

the females let their hair grow, and dress differently from the Siamese women. Few nations are so well prepared for the reception of the gospel as this; but, alas! few nations have less drawn the attention of European philanthropists.

The Siamese are in the habit of stealing Burmans and making them their slaves. Though the English have of late interposed with some effect, they nevertheless delight in exercising this nefarious practice. There are several thousand Burmans living, who have been enslaved in this way, and who are compelled to work harder than any other of his Majesty's subjects. They are held in the utmost contempt, treated barbarously, and are scarcely able to get the necessaries of life.

Perhaps no nation has been benefitted, by coming under the Siamese dominion, with the exception of the Malays. These Malays, also, are principally slaves or tenants of large tracts of land, which they cultivate with great care. They generally lose, as almost every nation does in Siam, their national character, become industrious, conform to Siamese customs, and often gain a little property. With the exception of a few Hadjis, they have no priests; but these exercise an uncontrolled sway over their votaries, and know the art of enriching themselves, without injury to their character as saints. These Hadjis teach also the Koran, and have generally a great many scholars, of whom, however, few make any progress, choosing rather to yield to paganism, even so far as to throw off their turbans, than to follow their spiritual guides.

There are also some Moors resident in the country, who are styled emphatically by the Siamese, *Kah*, strangers, and are mostly country-born. Their chief and his son Rasitty enjoy the highest honors with his Majesty; the former being the medium of speech, whereby persons of inferior rank convey their ideas to the royal ear. As it is considered below the dignity of so high a potentate as his Siamese Ma-

esty, to speak the same language as his subjects have adopted, the above-mentioned Moor-man's office consists in moulding the simplest expressions into nonsensical bombast, in order that the speech addressed to so mighty a ruler may be equal to the eulogiums bestowed upon Budha. Yet by being made the medium of speech, this Moor has it in his power to represent matters according to his own interest, and he never fails to make ample use of this prerogative. Hence no individual is so much hated or feared by the nobles, and scarcely any one wields so imperious a sway over the royal resolutions. Being averse to an extensive trade with Europeans, he avails himself of every opportunity to shackle it, and to promote intercourse with his own countrymen, whom he nevertheless squeezes whenever it is in his power. All the other Moor-men are either his vassals or in his immediate employ, and may be said to be an organized body of wily constituents. They do not wear the turban, and they dispense with the wide oriental dress: nor do they scruple even to attend at pagan festivals and rites, merely to conciliate the favour of their masters, and to indulge in the unrestrained habits of the Siamese.

In the capacity of missionary and physician, I came in contact with the Laos or Chans, a nation scarcely known to Europeans. I learnt their language, which is very similar to Siamese, though the written character, used in their common as well as sacred books, differs from that of the Siamese. This nation, which occupies a great part of the eastern peninsula, from the northern frontiers of Siam, along Cambodia and Cochinchina on the one side, and Burmah on the other, up to the borders of China and Tonquin, is divided by the Laos into Lau-pung-kau (white Laos), and Lau-pung-dam (black or dark Laos), owing partly to the colour of their skin. These people inhabit mostly mountainous regions; cultivate the ground, or hunt; and live under the government of many petty princes, who are depend-