custom, set out the tray containing areca nut, seri leaf, red lime, and tobacco for chewing. This ceremony over, the elders broach the subject of their mission, taking good care to address the parents according to their rank, as one improperly used pronoun might spoil the whole. If it is proper to say *you*, they say it, and if it is proper to say your *honors*, or your *graces*, they say that.

"Such parents having ascertained that this is a propitious day, have commissioned us to come and confer with you concerning their son of such a name, who has as yet no wife. His parents having put the question to him, 'Have you any one in your mind, you would like to have become your wife, and to whom you could trust your life in sickness, and your obsequies after death?' The young man answered, that he had your daughter of such a name, and her only. The parents have therefore commissioned us to visit you the much respected parents of the young lady, and confer with you in reference to this matter. What do you the parents say?"

The parents reply: "Our daughter is one we love much, and the young man is one whom his parents love much. We have an ancient proverb which says, 'Move slowly and you will gain your object, and a prolonged effort generally results favorably.' We will consult our relatives on the right hand, and on the left, and see what they say about it. Please call again."

After waiting a reasonable time and another propitious day has come, the elders call again. The parents of the young lady will say: "We have consulted our relatives, and they are unanimously of the opinion that if the young man really loves our daughter, and can confide in her as a proper person to take care of him in sickness, and take charge of his body after death, his affections and confidence should be planted." "But how is it in regard to the ages, and birthdays of the parties? Are they such as to be suitable to each other?" The Siamese have a superstition that persons born in certain years, are incompatible with each other. For instance, if one was born in the year of the *dog*, and the other in the year of the *rat*, or one in the year of the *cow*, and the other in the year of the *tiger*, they would be incompatible with each other. The matter is accordingly referred to some fortune-teller, who, for a small fee, generally pronounces no serious difficulty in the way.

This difficulty cleared up, the elders call for a further discussion of the preliminaries. They say:—"Since birth-days do not interfere, what shall be said about the mutual stock for the young couple to commence business on, and the money for building a house for the young couple?" According to Siamese custom the bridegroom almost invariably goes to live with the parents of the bride, and accordingly puts up a house on their premises, and as near the old mansion as possible. Thus a man who has a number of daughters, finds himself surrounded by a village, by the time they are all married off. The parents of the young lady will answer, "We are by no means affluent, that we could devote much money to that purpose. But allow us to ask, how will it be with the parents of the young man—how much will they be willing to give their son?" The others will reply, "It depends altogether on the parents of the young lady." The other party will reply, "If such be the case, we would suggest that they appropriate, say one hundred *ticals* (\$60), for the purpose of building a house; and for mutual trade *five hundred ticals*, and that they also contribute areca nut, seri leaf, red lime, cakes, &c., for wedding purposes, say one hundred salvers or dishes." The plan of the new house, and the number of rooms are generally also specified. The elders then return and report to the parents of the young man, and if they are satisfied, a bargain is struck.

All preliminaries having been made, the young man goes to work to build his house, which generally requires but a short time, and the parents of the young lady do not delay to consult astrologers in reference to a propitious day for the wedding. The day having been fixed, and all things arranged, the friends of both parties are invited to assist in carrying out the arrangements. The parents of both parties unite in selecting some elderly persons, who shall be the bearers of the money, together with two suits of white raiment, an offering to the bride's parents, and the wedding cakes, &c. This is done in procession, either in boats on the river, or by land, with bands of music playing wedding airs. The money and presents are given over to the bride's parents, and they in turn bring out their portion of the money, and perhaps a slave or two, to assist the young bride in performing her household duties. The guests being all assembled, the money and presents are all exhibited. The elders then count the money of both parties, as legal witnesses. Both sums are thrown together, and sprinkled over with a little rice, scented oil, flowers, &c., symbolical of blessings craved on the young couple. The joint stock is then delivered over to the parents of the bride for safe keeping.

Some time is then spent in feasting and mutual conversation, and priests are chanting prayers the while. The bridegroom then, in company with some of his young friends, goes to his new house.

The bride at the same time dispatches a lad neatly dressed, bearing a tray of areca nut, who meets them there, and invites them to be seated and enjoy themselves. She also decks herself in gay apparel, and in company with some of her attendants repairs to the same building, but the two parties are still

separated by a screen. Religious services are then held, after which the screen is withdrawn and the elders proceed to bathe the young couple copiously with holy water. The chief elder pours it first upon the head of the bridegroom, and then upon the head of the bride, pronouncing a blessing upon each. The attendants of the bride then assist her in changing her wet apparel for dry, but still, if anything, more gay than the former. A finely dressed lad then appears with a silver plated tray, containing a handsome suit for the bridegroom, being a present from the bride's parents, in which he speedily attires himself. Whilst these things are going on the priests are rehearsing prayers for the benefit of the young couple. All are then invited to a feast prepared by the bride's parents, and when this is over the guests all return to their homes. The bride stays with her parents, but the bridegroom goes to his new house, where he has secured a band of music, and serenades the bride until a late hour. Early next morning the guests all assemble, and have a feast for the priests in which all vie with each other in their attentions to the clergy. They then have another feast for themselves. If this is a propitious day the ceremonies are closed in the evening. A respectable couple, friends of the bride, who are man and wife, and who themselves have been blessed with a large family of children, are selected, and they then repair to the new house and prepare the bridal bed. About 9 o'clock in the evening the elders conduct the bride to her new home, and after some counsels and exhortations, the young couple are left alone perhaps for the first time. Oftentimes however, if the second day is unpropitious, the ceremonies are continued until the third or fourth day.

After a few days have elapsed the bridegroom conducts his bride to visit his parents. She takes with her a few presents of cakes and fruit, and upon entering the house prostrates herself three times to the floor, and is then taken into the embrace and confidence of the family. The bridegroom also pays a formal visit to the bride's parents, and prostrates himself before them.

After the birth of the first child the joint stock of money is produced, and the young couple enter into business for themselves, as they are supposed to have lived off the bride's parents up to this time. There are three things which are considered absolutely essential in these wedding ceremonies. These are three metallic platters, one containing a kind of sweet cakes called "*Kanome cheen*", or Chinese cakes; another contains a kind of mince-meat, highly seasoned, and much prized; and the third contains areca nut, seri leaf, red lime, and tobacco for chewing purposes. These articles constitute what is called the "*Kan mak*," literally the areca-nut tray, but which has become one of their names for a wedding.

Marriage amongst them appears to be little more than a civil contract, in which the bride has but little choice, but yields implicit obedience to the will of the parents.

If a young man attempts to pay his addresses to a young lady without going through the proper channel, he is supposed to be doing so from improper motives, and stands a chance to get himself chastised by some male member of the family. We had once in our school a young man, who was rather fancy, and who attempted to address a young lady in the neighborhood, without taking the proper steps. One evening two of the young lady's brothers met him, and administered to him a sound thrashing.

A man in Siam possesses the prerogative of administering to his wife a little wholesome chastisement, if she fails to fulfil her duties. I have seen a few instances in which I really thought it was deserved, and did good, but as a Christian missionary, and a representative of the free United States, where women are clamoring for the same rights as men, I had to discourage such things under all circumstances.

Polygamy is not common amongst the middle and lower classes, simply on account of their inability to maintain more than one wife, but divorce is very easy, being only a dissolving of the civil contract by the mutual consent of the parties, and then each party is at liberty to marry again. There are however, many happy marriages in Siam, and I have seen old people of seventy, who had spent a long life together and raised large families.

Notwithstanding the vigilance of the mothers, there is occasionally a runaway match. In such cases however, they as soon as possible take all proper steps to propitiate the parents. They select respectable persons, and send them with presents to the parents, and, as a general thing, like runaway matches everywhere; after a short time every thing is smoothed over satisfactorily. I had in my employ a young man who was an orphan. He became enamored with a young lady in the neighborhood, and through his friends secured the consent of her parents, but as he was poor, the wedding was to be postponed a year. In the mean time, a well-to-do Chinaman, who had considerable money at his command, came along and proposed. The parents consented, notwithstanding the former contract, and went on to make arrangements for the wedding, without telling the daughter anything about it. A few days before the wedding was to come off, she got wind of what was going on, and that night ran away and came down to our place, to hunt up her other lover. In the morning he came to me in great trepidation, but unwilling to give up his prize. I rather felt for the young folks, and selected some of the

most honorable persons in the neighborhood, and sent them up to the parents, but they were inexorable. I then sent for them to come down to our place, which they did through respect for me, but would still do nothing, and threatened to go to law; but I told them I would defend the young man in his just rights to the last. After a few days however, all was quieted down, and the matter smoothed over amicably. A faithful creature she also proved to be. She worked and kept up the house, and all the expenses, whilst he worked to pay me a tolerably large debt, for money which I advanced him on the occasion.

The nobility have all a plurality of wives, in proportion to their means and rank. The first one taken, is head or mistress over the others, and the whole get along as harmoniously together as such an arrangement could be expected to do, and much more so than the same arrangement would do with us. A nobleman is rather to be envied than otherwise on his return home, as he receives so many delicate attentions from his numerous wives, who all vie with each other in meriting a liberal share of the divided affections of their lord. Woman knows her place in Siam, and there are no such unfrocked specimens of the sex there, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and others. Polygamy is however, one of the curses of the land, and one of the great barriers to the introduction of the gospel. It is one of those mountains which the power of the gospel must eventually bring low. The day is coming when it must be abolished even in Siam.

CHAPTER VII.

CEREMONIES FOR THE DYING AND DEAD.

The Siamese dispose of their dead by cremation. When a prince of rank is found to be near death, the relatives suspend every other care, and assist in giving the departing spirit as good a passport as possible into the spirit land. Every effort is made to fix the thoughts of the dying man on Budha. They take their turns in calling out as loudly, and distinctly as possible, "*Pra Arahang*," one of the names of Budha. It is uttered as much as eight times in a minute, so that it is impossible to hear anything else. This seems to be the "Extreme Unction" of the Budhist. When all evidence of the dying man's hearing is past, the attendant friends will raise their voices to a stunning pitch, hoping that the departing spirit may still hear *Pra Arahang*. After it is thought *Pra Arahang* can be no longer heard, the most uncontrollable wailing is commenced, which can be heard to a great distance. The friends of the deceased, household slaves, and all, engage in this outburst of grief.

When a prince of high rank has died, the King visits the house of mourning and bathes the corpse with water, with his own hands. After him other princes present come forward, and pour a dipper of water upon the corpse. Next comes the nobles who are present, according to their rank, and do the same. When all the princes and nobles present have performed this office, certain officials present proceed to dress the corpse. They put on it a pair of tight-fitting pantaloons, and a tight jacket. Over these they apply a winding-sheet, wrapping it as tightly as possible. Quicksilver is also poured down the throat. The corpse is then placed in a copper urn, in a sitting posture. This copper urn is then placed inside of a golden urn. The inner urn has a grating at the bottom, and the outer one has a stop-cock, by which the juices flowing from the body are daily drawn off, until it becomes perfectly dry. The King usually remains until the corpse has been placed in the urn, and that placed on an elevated platform, ascending by three gradations to the height of about five feet. Whilst the corpse is being thus elevated, conch-shell blowers and trumpeters are performing lustily upon their instruments, with all the harmony possible. This trumpeting is called the inviting of the corpse to be seated on the platform.

When thus seated, all the insignia of royalty to which the prince has been accustomed during life are brought and arranged in order at the foot of the urn. These consist of his golden areca nut box, his golden cigar case, his golden spittoon, his writing apparatus—in short, all the utensils which he was accustomed to use in daily life. The band of trumpeters come at early dawn, at noon, and at dusk, every day, to perform the funeral dirge. They come in concert with some wailing women, who chant the virtues and excellences of the deceased. These women spend an hour each day in that service, and in the intervals a company of priests, seated upon a platform near by the urn, chant incantations, and recite moral lessons in the Pali language. These services are kept up daily until the time appointed for burning has arrived, which is six, and sometimes even eight months after death. The remains of a king generally lie in state about twelve months, before burning.

Upon the death of a king his successor commences at once to make arrangements for erecting the

temporary building for his cremation, which is called a *Pra mane*. The building is generally in size and grandeur proportionate to the estimation in which the deceased has been held. Royal orders are sent to all the provinces, and even to the tributary States, where large timber grows, requiring them to furnish posts for the *Pra mane*, and especially four enormous sticks, which are to form the central pillars of the building. These central pillars must be of the finest timber that can be found, very straight, and from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet long. Besides the large ones, twelve other pillars of smaller size are needed. Timbers which have been used on a former occasion cannot be used again, but all must be new. The large pillars are cut in the forest, dragged to the river by elephants, and floated down at high water to the capital. When they arrive at the city, a general levy is made all over the country for workmen, and those huge logs are dragged up to the place mainly by force, as it would be contrary to custom to employ any labor-saving machine in getting them up. They are first dressed off, and then planted with great difficulty in the ground about thirty feet deep. The four large pillars are planted in a square, about one hundred and sixty feet in circumference. When planted, the tops incline a little toward each other, forming a kind of truncated pyramid, having four sides, and is about two hundred feet high. On the top of these pillars is erected a pagoda-shaped spire, adding about fifty feet more to the height. The spire is covered with gilded and tinselled paper, so as to give it a neat and grand appearance, especially from a distance. At each side of this central pyramid is erected a wing, by means of other smaller posts, and extending about forty feet, and facing the four cardinal points of the compass; and each wing is also capped with a pagoda spire. The whole is covered with a basket-work made of bamboo splits, which is covered again with gilt and tinselled paper. The building is surrounded by a bamboo fence, enclosing, perhaps, two acres of ground, and entered by two large gates. Inside of the fence are numerous temporary buildings, made of bamboo, for the accommodation of priests, theatrical performances, and other exhibitions. On the west side of the *Pra mane* is the building for the accommodation of the King and his family. The roof of this building is made of crimson cloth, with gilt edges, and the sides are covered with curtains, which in front are tucked in neatly to the posts. At each end, at the comb of the roof, is a peculiar shaped horn extending out, which is peculiar to royal buildings and temples.

The whole area of the enclosure is covered with a floor made of split bamboos neatly woven together. Immediately at the base of the *Pra mane* are small artificial mountains, and artificial lakes, and ponds, upon which small boats and miniature floating houses are moored. Also flowers, shrubbery, and every other thing imaginable, which is considered at all ornamental. On the outside of the enclosure are houses built for the accommodation of princes, nobles, and all foreigners who may wish to attend, and who are all entertained at the royal expense. Rope dancing, juggling, and every other imaginable feat are also carried on outside. At night, too, those brilliant fireworks, in which the Siamese so much excel, are touched off by the King himself, and are kept up to a late hour every night.

Directly under the tall spire in the centre of the building is erected what may be termed the *Pra mane* proper. A floor is laid over the whole building about twenty feet from the ground, and upon that floor, directly under the tall spire, is erected an octagonal pyramid, about sixty feet in circumference. It diminishes by right angled gradations, to the height of about thirty feet, and terminates in a truncated top, and upon this top is placed the urn containing the royal remains. On an appointed day the royal remains are brought out and placed upon the *Pra mane*. This is done in a procession. The governors of the different provinces, and the kings of the different tributary states have all been ordered to be present at the cremation. Early in the morning of the day of the procession, the chief princes, nobles, and rulers, assemble at the palace. The golden urn, richly decked with diamonds, containing the remains, is placed on an elevated seat, upon a huge and unwieldy car, drawn by two horses, assisted by hundreds of men. The funeral car is preceded in the procession by two others. The first is occupied by the high-priest of the kingdom alone, reading as he goes moral lessons from the sacred books, in the Pali language. The second car is occupied by a few of the favorite children of the deceased. A strip of silver cloth, about six inches wide, extends from the thighs of the high-priest to the seat occupied by the children in the next car, and thence to the funeral car, and is attached to the urn. This forms the mystical union between the deceased, the sacred book, and his children. The car next behind the funeral car contains a few sticks of sandal wood, with ends gilded, for the purpose of burning the corpse. These cars are all drawn by horses, assisted by scores of men. There are also in the procession numbers of other cars, containing figures of lions, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, and numbers of indescribable fabulous animals, and upon the backs of all these animals are placed piles of yellow cloths, to be presented to the priests. There are also numbers of boats placed on small wheels and drawn along, which are also to be presented to the priests. In front and rear of the cars are hundreds of men, dressed in white, and having white turbans, terminating in a pagoda point, and who represent the *Tewedas*, or Budhist angels. When the procession arrives at the place, the urn is drawn up an inclined plane, and placed upon the top of the truncated platform already described. The piece of narrow silver cloth, already mentioned, is attached to the top of the urn, and extends to the floor, and then out the east and west wings of the building to the steps. High above the urn is suspended a neat golden canopy, of that indescribable form for which the Siamese are so celebrated. Around and under the

canopy are hung beautiful white scented flowers, arranged in the form of a chandelier; splendid chandeliers are also suspended all around for the purpose of brilliantly lighting up the *Pra mane*. Nearly all the priests in the kingdom are called into requisition on these occasions, who chant prayers and recite moral lessons.

All the chief princes and nobles, the family and family servants of the deceased, are all dressed in white, and have their heads shaven, the badge of mourning. When the time has come for igniting the fire the outer golden urn is removed, leaving only the inner copper urn. The grating at the bottom of the copper urn is covered over with spices and fragrant powders. All valuable or precious articles are removed from the platform. The platform is also lowered some feet, to make it more convenient. The sandal wood is arranged under the grate of the urn, and precious spices and fragrant articles are placed amongst the wood. A gunpowder train is arranged, extending to the place where the king is. All being ready, the king takes electrical fire, which has been preserved in the palace for a long time for such purposes, and ignites the fuse, and soon the wood is in a blaze. The family of the deceased, and the chief princes and nobles are all standing near, with lighted wax candles in their hands, and each in turn steps up and places the candle amongst the wood. Tubs of water are standing near, and men with dippers ready to prevent the flames from rising too high, and consuming the whole building. Many persons from reading descriptions of these cremations, have got the idea that the whole building is burned, but nothing is burned but the sandal wood and the corpse which is in the urn. When the wood is fired the band strikes a funeral dirge, and the women commence wailing, which generally lasts only a few minutes. When the ceremonies are all over the *Pra mane* is taken down, never to be used again.

The corpse is generally burned on the third day of the ceremonies, and they are kept up in the same manner for three days after the burning proper, making about six days in all. After the burning, the charred bones still remaining are collected, put into a small golden urn, and kept by the family. The present king has the remains of his ancestors for many generations back, preserved in this manner. The ashes are also collected, when a procession of boats is formed, and they are scattered upon the river.

During these ceremonies much is given away in presents, for the purpose of making merit. Small gold and silver coins, and gold rings, are put into *limes*, and other small fruit, and these are scattered amongst the crowd, and they scramble for them. The king amuses himself at this kind of sport very frequently during the ceremonies. Other small fruits contain lottery tickets, which always draw a small article of some kind. These are also given away. Outside the enclosure are artificial trees, full of *limes*, in every one of which is a small coin. A person frequently during the ceremonies ascends a platform, pulls off the *limes* and scatters them amongst the crowd, and then such a scramble as there will be. Persons frequently get hurt in the scramble, and it is frequently muddy, and I have seen the scramblers all covered over with mud. The royal funerals are very expensive. The funeral of the late king must have cost at least \$150,000.

The common people, on account of the expense, do not keep their dead long, but burn them as soon as possible, but in substantially the same manner. They do not erect a *Pra mane*, but most of the temple grounds have a permanent *Pra mane*. I have also frequently seen them burning, out in the open space, without any covering. The corpse is placed in a board coffin, covered over with figured paper, and is then taken to the temple and burned. There is a very disgusting practice more or less common amongst them. Sometimes the person dying orders it to be done in order to make merit, and sometimes the friends do it of their own accord. When the corpse is taken to the place of burning, they take knives, cut the flesh from the bones, and feed it to the vultures. These filthy birds will be perched near by, and will come down into the crowd to receive the coveted morsel, which they either carry off, or swallow upon the spot. After the flesh is thus taken off, the bones are burned.

Persons dying of cholera, small-pox, in childbirth, or any sudden disease, and by suicide, are not burned immediately, but are buried for a few months, and are then taken up and burned. Criminals executed, and paupers, are given to the vultures wholesale. Medical students would have no difficulty in getting subjects there.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

When we consider that amidst all the light which the latter half of the nineteenth century sheds upon the subject, the theory and practice of medicine amongst western nations are still enveloped in

darkness, and are constantly changing, it is not to be wondered at that a nation like the Siamese is almost wholly in the dark upon such a subject. The Rev. D. B. Bradly, M.D., the oldest missionary in Siam, and who for many years practised medicine in Bangkok, has prepared an abstract of the Siamese "Theory and Practice of Medicine," which was published in the *Bangkok Calendar* of 1865, and from which the abstract which I shall give at present is mainly taken.

The Siamese believe the human system to be composed of four elements—water, air, fire, and earth, and that disease is simply a derangement in the proportions of these elements. They believe also that all nature is constituted in the same way, and that the elements without, are continually operating upon the elements within the body, producing health or disease. For instance, if fire from without enters the body in undue proportions, it will derange the healthy equilibrium of the same element within, and will produce one or more of the diseases into which fire enters, such as fevers, measles, small-pox, &c. Each element is supposed to have its season of influence to produce disease, just as the fruits of the earth have their seasons. Their medical books, and common parlance, both say that in such and such months, wind produces most disease, and in such and such other months, fire produces most, and so with all the other elements. The internal elements are also supposed at certain times to become deranged from causes wholly internal. For instance, one of their theories in regard to apoplexy is, that the internal wind blows from all parts of the body upon the heart, with such force that it is often ruptured, and death immediately ensues. The other theory is, that the wind has fled, and left a vacuum in the upper story, and it must be forced back again, if a cure is to be effected.

All diseases are produced either from an excess or diminution of one or more of the four elements; and, according to their theory, wind produces more disease than any, or all of the other elements combined. If you ask any Siamese what is the matter with him, in nine cases out of ten, he will answer, "*Pen lom*"—it is wind, or disease produced by wind.

Their theory also teaches that all vital motions of the body are primarily produced by wind taken into the system by inhalation, as wind enters a bellows, and proceeds to the heart, and the heart by its expansions, invites it into the body, and then, by its own power it passes to all parts, and is the approximate cause of all internal circulation.

There are two grand divisions of internal wind, viz., that above, and that below the diaphragm. Strictures in the chest, headache, epilepsy, and apoplexy, are produced by wind beating upward. Colic, flatulency, inflammation of the bowels, &c., are caused by wind from above beating downward.

It is seldom however, that disease runs its course without involving two or more of the other elements. For instance, in case of a common boil, the wind first drives the blood from all quarters into the locality of the disease, where it stagnates, being invested by wind. Secondly, the water from the blood consequently settles in that place, as water in a tea-kettle before the fire is applied. Thirdly, the internal fire having nothing to drive it away, acts upon the water, and heats it to scalding. And, fourthly, the earth, inclusive of the crassiment of the blood, which had stagnated, and other solid matter in the locality, become diseased from great heat, and are consequently decomposed and melted down into matter. Anasarca, or general dropsy, belongs to the water-class, and is produced by the watery parts of the blood settling under the skin, and among the muscles, causing the parts to puff outward. But water is not the sole cause; there is also a diminution of fire. If fire had been present in due proportions, it would have dried up the surplus water, as the sun dries up the dew.

In the hot season, heat from without combines with heat from within, and produces an unhealthful degree of heat in the body, and causes disease of the fire-class. In the rainy season too much water is absorbed into the system, filling intensely the natural vacuum in the upper part of the head, and produces disease of the water-class. The earth produces disease through her mists and vapors. Cholera is supposed to arise from this source.

They also believe that spirits, good and evil, have great power over the elements, and have much to do in producing disease. They are consequently held in continued dread of them, and use every means to propitiate them. They never start on a journey, or enter a forest where fevers prevail, without first making an offering to the spirits.

They believe that medicine has power to counteract the deranged elements, and restore them to a healthful equilibrium. The origin and practice of medicine they believe to have been supernatural. Their medical books declare that the father of medicine was so privileged, that wherever he went, every individual member of the vegeto-medical kingdom was sure to summon his attention, and speak out, revealing its name and medical properties; and since the days of miracles have passed away, the science is only now to be acquired by following closely the original medical books.

They have four classes of medicines, each calculated to counteract the disturbances caused by each of the four elements. The *modus operandi* of each individual class is supposed to be as various as the

specific diseases. For instance, medicine for wind in the head is quite different, and acts differently from medicine for wind in the bowels. A sternutatory snuff, a wash for the head, a patch or plaster, may dispel the wind in the head, whilst it will require a carminative to allay the storm in the bowels. It is believed that wind of every kind may not only be expelled from the body by way of the esophagus and rectum, but also by the pores of the skin, and all the secreting organs of the body. It may hence be drawn off by suction; as cupping, poultices, bleeding, and scarification. They also attempt to drive the surplus wind from one part of the body to another part where it may be wanting. If the disease arise from a deficiency of wind, they try to raise an artificial breeze in the system by appropriate medicines. Giddiness is supposed to arise from a deficiency of wind blowing upward upon the brain, and the upper part of the skull becomes a vacuum. They consequently fill the stomach as full as possible with food, and put the patient to bed, and he will awake quite well. If there is a want of heat, they produce artificial heat; and if there is too much, they employ a refrigerating treatment. If there is too much water, they try to draw it off by drastic cathartics. In all their treatment they employ opposites.

Their medicines are derived chiefly from the vegetable kingdom, and from those kinds too which are indigenous to their own country. Some few articles are brought from China, and sold by the Chinese apothecaries. Barks, roots, leaves, chips, fruits, and herbs, constitute the great bulk of their *materia medica*. They also employ some articles belonging to the animal kingdom, such as bones, teeth, sea-shells, fish-skins, snake-skins, snake's galls, urine, birds' eyes, &c. They have also a few from the mineral kingdom, such as stones, saltpetre, borax, lead, antimony, sulphate of copper, table salt, sulphate of magnesia, and rarely mercury. They have a few gums also, of which aloes and gamboge are the chief.

But few articles of the vegetable kingdom however, escape enlistment in the war against disease. They depend more upon great combinations, than upon the power of a single ingredient, and consequently scores of kinds, or ingredients, often figure in a single dose. Dr. Bradley says he has seen one instance in which one hundred and seventy four ingredients were employed in one prescription, and the whole to be taken at three doses. The work of preparing medicines is therefore onerous. Vegetable combinations are used chiefly in a state of decoction or infusion. They frequently speak of a patient having taken four or five pots full—a pot holding from two to four quarts. They knew nothing of tinctures until European physicians came amongst them, and they are slow to adopt them.

After such a system, it may readily be supposed that their physicians are in keeping with it. They are wholly self-taught, or, more properly, untaught. They have nothing like medical colleges, or a system of medical discipline. They are like too many in our own country who rush into the study of medicine without a sufficient literary or scientific education upon which to base a medical education, and thus prostitute a noble profession. Without a correct knowledge of their own language, they read a few of their medical manuscripts, and start out for a patient, following the manuscript very closely in their treatment. Should they get a patient who is pretty sick, and he recover in spite of their treatment, their reputation is made. The reputation once made seldom wanes, for the physician's tongue helps him out of a great many scrapes. If he loses a patient, the spirits or some other insurmountable object have always been in the way.

It is seldom however, that a man professes to be a general practitioner; they turn their attention to specialities. One will be renowned for fevers, whilst another will have a reputation in cases of small-pox. The Siamese physicians are held in great esteem by the people, an esteem but little less than that offered to princes and nobles, but of a different kind. That given to the latter is a kind of servile reverence, but the former is a true esteem. They have two general classes of physicians, viz., the royal physicians and the people's physicians. The former class are appointed by the King to practice in the palace, and amongst the princes and nobles, and receive a small salary from the royal treasury. The latter class are self-appointed, and receive no regular salary, but depend upon their fees for their living, and as a general thing make it pay better than the other class. A common physician of reputation is frequently promoted to be a royal physician.

They have also another kind of doctors who profess to cure certain kinds of diseases by shampooing and manipulating. They are well versed in the locality of the muscles, tendons, and blood-vessels. They gently press these points, and when one is tired and weary, it has a soothing effect, and produces sleep, and in some diseases it may prove beneficial. I have found it very beneficial at times of great weariness and lassitude.

The common physicians are always employed by the job, and always on the condition, no cure no pay. Sometimes, if the disease is chronic, and but little hope of recovery, they stipulate to pay a certain sum in case of an alleviation of the disease, and so much more in case of a permanent cure. A bargain is always struck by the patient himself, or by his friends, before the physician takes charge of the case. Sometimes, if a doctor sees his patient is going to die, and he be the loser, he will take "French leave" without giving the friends any notice whatever of his intentions. Generally however a more honorable

course is pursued, and the doctor gives up the patient, and releases the friends from all obligations, and they are at liberty to call another doctor. The physician is thus changed frequently, several times before death or recovery, each new one putting in for a higher bid. They have also a kind of domestic water treatment, by copious bathing, which in many cases is far more beneficial than their nostrums.

They are also great people for recipes, and many of the temples have these recipes inscribed by scores upon the walls, and upon little marble tablets, for the benefit of the poor, and all others who wish to use them. The king frequently makes merit by having these recipes thus inscribed. The following one for small-pox, will serve as a specimen:

"One portion of conch-shell; two kinds of aperient fruit, one portion of each; two kinds of sour leaves, one portion of each; one portion of asafoetida, one of borax, one of ginger, nine kinds of pepper, including the hottest, a portion of each; four kinds of cooling roots, a portion of each; one of an astringent root; four kinds of drastic cathartics, including the fruit and leaves of the croton plant, one portion of each; one of rhubarb, and one of Epsom salts. Boil in three measures of water until it be diminished to one measure of the decoction. Then squeeze out the oily parts, dry, and pulverize. A woman may take the weight of thirty cents in silver, and a child may take the weight of seven and one-half cents in silver. It will purge off everything in the bowels."

They have as yet little or no confidence in European physicians and medicines. They however, are obliged to acknowledge their ability as surgeons, and they are beginning to have confidence in quinine in the treatment of fevers. They know nothing of anatomy; and consequently nothing of surgery. They do not pretend to lance even a common boil, but depend upon opening it with poultices.

The first amputation was performed in Siam by Dr. Bradley, in 1837. A company of priests at the dedication of a temple were playing with fireworks, when a cannon burst, and killed several and wounded many more. Dr. Bradley offered his professional services, but all the wounded refused, except two. He amputated the arm of one of them, and dressed their other wounds, and they soon recovered, but all the others died. Inoculation for small-pox was introduced by the missionary physicians in 1838. They found themselves surrounded by the disease, and being without vaccine virus, they inoculated their own children as the next best thing that could be done. It acted so well that the king sent a number of the royal physicians to examine into it, and learn how it was done. Having learned, he sent them out through the city to inoculate.

Vaccination was introduced in 1840, from a scab sent out from Boston *via* the Cape of Good Hope. It finally died out, and was again renewed from time to time. It is now constantly kept up by Dr. Campbell, a Scotch physician, in connection with the English Consulate. The natives no longer hesitate to have their children vaccinated, and it has done much towards staying the ravages of the small-pox.

The first operation for cataract was successfully performed by Dr. Bradley, upon the eyes of a distinguished nobleman and minister of state.

They know nothing of obstetrics, and those cases where nature needs to be assisted, are left to die. Superstition too, has enveloped the whole affair in silly and ridiculous notions. Since they believe in the transmigration of souls, and that the spirits of all persons who are born have existed in some previous state, their books on midwifery pretend to teach parents how they may know whence their children came, and whether the expected stranger will be a boy or girl. There is also a choice in the day of the week upon which a child is born. Wednesday and Thursday are particularly favorable for robust constitutions, and bright intellects. Children born on Sunday, are liable to be careless and reckless all their lives.

This business is almost wholly committed to elderly women or midwives. Male physicians are seldom called in on such occasions, unless the case requires extraordinary skill, and then they are as ignorant as the midwives themselves. They always attempt to assist natural labor by the use of domestic medicines, shampooing, and other manipulations, and in many instances do positive injury by deranging natural labor. Facts however, prove that parturition amongst the Siamese is much shorter and easier than amongst Europeans and Americans. One reason is, that they have more of the animal in their natures, and doubtless the kind of dress they wear has much to do with it—their dress being more in accordance with nature.

It is after the birth of the child that the Siamese mothers have to endure torture. It is a custom amongst them, as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, that the mother after the birth of the child, must lie by a hot fire from five to thirty days. After the first child they must remain by the fire about thirty days, but the time gradually diminishes with every subsequent birth. She is placed on a hard board, with nothing under her but a thin mat, and no clothing but a narrow waist-cloth and is thus obliged to lie within four or five feet of a hot fire. This is generally, too, in a small room, with no chimney, but the fire is on an open furnace, and the smoke is allowed to escape as best it can. In such a

climate as Siam, this must be positively injurious, and it certainly makes young mothers look prematurely old. It is not known whence this custom originated. It is also practised amongst the Cambodians, Peguans, Burmese, and Cochin Chinese.

CHAPTER IX.

FARMING AND PRODUCTS.

The staple of the country is rice. Their farming operations are simple in the extreme, and as the soil is very fertile, I know of no place where the husbandman is so abundantly rewarded for so little labor. Their plough is exactly like that used in Scripture times, and pictures of which you have doubtless seen in books on biblical antiquities. It consists simply of a crooked stick, answering for beam and handle, to which a sheath is attached, to the end of which a small shovel is affixed. It has but one handle, and is difficult to hold, and hence from the same kind of an instrument we have the Scripture illustration, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." To this plough they attach a couple of oxen, or Indian buffaloes, and when sufficient rain has fallen to soften the ground a little, they scratch it over with their little plough. When sufficient rain has fallen to turn the ground into a perfect mortar, they stir it up again, and sow the rice upon the mud. This they sometimes harrow over with a brush or rude wooden harrow. About this time the water in the rivers begins to overflow the banks, and gradually overflows the rice fields to the depth of three or four feet. The rice however, manages to grow, and keep head above water, and so long as it can do this it is all right. The water keeps up until the rice is out in heads, and then it begins to subside until harvest, when the ground is generally quite dry. I have rode in my boat for a whole day, directly over the rice fields, when the rice was coming out in heads, and found the water in many places four feet deep, but the heads of the rice were waving in the wind majestically above it. The best quality of rice is raised by transplanting. The ground is prepared the same as before, but instead of sowing broadcast, they take the rice plants, and place them in the soft mud with the hand. This work is generally done by women and children, and they do it very dextrously, placing the plant in the mud with the thumb and finger almost as fast as they can walk. It is put down in rows, about two or three inches apart. This is the same kind of rice as the other, only the grains are fuller and better, and it commands a better price in market.

After planting his rice the farmer has little or nothing to do until his crop begins to ripen, when all hands have to turn out to drive off the birds. There are immense flocks of a diminutive little bird, with gray and red wings, and about the size of a canary, and sings almost as sweetly. They are beautiful little creatures, but great rice-eaters, and would soon destroy a whole crop if not driven away. Men, women and children have all to turn out to guard off these, and other rice-eating birds, until the harvest is gathered.

The rice crop is harvested about the first of January, with a kind of primitive sickle, and bound into small sheaves. It is then collected by means of a nondescript ox-cart into one place, where they intend to thresh it. The threshing floor is levelled off on the ground, as in Scripture times, and a bamboo pole is set up in the centre, upon the top of which a few heads of the best rice have been tied, as a kind of first fruit-offering to the spirits. The sheaves are then placed around in a circle, and a number of oxen are driven around abreast upon it. When threshed, the rice is collected into a heap and winnowed with a large fan. The threshing is frequently done at night, and I have seen the banks of some of the rivers illuminated for miles with fires around the threshing floors. The crops are generally abundant, and the labors of the husbandman abundantly rewarded.

The native mills for hulling the rice are small basket affairs turned by band, but there are now in operation four steam rice-mills, built and owned by Europeans, and which clean on an average about four thousand piculs of cargo rice daily.

Bangkok is one of the greatest rice ports in the world, and vast quantities are shipped every year to China, Europe, California and other places.

Cotton grows well, and the quality is good, but is not raised in any quantities. A few Hainan Chinese have located up the country, and are raising cotton, but all they raise is shipped in junks to the island of Hainan.

Some little Indian corn is raised, but not as a business; it is generally used when soft. Vegetables of

various kinds are also raised in considerable quantities, such as sweet potatoes, turnips, cabbage, beans, peas, cucumbers, squashes and egg-plants.

All tropical fruits are also abundant, such as oranges in great variety, shaddocks, plantains, mangos, mango-stines, jack-fruit and bread-fruit. The king of fruits to the natives however, is the *durien*, a large fruit about the size of a man's head, with a prickly shell. Inside the shell there are a number of lobes, each having a large seed, surrounded with a white pulpy substance, resembling custard highly flavored with garlic. To most Europeans the smell of the fruit is very offensive, resembling that of a spoiled egg. When a boat load of the fruit is passing up the river, even before the shell is broken, it can be smelled at a great distance. Strange to say however, after a few contacts most Europeans become extremely fond of the fruit, notwithstanding the smell. It is however, like most acquired tastes, the end gained scarcely justifies the effort in obtaining it.

The palm is there also in considerable variety. The palmyra, the cocoanut, the nypa, the date, and the areca palms, all figure to some extent.

Amongst the woods the teak is most valued for ship building, and quantities of it are shipped every year to China and Europe for that purpose. Rosewood is also abundant, and a variety of other red woods. Sapan wood is largely exported to China for dyeing purposes.

There is scarcely anything so generally used and so universally prized as the *bamboo*. It grows in clumps to the height of about seventy-five feet; and when full grown is about six or eight inches in diameter at the butt. It also grows in joints, and is hollow except at the joint. The houses of the poorer classes are all built of this. Their baskets, boxes, buckets, boat covers, and nearly all the utensils used by the poorer classes, are made of it. It is to all appearances a "*sine qua non*" in the country.

Their domestic animals are few. The ox and the Indian buffalo are prized for farming purposes. Fowls and ducks are raised in great quantities, but by the Siamese only for the eggs; the Chinese however, eat large quantities of them. The ducks have lost the instinct of incubation, and the eggs are hatched by artificial means. Pariah dogs are there in great numbers, and many of them without any owners, and they frequently render night hideous by their howling.

Amongst the ferocious animals the tiger is chief; both the Bengal and leopard species are found in numbers in the jungles. The fox, wolf, and a small species of bear, are also found.

Monkeys in great variety are there, and in passing up the rivers and along the canals they can be seen in large droves perched upon the trees, cutting up their antics apparently for the benefit of the passer by. Several species of deer, and wild hogs, abound in the jungles. Jungle-fowls, pea-fowls, and a vast variety of other birds abound, so that an expert sportsman can find plenty to do for his gun.

About thirty species of venomous serpents are known to the natives, about one half of which are considered very poisonous. A few inflict deadly wounds with their tails. One of the most venomous is five or six feet long, and has the power of reflecting prismatic colors. The cobra, or hooded serpent, is abundant. The boa constrictor is also common, but does little harm except rob hen-roosts at night. The writer has frequently been obliged to arise at night to relieve his hen-roost from their attacks, and he has seen them, when killed, measuring twelve and fifteen feet long. The natives tell marvellous stories about those found in the forests, forty and fifty feet long, and which can crush and swallow a deer, or an ox, without any difficulty. Vast numbers of harmless little lizards are constantly sporting upon the walls of your house and bed-room. The most noted is the "gecho," a large dragon-headed lizard, about six or eight inches long, called by the Siamese "*To-kay*." He secretes himself during the day, but comes out on the walls at night in search of moschetos and other things for food. He is a fierce-looking fellow, and most Europeans at first sight are terribly afraid of him. Shortly after our arrival in the country, one evening when we were about to retire, we discovered something, presenting rather a ferocious appearance, in the corner of the bed-room near the ceiling. My wife could not think of retiring with such a creature so near the bed, so I got a long bamboo pole and called in a native man to assist, and after a considerable contest we succeeded in worsting him. They have also a tremendous voice, and at night will often keep you awake by hollowing "*To-kay, To-kay*," from some secret corner of your bed-room. We once lived in a part of a house, the other half of which was occupied by another mission family. There was a large "*To-kay*" which had been about the house for some time, and was quite a pet with the other family, and they would not allow him to be disturbed. In the evening, however, just when our baby would get to sleep, he would come out and commence his hollowing and wake her up again. One afternoon when the other family were out, he came out on the porch, or veranda, and commenced hollowing lustily, and I loaded my shot gun and brought him down. This, and the one already alluded to, are the only encounters I have ever had with the "*To-kays*."

An American gentleman who was traveling around the world, once stopped with us. He arrived from the ship about 9 o'clock in the evening. He was scarcely in the house until a *To-kay* commenced

hollowing, apparently for his edification. The gentleman looked up in consternation, exclaiming, "What's that—a billy-goat?"

CHAPTER X.

MODE OF DIVIDING TIME.

The twenty-fours of the day are divided into two equal parts. The day is called *Wán*, and the night *Kún*. The former begins at 6 A.M., and the latter at 6 P.M. The hours of the forenoon are numbered from one up to six, or mid-day. The hours of the afternoon are numbered in the same way. The forenoon is called *Pěla Chow*, and the afternoon *Pěla Bai*. The word denoting an hour of the day is *Mong*, and that denoting an hour of the night is *Toom*. In expressing 9 o'clock, A.M., they would say, "*Sam Mong Chow*," or the third hour of the morning. Three o'clock, P.M., they would say, "*Sam Mong Bai*," or the third hour of the afternoon. Nine o'clock in the evening, they would say "*Sam Toom*."

Siamese months are lunar months, but often vary from the moon, a day or two. Each month is divided into two parts, the *waxing* and *waning* moon. The former has always fifteen days, but the latter has sometimes fifteen and sometimes fourteen. Six of their months have thirty days, and six twenty-nine days, making three hundred and fifty-four days to the year, which lacks eleven days of a full solar year. To compensate this deficiency, they have an intercalary month of thirty days, every two or three years. There is still however, a deficiency of about three days in nineteen years, which is supplied by adding a day to the seventh month from time to time, whenever the astrologers may think proper.

They have no word to denote a week of time, but each day has its appropriate name and number, commencing at Sunday and ending at Saturday. By the recurrence of the first and seventh days, they are reminded that seven days of time have elapsed.

The days of the week are:

1st. Wan Atit, (day of the sun,) Sunday. 2d. Wan Chan, (day of the moon,) Monday. 3d. Wan Angkan, (day of Mars,) Tuesday. 4th. Wan Póot, (day of Mercury,) Wednesday. 5th. Wan Prahat, (day of Jupiter,) Thursday. 6th. Wan Sook, (day of Venus,) Friday. 7th. Wan Sów, (day of Saturn,) Saturday.

Their months are numbered from one up to twelve, and have no particular names, but are designated by their numbers. The first and second months, it is true, are called by names, but their names have the same meaning as their numbers.

They have two cycles, one within the other. The greater cycle is twelve, the smaller ten. The former is called *Pee*, their common name for year, and the latter is called *Sok*. Every year of each kind of cycles has its own specific name.

The years of the cycle of twelve are:

1st. Pee Chóoat, *year of the Rat*. 2d. Pee Cháloo, *year of the Cow*. 3d. Pee Kán, *year of the Tiger*. 4th. Pee Taw, *year of the Rabbit*. 5th. Pee Marong, *year of the Great Dragon*. 6th. Pee Maseng, *year of the Small Dragon*. 7th. Pee Mameea, *year of the Horse*. 8th. Pee Mamaa, *year of the Goat*. 9th. Pee Wawk, *year of the Monkey*. 10th. Pee Raka, *year of the Cock*. 11th. Pee Chaw, *year of the Dog*. 12th. Pee Koon, *year of the Hog*.

The years of the cycle of ten are:

Eka Sók, 1st. *cycle*. To Sok, 2d. *cycle*. Tree Sok, 3d. *cycle*. Chattawa Sok, 4th. *cycle*. Benya Sok, 5th. *cycle*. Chaw Sok, 6th. *cycle*. Sapta Sok, 7th. *cycle*. Atta Sok, 8th. *cycle*. Woppa Sok, 9th. *cycle*. Samretti Sok, 10th. *cycle*.

In writing the number of their era, they mention the name of each cycle, as it happens to be. For instance, January 1870, would be 1231 *Pee Maseng Eka Sok*, year of the *small dragon*, 1st of the cycle of 10, and 1231 of the civil era. The Siamese sacred era is reckoned from the time of Budha's supposed death, which, on the full moon of May 1870, was 2413 years. This era is only used in religious matters. The civil era is reckoned from the time that *Pra Rooang*, a Siamese king of great celebrity, established it, and on March 27, 1870, was 1231 full years.

Although the Brahmin astrologers manage to calculate eclipses with considerable accuracy, the great

mass of the Siamese are wholly ignorant of their true cause. They attribute them to *Rahú*, a terrible monster who threatens to devour the sun and moon. When they see an eclipse of any kind coming on, they commence firing guns, beating gongs and tin-pans, and shouting, to frighten away *Rahú*. The late king however, studied astronomy, and could calculate eclipses in the European way, and did much to dispel the ignorance of his subjects in regard to such matters.

CHAPTER XI.

MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

It would be unjust to close without at least some reference to the efforts of missionaries to evangelize Siam, It is also just to state that there is scarcely any other field, in which modern missions have been established, where the introduction of the gospel has met with so little opposition as in Siam proper, and especially during the late reign, and so far during the present. It is equally just to say that there is scarcely any other field which has been so barren of results. Pure Budhism appears to yield more slowly to the power of the gospel than any other false system. Even Brahminism itself yields more rapidly. The Siamese have the utmost confidence in the strength of their own religion to withstand the power of the gospel, and hence that stolid indifference which they manifest to the introduction of the gospel amongst them. A nobleman high in rank, once playfully remarked to a missionary, "Do you expect, with your little chisel, to remove this great mountain?"

To the Rev. W. H. Medhurst belongs the honor of projecting the first Protestant mission in Siam. As early as 1827 he proposed to visit Siam and some of the neighboring kingdoms, but never was able to accomplish his designs. The Rev. Charles Gutzlaff and Rev. Jacob Tomlin arrived in Siam, August 23d, 1828, on a Chinese junk. They obtained liberty to remain in Bangkok, and labor amongst the Chinese, but through the influence, of the Jesuit missionaries they were afterwards threatened with expulsion from the country. The Portuguese consul, Signior Carlos de Silveira, the only resident consul in Siam at that time, interested himself in their behalf, and partly through his influence they were allowed to remain. They were out constantly talking to the Chinese, and distributing books, which soon excited the suspicions of the Siamese, that the missionaries were endeavoring to incite the Chinese to rebellion. The King ordered some of their books to be examined, and when nothing objectionable was found in them, they were allowed to proceed. It is believed however that a secret edict was issued, forbidding the people to receive the books. The only English merchant then in the country was quietly requested to take the missionaries away in one of his ships. They however demanded of the Minister of Foreign Affairs the cause of such a step, and claimed equal rights with the Roman Catholic missionaries, who were allowed to pursue their labors without molestation. This appeal brought the Minister to terms, and they were allowed to remain. They studied to some extent the Siamese language, and endeavored to translate portions of the Scriptures into that language, which was of course labor lost, as they had only been in the country about six months, and it was impossible that they could have acquired the Siamese sufficiently to do anything at translating.

Mr. Tomlin's health had now failed to some extent, and he left for Singapore. Mr. Gutzlaff remained a short time, and also left for a time. During his absence he married Miss Maria Newell, an English lady then residing at Malacca, and then returned with his wife to Bangkok. They were there however, but little over a year when Mrs. Gutzlaff died, and Mr. Gutzlaff becoming discouraged, took passage to China on a junk. Messrs. Gutzlaff and Tomlin however had visited Siam wholly on their own responsibility, and perhaps never intended to remain permanently.

The Prudential Committee of the American Board, upon the solicitation of Messrs. Gutzlaff and Tomlin, sent the Rev. David Abeel, then in Canton, to Siam to make arrangements for establishing a mission there. Mr. Abeel on his way met with Mr. Tomlin, and the two together proceeded to Bangkok, and arrived there in June, 1831. They found the people still eager for books, and soon established a place for public worship and the distribution of books. Mr. Abeel however, was soon brought down by a fever, and when sufficiently recovered to do so, he and Mr. Tomlin both returned to Singapore. Mr. Abeel's health being recruited, he embarked again alone for Bangkok on a Chinese junk. He prosecuted his labors for about six months more, but in consequence of continued ill health he was obliged to leave for good.

In 1832 the Rev. Messrs. Stephen Johnston and Charles Robinson were appointed by the American Board for Siam, but before they arrived, and even before Mr. Abeel left, the Baptist mission in Burmah

transferred the Rev. J. T. Jones to Bangkok. Mr. Jones was permitted to reap the fruits of some of the seed sown by those who preceded him, and a small Chinese church was organized by him, which is still in existence, and is now under the pastoral care of the Rev. William Dean, D. D. Messrs. Johnston and Robinson, already alluded to, arrived in Bangkok, July 25th, 1834. They were kindly received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and soon after arrival secured a lot of ground and proceeded to build upon it. Thus was finally established in Siam the mission of the American Board, which, after several years of labor, was eventually removed to China.

The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in 1840 sent out the Rev. W. P. Buell and his wife to Siam. Mr. Buell however, had scarcely acquired the language sufficiently well to become useful, when he was obliged to return to the United States on account of Mrs. Buell's health. In 1841 that Board sent out the Rev. Stephen Mattoon and wife, and the Rev. S. R. House, M. D. By the time they arrived the king then upon the throne had become tired of not only missionaries, but all foreigners, and had determined upon an exclusive policy. He refused to make commercial treaties with western powers, or to open up the country any more to commerce. Sir James Brook, the English ambassador, received what he considered an insult to his nation, and left with the intention of returning, prepared to open up the country by force. Our missionaries in consequence of this determination of the King, were unable to secure a site for the mission, or any foothold whatever. They were not flatly refused, but were baffled, according to Siamese custom, with trifling excuses and postponements, so that they became discouraged, and were upon the eve of leaving the country to seek some other, where they might find an opening. At this juncture the King was providentially removed by death, and the now late King ascended the throne. He was a prince who had imbibed more liberal views in regard to foreigners, and he immediately opened up the country to foreign commerce, and our missionaries were permitted to secure a location.

It may also be stated here, that to the missionaries belongs the honor of opening up the country, although many will doubtless deny them this just due. The late King, whilst a priest in a monastery, studied the English language with some of the missionaries, and especially with the Rev. J. Caswell. He also studied astronomy, and some other branches in which he made commendable proficiency. He also imbibed from them more liberal views in regard to western nations, and consequently as soon as he ascended the throne he was prepared to treat with them; and that which in many other countries had to be done by gunpowder, was in this instance accomplished by missionary effort.

The present Regent once in the presence of the writer, whilst conversing with an American, George F. Seward, Esq., United States Consul-General to Shanghae, shrewdly remarked that "Siam had not been disciplined by English and French guns as China, but the country had been opened by missionaries."

The late King always entertained the highest regard for his instructor, the Rev. J. Caswell, and besides building a tomb over his grave, presented his widow with \$1,500 as a token of his regard.

The Presbyterian Board has now six missionaries with their families in Siam proper, and two amongst the Laos, a tributary kingdom to the north. They are distributed as follows:— Messrs. House, McDonald, George, and Carrington, in Bangkok; Messrs. McFarland and Van Dyke in Petchaburi; and Messrs. McGilvary and Wilson amongst the Laos. The American Baptist Union has also a mission to the Chinese in Siam. The missionaries are. Rev. William Dean, D. D., and Rev. S. B. Partridge, with their wives, and the Misses F. A. Dean and A. M. Fielde, single ladies. The Rev. D. B. Bradley, M. D., was originally sent out by the American Board, but is now in nominal connection with the American Missionary Association, but is wholly self-sustaining, receiving no support from any Board. Besides supporting his family, he preaches regularly and does other mission work. The Rev. S. J. Smith was formerly in connection with the American Baptist Union, but has dissolved his connection with that Board, and is now self-sustaining, and also does much missionary work. This is our force for at least eight millions of people.

When the writer arrived in Siam ten years ago, there was but one native convert in connection with the Presbyterian mission church. We have now at Bangkok a church numbering about twenty members; also one at Petchaburi with about the same membership. We have also a school in connection with our mission which averages about twenty five pupils. This school has not met the expectations of those who have had charge of it, but there is no reason to be discouraged at the results. Whilst many of the pupils have gone back to heathenism, and others have turned out badly, a goodly number are exemplary Christians, and some are looking forward to the ministry, and hope some day to preach the gospel to their countrymen.

Ten years ago we had the Gospels alone of the Scriptures translated; we have now the whole New Testament. Many portions of it, especially the Epistles, need revising, still it answers the purpose. We have also the Old Testament translated as far as through Joshua, and also the prophecy of Ezekiel, and

minor prophets. Our mission hopes soon to be able to give the people the entire Scriptures in their own language. Our printing press is constantly at work printing the Scriptures and religious tracts.

It has also been the duty of the writer, shortly before leaving the country, to visit the scene of the last persecution (if we except the late troubles in China) which the history of the church has to record. North of Siam proper, there are a number of petty Laos kingdoms, all of which are in a certain sense tributary to Siam. They pay a small annual tribute, and the King of Siam claims the prerogative of nominating the successor to the throne when a vacancy occurs, but aside from this each of those kings is absolute in his own dominions. The largest of those kingdoms is Chieng Mai, and the capital city of the same name is situated in latitude 18° 48' north, or about five degrees north of Bangkok. About three years ago two of our missionaries, Rev. Messrs. McGilvary and Wilson, having previously made a visit to that kingdom, determined to establish a mission there. They obtained permission from the King, and also from the Siamese government, and with great difficulty and self-denial removed their families thither, following the river all the way up over the thirty-two rapids. Their goods at the rapids had to be taken from the boats and carried around, whilst the boats had to be drawn up with ropes. The whole journey occupied some three months, a much longer time than it now takes to come to the United States.

At first they were kindly received by the King, but gradually his friendship began to cool down. This they attributed to the influence of a mongrel Portuguese whom the King had taken into his employ, and who was a Roman Catholic, and looked upon the missionaries as his enemies. After his departure the King again became more friendly. Some two years after their arrival they were permitted to baptize two Laos Christians, and not long afterwards five others were received. This appeared to arouse the wrath of the King, and before the missionaries were aware of it, he had arrested and executed two of the Christians, and warrants were issued for the other five, but they managed to escape arrest. The two who were executed were faithful witnesses for the truth, and died as courageously and as triumphantly for the faith, as any in that long list of martyrs which the history of the Church has to record. We find here amongst the mountaineer Laos, men who but a short time before had embraced Christ,—infants as it were, but a span long in faith,—sealing their faith with their blood. Had we no other fruits of our long labors in Siam than this glorious conversion, and still more glorious death of those mountaineer Laos, that alone will more than a thousand times repay all the expenditure of men and money upon that kingdom.

The missionaries were not aware of the execution of the Christians at the time, but soon discovered that servants and all those in connection with them were leaving, and upon inquiring the cause learned with difficulty what had happened, and that the others were leaving through fear of the King. Most of the princes of the kingdom, and apparently all the people, were indignant at the conduct of the King, but such was the fear of him that no one durst scarcely whisper a word, lest it might come to his ears, and their head pay the penalty of their rashness. He ruled with a rod of iron. The slightest theft, and continual drunkenness, were punished with death; and I must say, I know of no country where property is so secure from theft as in Chieng Mai.

Such however, was the known treachery of the King, and such the many stories afloat, that the missionaries supposed their own lives in danger. They tried to communicate with the mission at Bangkok, but such was the fear of the King that they could get no one to carry a letter, although they offered at one time as high as five hundred rupees (\$225) to any one who would carry a letter to Bangkok. Fortunately however, a Burmese came along who was a native of British Burmah, and an English subject, and who offered to carry the letter for nothing. When we at Bangkok heard the news, we did not know but that they and their families might be murdered; we however deemed it our duty to make some effort to communicate with them. We accordingly sent a committee to wait upon the Regent of Siam, who, after expressing his indignation at what had happened, kindly offered a "*Ka HLuáng*," or government officer, to accompany any one of us who might wish to go up, who should be the bearer of a letter to the King of Chieng Mai, and who should also be a safe conduct to us. The officer had power to levy on provincial towns along the way such provisions and other things as we needed, and had also power to chastise delinquent governors who were slow to comply with our demands. It fell to the lot of the writer, in company with the Rev. S. C. George, to go on this important and rather dangerous errand. The letter from the Siamese government only ordered the King of Chieng Mai to allow the missionaries to remain peaceably, if they wished to, and if they desired to leave, to offer them every facility in his power to do so, and by no means to offer them any personal violence, as that would involve the Siamese government in difficulty with the United States government.

After storing our boat with a few necessaries which could not be secured by the way, and shipping a crew of six good boatmen, we turned her bow toward the north. The Siamese officer with his boats was to follow on in a day or two, expecting to overtake us ere we reached Raheng. We rowed by day, and a few hours by night when the moon was favorable, and when bedtime came, tied our boat up to the bank and slept till morning. After taking our morning meal of rice we were off again. We thus journeyed for

ten days, passing the provincial towns of *Aungtauwng*, *Chinat*, *Monorom*, &c., all of which provinces have governors.

There is nothing striking in the country or scenery on this portion of the route. The banks of the river are low and the scenery rather monotonous. The tenth day brought us to Nakawn Sawán, a provincial town at the junction of the two principal branches of the river. Here the novelty of the trip (if there be any novelty in it) was to commence. Our course lay rather northwest, and the current in the branch of the river which we were to take became very rapid, so that our oars which had hitherto served us a good purpose refused to serve us further. We had now to resort to poling. We had however, prepared ourselves somewhat for the emergency, and had secured several bamboo poles about fifteen feet long, in the butt ends of which were short iron forks. A man with one of these poles walked to the bow of the boat, and placing the end of the pole containing the fork firmly upon the bottom, he placed his shoulder to the other end and walked to the stern. Another was ready to take his place, and thus they kept the boat constantly moving. It required great dexterity however on the part of the steersman to keep the bow of the boat to the current, and thus be enabled to stem it. So soon as he allowed the bow to turn the least to the current, the poles would lose their hold, and we were set adrift, and in a few minutes would lose what we would make in an hour, and besides it was dangerous, as the river was full of snags. The river here spreads out over a sandy bottom, and many places where it was tolerably shallow it presented the appearance of a boiling chaldron. The bottom too, was treacherous; on one side of the boat we would be against a sand-bar, whilst on the other our poles would not touch bottom. The receding waters too, at that season of the year, left huge sand-bars running out from either bank to a point in the middle of the stream, and also numerous little sand-islands. Some portions of the route were solitary in the extreme, and in the morning we were aroused by the crowing of the jungle-fowl, and the scream of the peacock. In ten days more of poling, making in all about twenty-one from Bangkok, we reached Raheng, the last Siamese provincial town on the Laos borders. Here it was determined to leave our boats and take elephants across the country to Chieng Mai. We accordingly levied upon the Governor a sufficient number of elephants, and an escort of men to see us through the jungle. After some little delay our elephants were reported ready. The Governor of Raheng also, as a special favor, allowed his Lieutenant-Governor, a fine young nobleman, acquainted with the route, to accompany us in addition to the principal officer who had accompanied us from Bangkok. Our elephants were brought up each with a saddle, or *howdah*, on his back. A frame is made not unlike a wood-horse, on the top of which a seat is made about four feet long, like a buggie seat, and over which a basket cover is placed to shield the rider from the sun, and the whole, when on the elephant, resembles somewhat the top of a calash buggie. Raw hides are placed on the back of the elephant to keep it from chafing, and the saddle is then girthed on with a strong ratan rope. A cushion is placed in the seat, so that the rider, for a change, can lie down. The Siamese often sleep whilst the elephant is going, but we preferred to sit upright. You mount by means of a high block, or stand, but in the absence of this the elephant is taught to hold up his front leg, and his knee forms a step by means of which the rider can climb up. The driver sits astride the neck, in front of the saddle, with a short stick in his hand, on the end of which is a sharp iron hook, and when the animal becomes unruly he drives this hook unmercifully into his flesh, which soon brings him to his senses. Oftentimes one or two of the natives would crawl on behind to ride, for a rest. An elephant can carry four persons and a considerable amount of baggage with ease.

We started with our train of elephants single file. The man ahead carried a huge gong, which he beat for a halt in the evening, and for starting in the morning, and when approaching a town or village, to let the people know that a great personage was coming. Our course lay directly through the forest and jungle, and over the mountains. About 4 P. M. of the first day we encamped at the foot of a mountain spur, where there was a pool of water. The elephants were unloaded, fettered, and turned out to browse. As we had no tent along, our saddles were placed around in a circle, and a fire was kindled in the middle. Watch fires were also lighted around outside. After cooking our rice, and taking our suppers, we retired to rest. As many as could, slept in the saddles, and the others threw themselves down on the ground, with a single blanket around them. A watch was also appointed to keep up fires, and guard against tigers and robbers. Elephant-stealing is common there, just as horse-stealing is with us sometimes. About the middle of the first night we were aroused by the elephants beating the ground with their trunks, which they always do when alarmed, and the watch cried out, "*súa, súá!*" a tiger, a tiger! The tiger however, seeing our fires and watch, considered discretion the best part of valor, and made off. In the morning we were up early, and had our rice eaten and were ready to start by daylight. Owing to the difficulty in carrying many utensils and much provisions on elephants, the two noblemen and us usually took our meals together. It was amusing to see us with our knives and forks, and they with their fingers, all dipping into the same dish. On one occasion I was considerably provoked at the chief man. At a certain Laos town they brought us victuals already cooked, but the fowls prepared after their style were not suitable to our taste. The Lieutenant-Governor of Raheng, who was ever more mindful of our wants than the headman, requested that some live fowls should be brought in, that we might have them cooked to our taste. The fowls soon came, and were delivered over to the chief man,

who not knowing that they had been particularly requested, came to us saying, "Doctors, this is our sacred day, and if you don't object, I will let these fowls go, and make merit by saving their lives." I was about to object, but my companion, ever ready, quickly responded, "*ou tert, ou tert,*" take them, take them. I was determined however, not to be done out of a fowl in that style, so I gave my shot-gun to one of my men, and he went out and shot one. Our cook fixed it up nicely, and when we came to eat, before I could get a piece, for myself, the chief man was into it with his fingers, and had like to have spoiled the whole.

We crossed deep ravines, wound around precipices, which to look down would make the hair stand on the head, and went over mountains where one unaccustomed to it would say an elephant could never go. He is however, sure-footed, and when he once plants his foot, which he does with great deliberation, it is there. I once remarked to the driver, is there no danger of him falling? The reply was, "He knows better than to fall, for if he does, he gets killed." We went down one or two declivities where I would fain have dismounted, could I have done so, but it was impossible. The driver spoke to his elephant, saying, "slowly." He placed first one fore-foot forward, and then the other by its side firmly. The driver then said "drag," and he threw his hind parts down on the ground, and drew them up to the fore-feet, and then held on until he could again plant the fore-feet, and in this way the whole train passed down.

Sometimes, too, our course lay across vast plains of rice-fields. The rice had been harvested and threshed, and they were busied in carrying it to the villages. Trains of elephants, with baskets holding ten or twelve bushels on their backs, were walking along majestically with their loads. Long trains of bullocks were also employed for this purpose. Two baskets were fastened on a frame, and thrown across the back like a pair of saddle-bags. The front bullock was fantastically dressed up with a mask, and a huge peacock tail in it, and numerous strings of little bells resembling sleigh-bells. He had also a driver, and all the rest followed after without any drivers. On the afternoon of the thirteenth day, the spires of the city of Chieng Mai began to loom up in the distance, and about 5 o'clock P. M. we entered the city with gong beating lustily. Our approach had been heralded ahead, and the King had his officers waiting to receive us. Our missionary brethren, whom we found well, but rather depressed in spirits, also came to meet us with open arms. The next day the letter of the Regent of Siam was to be conducted to the palace, under the royal umbrella, and we, of course, were to accompany it. Before starting, the missionaries held a consultation, and it was deemed best not to cover anything over, which might break out again, as soon as we were gone. It was thought expedient to bring matters to a focus, and then abide the consequences. We found the old King in his audience hall, surrounded by his court, who were prostrate before him. He appeared pale, with suppressed rage. After the reading of the Siamese letter, he remarked that "This letter only gives the missionaries privilege to remain, if they wish—or to go, if they wish." This opened the way, and I went on to state, that some three years ago the missionaries had come up there with his consent, and we might say with his invitation, and also with the consent of the Siamese government. They were at first kindly received by him, and he showed them many kindnesses, for which he deserved praise, and for which they had praised him. But latterly, things were not going on so well, and circumstances had transpired which justified them in writing to their friends at Bangkok. They were now ready to commence building suitable houses to live in, but could get no workmen, as the people were all afraid to work for them; and the reason was, that he had taken two, in connection with them, and put them to death. This did not appear to ruffle him, and he replied, that as to workmen and servants he had never put anything in the way. He had put a couple of fellows to death, who had failed to do their government work. It appears that an order had been issued to a certain number of men, for each to bring a stick of timber to repair the city wall. The order had been issued some two days previous, and when the two Christians were on their way to get the timber, they were arrested and executed. The pretext given for their arrest was that they had failed to comply with the King's command. Mr. McGilvary then proved to him most clearly, that they had in no way failed to perform their government work; and that when they were executed, not one out of fifty of those who had received the order had complied with it. When he saw he could not lie out of it, he fairly boiled over with rage. So great was his anger that I at one time feared that it might become so uncontrollable that he might break over all restraints, and do us some personal injury. The highest prince in the kingdom would not have dared to say the one hundredth part of what we did, without losing his head. And then to be contradicted and proven a liar, before his court, was hard to bear. He said he had executed them because they had embraced the Christian religion, and he would continue to kill all who did the same. The missionaries might remain, in accordance with the command of the Siamese government, but could not teach religion—they could not make Christians. The Siamese officer was also alarmed for our safety. After a consultation it was considered expedient to break up the mission for a time, and we sent in word that the missionaries would leave as soon as the river would rise sufficiently for the larger class of boats to pass down, hoping, however, that Providence would so interfere in the meantime as to prevent the breaking up of the mission. He has most wonderfully interfered. When we left, the King was preparing to come down to Bangkok, to attend the cremation of the late king of Siam. Whilst at Bangkok the United States Consul-General, F. W. Partridge, demanded of the Siamese government that

they would make the King of Chieng Mai conduct himself more properly, and grant religious toleration. They doubtless gave him such orders, but he secretly told some one that when he returned, the missionaries would have to leave, according to promise. He however, took suddenly sick, and left Bangkok in haste, but was never permitted to enter again his own capital. He died on his way home, and according to Laos custom, no corpse is permitted to enter the city, and his remains are now lying in state in his river palace outside the city walls. He was apparently the only obstacle to the spread of the Gospel amongst that people. The Laos are a hardy mountaineer people, with much more stamina of character than the Siamese, and free from many of their vices. I know of no more interesting missionary field than Chieng Mai. They also appear to be ready for some more substantial religion than Buddhism.

After spending ten days in Chieng Mai we began to think of returning home. The letter of the chief Siamese officer required that he should return by elephants, as he had come, but we were anxious to follow the river down, in order that we might pass over the thirty-two rapids, or falls, and witness the scenery on the way. To this the King gave his consent if we would secure boats, and he would then send a letter ahead to have us sent from village to village along the way, and would give us pilots to take us over the rapids. We accordingly secured three boats, each about thirty feet long and two feet beam, propelled by two short oars, and steered with a long paddle fastened to the stern with a ratan rope. These boats are peculiarly adapted for shooting over the rapids. We divided our party, the chief man returning on elephants, whilst the Lieutenant-Governor of Raheng, and a number of the men, accompanied us. After some little delay we got started, and things went on pretty well for part of the first day. Men were waiting on the bank at every village, to send us on to the next. Soon however, we got ahead of the King's letter, which had started the previous day. Rather than wait on men, we put our own men to the oars, and passed the villages by. Nothing of importance transpired for the first five days. Occasionally we would run on a sand-bar, and our men would have to get out and push the boats off. Sometimes a company of men and women would come down to the river to bathe. The Siamese never bathe without a waist-cloth around them, but the Laos go into the water perfectly nude, yet it is done with such dexterity, that nothing amiss can be seen in it, although both sexes bathe together. The Laos women wear a garment resembling a lady's skirt, but very narrow. They step into the water, gradually raising the garment, until the water becomes sufficiently deep to cover their nakedness, and then they slip the garment over the head, and lay it aside. When they are ready to come out, they again practise the same dexterity in putting it on. Nothing is thought of such a scene amongst them, and it does not call forth such expressions of vulgarity as a similar scene would amongst us.

At one time we came near falling into the hands of what we supposed to be a band of robbers. In a solitary bend of the river, some twenty persons were stationed, some with flintlock muskets, and others with short swords. They beckoned to our men to stop, as if they had business, but our men, suspecting their character, gave them a wide berth, and we put our guns in order, determined to die hard should they make an attack. Fortunately there were no sand-bars in the river, and we shot rapidly past them, without their attempting to do us any injury.

The fifth day brought us to the village at the head of the rapids. We did not know but now we might be in a tight place. It would be impossible for us to pass the rapids without pilots who were intimately acquainted with every rock in the river, and these we could not get without the King's order. The letter must be three days behind us, and it would be trying to wait on it. The villagers too, seeing us pass without stopping, might not send it on. And then, might it not be a trick of the King, to get us into a scrape, as he was in no pleasant mood towards us. We determined however, to make the best of it. After arriving at the village, the Lieutenant-Governor, who was with us, sent for the head-man of the village, who soon made his appearance. He then inquired, "Has the King's letter to send us down the rapids arrived?" "No," was the reply. "Well, it is coming, and we are in haste. I want you to furnish us by to-morrow morning, three of the best pilots you have, and also two additional rowers for each boat, to send us down the rapids. I have foreigners in my charge, and if anything happens to them, the blame will rest with you." The next morning the men made their appearance, and a faithful set of fellows they were. We were off early, and very soon began to near the mountains, and just where the mountains on each side come down to the river is the first rapid. Before approaching it, the pilots ran the boats ashore, and taking some rice, fruit, and cigars, they made an offering to the spirits of the mountain, and then pushed off. Our boat was ahead, and the pilot, seemingly aware of the responsibility which rested upon him, rose up and stood upon the stern, seized tight hold of his steering oar, spoke a few hurried words to the oarsmen in front, such as, "Lay heavy to the right or left", and then apparently held his breath. We also held ours; the hair appeared to rise upon the head, and the heart beat very near the throat, but in a moment the long breath of the pilot indicated that danger was past, and our boat was dancing over the waves caused by the falling of the water below. We had passed the first rapid. Were a boat to be capsized, death must ensue, for the water is so rapid, and rocks so abundant, that the most expert swimmer could do nothing.

The scenery here is indescribably grand. Much of the boasted scenery of Europe and America would be tame in comparison with it. Grandeur and beauty oftentimes struggle for the mastery, first one and then the other prevailing, and sometimes both combined. The river winds its way along between the mountains which rise perpendicularly from one bank, and in an amphitheatrical order from the other. Sometimes the ascent is gradual on both sides. In one or two places no outlet can be seen for the river at all, and one would think that soon all would be dashed against the opposing mountains; but a slight turn would open up a channel, with perpendicular banks on each side, to the height of at least six-hundred feet, whilst between those perpendicular masses of solid rock would be one of those indescribable rapids to be passed. The fish-eagle would be screaming hundreds of feet above our heads, and the little mountain-goat, sticking on a cliff, apparently midway between heaven and earth, would look down upon us with apparent contempt. We could seldom see a quarter of a mile either way, and the sun shone upon us but a few hours at midday. Huge stylactites, the formation of ages, were pending from the crevices. At one of the rapids the river passes under a projecting rock for some distance, and a little cascade, which in the rainy season must be quite a stream, falls into the river some distance beyond the boat. When night came on, we stopped in the solitude, tied our boats to the shore, cooked our rice and then retired, we sleeping on the boat, but our men on the sand.

The scientific geologist might find an ample field here, and the sportsman would also have plenty of sport amongst tigers, deer, wild-hogs, pea-fowls, and jungle-chickens. For a passing effect however, a simple ride down the rapids is best. Five days brought us through the rapids to Raheng, where we had left our other boats, making about ten days from Chieng Mai. We were not long in getting our boats ready, and the rapid current brought us to Bangkok in about one fourth of the time it took to ascend against it. We arrived at home without a moment of sickness, or any mishap, except the loss of one poor fellow, a slave of the chief man, who died of jungle-fever.

It may be asked why Buddhism, and especially the Buddhism of Siam, yields so slowly to the power of the Gospel? The cardinal doctrine of the system is, no God, no intelligent creator and proprietor of the universe. The unrenewed heart loves such a doctrine better than all religious creeds and dogmas, yea, better than the simple gospel of Jesus. As soon as sin entered the world, our first parents were afraid of God, and could they have done so, would have dispensed with him all their days. Thus it is that in Christian countries men hatch up development theories, and every imaginable falsehood, to dispense with an intelligent first-cause. Men of natural good sense on other subjects, on account of this enmity against God, become fools upon the great subject, "The fool hath said in his heart no God." Alabaster, in his "Modern Buddhist," closes up with the following remarkable flourish:—"The religion of Budha meddled not with the beginning, which it could not fathom; avoided the action of a deity it could not perceive; and left open to endless discussion that problem which it could not solve, the ultimate reward of the perfect. It dealt with life as it found it; it declared all good which led to its sole object, the diminution of the misery of sentient beings; it laid down rules of conduct which have never been surpassed; and held out reasonable hopes of a future of the most perfect happiness.

"Its proofs rest on the assumption that the reason of man is his surest guide, and that the law of nature is perfect justice. To the disproof of those assumptions we recommend the attention of those missionaries who would convert Buddhists."

Mr. Alabaster must think missionaries very obtuse, not to be able in thirty years labor in Siam, to find out the strongholds of Buddhism. Those "assumptions" have been "disproved" a thousand times, but as they harmonize with the natural heart of the Buddhist, and indeed with that of very many who are nominal Christians, but who are in greater condemnation than the Buddhist, all reasonable proof is rejected.

Again, in all Buddhist countries there is a mutual union of church and state, and the Buddhist regards kings as the proper rulers of the land, and also the regulator of the religion. A man in Siam who embraces Christianity, expects to cut himself off from everything which has hitherto been near and dear to him. They have the most profound reverence for the King, and cannot understand how the United States can get along without one. A nobleman not long since asked a missionary in good faith, if the United States would not soon be far enough advanced to have a King, like England and France. The missionary replied, that from present indications England and France would soon be far enough advanced to do without one.

The Siamese are also wonderfully addicted to custom. Whatever their fathers have done they must do, how ridiculous soever that may be. "*Pen tumneum thai*,"—it is Siamese custom, is sufficient reason for doing anything. It is seldom that a Siamese can be drawn into an argument, even on religion. They will generally assent to everything the missionary says, and will reply, "Your religion is no doubt much better than ours, but it would be contrary to custom to abandon our religion in this life; in the next life we will embrace Christianity." Apostasy from Buddhism too, is one of their unpardonable sins.

One of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the Gospel amongst the heathen is, the ungodly example of those who have been brought up in Christian countries, and who unfortunately bear the Christian name. Every port open to commerce is overrun with adventurers from western countries. So few of them have any religion at all, that the heathen are unable to make any distinction. Many too, who have professed religion, when they come to the East manifest no vital godliness, and soon abandon themselves to every imaginable vice. Most of the official representatives sent out by western governments are either avowed infidels, or men of no moral character. All these things are against us. The Siamese have frequently said to me, "Why do you offer us your religion, whilst those in our midst, who have been brought up in that religion, are no better than we, and are even more abandoned? True, you missionaries do not engage in those vices to which the others are addicted, but religion is your business. You are paid for it." It will also be found that all such characters are opposed to Christian missions, and missionaries in general, and are ever ready to bear testimony against them.

I have often thought that a few such business men as George H. Stuart, who carry religion into business and every-day life, would do more in the East in converting the heathen, than a host of missionaries. It is not however, "By might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

In view therefore, of all these obstacles and difficulties, we appeal to all true Christians for their sympathies and prayers for the success of this great work which God has committed to his Church.

THE END.

Transcriber's Note:

Archaic spellings have been retained, but obvious typographic errors have been corrected. Otherwise the author's spelling of non-English words, including tone marks, has been preserved as printed, even when inconsistent, e.g. Birmah vs. Burmah.

Use of double capital letters in HLuang appears to be intentional by the author, to represent the digraph in the Thai spelling of the word, and as such has been preserved as is.

Ditto marks in lists have been replaced with the appropriate text.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIAM: ITS GOVERNMENT, MANNERS, CUSTOMS,
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