

mand over towns and villages; and there is no village, if we may trust the Memoirs, which is not under the oversight of a soldier, who in turn is subject to his superior. Domestic slavery is greatly practiced; some of the principal people had hundreds of slaves. The chiefs have a body guard of a few hundred young men, and keep a number of vessels, each with two masts and twenty-four oars; but they make no use of cannon.

In each district there are five or six towns where instruction is given in reading and writing. The count declares that they obtain their books from China, and that their characters for writing are as difficult as the Chinese. If this be so, it is probable that their literature was quite dependent on China for its origin; and that they either derived from thence the knowledge of writing, or that the Chinese mode of writing has superseded their own, or combined with it, as in Corea and Japan. In the matter of religion, the count quite disagrees with Chinese authors, affirming that the religion of the people consists in adoring one God, and in the performance of good offices towards their neighbors. But we do not attach implicit reliance to the count's testimony on this subject; because we judge that he was not so nice an observer on this point as on some others. Their pure and simple theism, like that of the Chinese which was once so lauded, will probably prove to be an idea always unknown, or long since lost, among the people. But all agree, however, in describing them as free from any tokens of idolatry, yet as subject to the influence of conjurers and diviners;—in these respects bearing much resemblance to the aborigines of North America.

In conclusion we would say that we have quoted from this curious book, rather because it speaks of a subject quite unknown, than because it is of undoubted veracity in all its statements. They are the observations of a military man, observing and shrewd, and designed, no doubt, to give on the whole a favorable aspect to his proposed enterprise of colonizing the island. But since we do not find his Memoirs have been corrected by subsequent observers, so far as they have had opportunity to verify his statements relative to other subjects treated of in his book, we suppose that these may in general sustain the same test, if any one shall ever be permitted to visit the same ground. He evidently intended to return and risk his own fortunes on the island, but was subsequently diverted from his design by the offer of royal patronage in Madagascar; so that our knowledge of eastern Formosa remains at the present day as it was half a century ago. Enough, however, is known to show that the acquisition of further knowledge is practicable. The anchorages are good and numerous. Though he did not see the "gigantic race of negroes" which Valentyn declared might be seen there, yet he found an olive colored people, with whom he held a varied intercourse; a country already to some degree furnishing the means of trade, and with proper motives to the cultivators, capable of a vast increase of such means; he found them not exempt from the vices of such a state of semi-barbarism, but without idolatry.

ART. III. *Siamese Romance: translated from the original Siamese by Mrs. ———, while residing at Bangkok the capital of the kingdom of Siam.*

It will be in our power ere long, we hope, to entertain our readers with verities concerning the history, geography, literature, manners, habits, government, religion, &c., of the Siamese. As a nation, they are excessively fond of the wild vagaries of Buddhism. Those who have amassed wealth, often employ it in building temples or pagodas for the convenience of the priests and the honor of their religion. Those also who have the means, maintain large numbers of the priests, who pass their whole time in perfect idleness. People often invite the priests to their houses to perform religious services. In such cases, seated "squat like a toad," on a seat a little elevated, they rehearse in a drawling voice a piece similar to that which we subjoin. During the performance, the auditors, who are generally few, and chiefly old women, remain on their knees, with raised hands, until the dull tones of the orator have lulled them to sleep. After the service is ended, the priest is richly entertained and liberally paid.—The following is an extract from one of those pieces, which are rehearsed in the manner above described; it seems to have been published as an address to readers.

"Now I am about to republish a story. At the time when the vacuum was in existence, and all things were in the most profound silence, long, long ago in olden time, there was a kingdom, called the realm of Chambauk. The king bore the name of Chambauk Racharetract, and his queen was the lady Chantahtawee. She was both amiable and dutiful, and a thousand times fair and slender. Her countenance was very handsome, her deportment elegant, and she was quite superior to all her maids of honor. Now I would speak in praise of the kingdom. The whole surface was covered with an immense population, who lived extremely contented, and filled with happiness. The symmetry of their bodies adorned the kingdom. They came in crowds to bring stones for the wall of the city.* They also built a spire of three stories, and adorned it with the finest sculpture and carving.† The pillars were well proportioned, and sustained a splendid dome, laid out with lamina; to the sight it was like branches drooping from a tree. The vault of the dome was very great; upon it were griffions fighting with giants. In front of the pillars, was abundant splendor. The plan was laid out in the utmost grandeur. The whole was perfect, surrounded by a moat, which thus con-

* In Siam and Camboja, one of the greatest beauties of the city is the wall which surrounds the imperial residence. In 1830, the city wall of Bangkok in Siam, required whitewashing; the nobles were collected, and to each a part of the wall was allotted to be cleaned and whitewashed at his own expense. The rich had the smallest portion, but the poor were favored with a wider space.

† The spire is the highest decoration of a palace, and is usually gilded, and inlaid with a species of mother of pearl.

stituted it a camp; and there they erected towers like shields, and made loop holes, which everywhere embellished the city walls. About the massy gates were crowds of people observing the glory of the nation. The high towers were elegant, beautiful, fine! Within the walls was a market, where bustling crowds bought and sold. All was undisturbed, universal gaiety and joy, and there they walked in stirring rows.

"Now, my good reader, when the king cherished love towards the lady Chantahtawee, he wished to raise her to the rank of queen* above all the ladies, and all the train of waiting maids. He observed, therefore, the directions of the sacred books, showed himself generous, and gave alms to the poor, wretched, and destitute. The king showed himself gracious, and bestowed gifts on all his slaves, female as well as male. He expended and distributed much property, made all the people cheerful, gave them gifts according to their wishes, and provided food for the future. At the same time, he built a temple, destined for the priests, where they should commemorate the *passover* [?], live piously, and keep their bodies in subjection; investigate and investigate the sacred books. The king also ordered the sacred books to be translated, and to be studied according to the rule of the sacred code, so that the behavior of the priests might be regulated. Thus he glorified the holy ritual, made it splendid, and without spot.† The glory and might of the king was exceedingly great.‡ His fame and honor spread even to far distant kingdoms, whose inhabitants willingly became his slaves.

"Now, my reader, when lady Chantahtawee had lived with the king, she became pregnant. At this time, rice, coriander, peas, and beans were produced in large quantities. Whilst the queen enjoyed health, she frequently came to behold the nation, till the time of her delivery arrived. She then brought forth a son, beautiful and vigorous as a bow from the moment of his birth. He was the possessor of great riches and honor; a large train of attendant slaves waited on him without cessation, day by day. Now this mighty king wished to show kindness to his best beloved son: and chose for him both wet nurses and governors, whose business it was to superintend him day and night. There was also issued the royal decree, that a hundred waiting maids, high in authority, and of noble extraction, who possessed honor, and rank, and beauty, and elegance, finely proportioned, in complexion neither black nor white, but of the lovely yellow of the saffron, should be selected. Their beauty was

* When the king comes to the throne, his wife does not become queen, till her husband chooses to confer that favor upon her; but usually, on becoming king, he marries another person, and the first giving place then becomes his second wife.

† On the occasion of marriages, the priests are the principal objects of regard; to them abundant presents of clothing, food, and money are given, for which they are expected to say prayers or masses. The poor are generally the least remembered, but receive some trifling gifts when the prayers are said.

‡ The greatness of a king consists in building temples, and supporting an immense number of priests.

sparkling, and their countenances glistened with splendid majesty and chastity. They had to sing, and dance, and chant to the son of the king with their melodious voices, like the celestial beings who reside in the kingdom of heaven.

"Now, my reader, I must speak about the beauty of this exalted child, because it was of royal extraction and parentage. When it was born it was wonderful. There was a wonder: the stars sparkled, shone, and glistened with immense beauty; and in the universe the angels,* gathering in crowds, pronounced a blessing, and strewed flowers, the fragrant of which penetrated every corner. When the prince was born, there was a Brahmin came from another country.† He brought fine, large elephants, and presented them to the new born prince, together with golden anklets. The king rejoiced exceedingly and made presents to him as a remuneration; raised him above all the other Brahmins, and made him the ruler of the kingdom. Now, reader, when the child was grown to the age of five years, his majesty gave him the name of Chow-tee-ah-woo-ke-man. He was at that time, well proportioned, of slender hip and possessed a smiling countenance, with tender features. When he wished to go out, there was prepared for him a golden palanquin, beautiful to behold.‡

"In his superiority, he possessed riches and dominions. His look was condescending, surpassing all the kings of other kingdoms. He also held a kingdom which was incomparable. By the merits of this royal prince, the nation was happy, contented, and cheerful.

"Now, reader, I must break off awhile from this story, and I will relate something of another kingdom called Bunchal; the name of the king was Bunchalret; the name of the queen was Nuntabavi. She was fair, tender, and slender; she had many daughters, who accompanied her, and superintended the slaves. The king had a very amiable disposition towards his ladies; and because they were pleasing, he founded a city according to the pattern of the ancients, planted it with many trees, built it with stones, and whitewashed it with lime. He built a market with a channel, where all the people assembled in crowds; there, seated in rows, they bought and sold as much as was sufficient for their necessities. The people were happy, cheerful, and suffered no oppression. The king also built a dome. Everything in the kingdom was elegant and splendid. The nation gathered around, cheerful, happy, and without cares; and the nobility followed the pattern of the ancients. The king

* The Cambojans believe that there are different ranks of angels; some dwell in paradise, others in woods or with men. All are the attendants of men to whom prayers are addressed, and sacrifices offered.

† The Brahmins frequently visit and even settle in Siam; they are chiefly employed as astrologers and sorcerers, perform the rite of baptism, explain the Pali books; and the kings emulate each other in building for them splendid temples, and supporting them with all imaginary dignity.

‡ Only those persons who are of the highest rank, are allowed a palanquin or chair; and the members of the royal family only are allowed to have an umbrella carried behind them.

also took care, that there was no want of justice. So he was celebrated, and possessed great honor; his name was famous in the whole universe, and his glory and majesty were unspotted. When the king was thus happily seated, his queen again became pregnant, and great wonders appeared. The earth shook, thunders rolled, lightnings flashed in variegated colors, and the people came together to praise the merits of the king. Then the queen brought forth a daughter, beautiful, without spot, and very dutiful; her smiling face resembled the moon when she is in her fullness. The whole nation brought presents of gold and silver, offering them to the new born daughter. The king sought for five hundred virgins to wait on the young princess; they were pure, chaste, and unspotted; while the nation rejoiced, and was perfectly happy. When the princess had attained her fifth year, her beauty was perfect. His majesty appointed governesses to watch over her with the utmost care. These ladies were famous in other kingdoms. Every body, nobles as well as the common people, came to admire the royal child; they thronged in immense numbers, and the voice of their praise shook the earth.

"I shall now discontinue this relation, and speak again about the former king, Chumbauk Rachareteret. While this monarch was enjoying perfect ease, there came hunters from a far kingdom. They announced that in their excursions, they had seen the immense beauty of this princess, and now came to acquaint his majesty of it. The king was greatly delighted, consulted with his consort, and commanded to take another sight of her. They then went back, and arriving in the garden by stealth, they hid themselves in the bushes, and laid themselves down in the pleasant shade; when, accompanied by an immense train of maidens, the princess entered. Elephants, horses, and chariots, with soldiers, followed. When all the attendants had arrived, they surrounded the royal child on all sides, and coming to the brink of a stream of water, they put down the palanquin which they bore on their shoulders. The governesses, then anointing the royal child, undressed her, after which the glorious princess, with all splendor, descended into the sparkling, glistening water. Now the whole company began to play, dandle, and caress each other full of joy and cheerfulness. The royal princess dived and swam, leaving the maidens far behind, and hid herself under the shadow of the trees. The hunters, beholding the royal daughter, stood astounded, looking at her elegant beauty and accomplishments. They addressed her, saying, 'O wonderful nymph! from the time of our first existence, we have never beheld a countenance like thine, so beautiful, so fair: there is no female like thee: thou art to be compared to celestial beings and angels who dwell in paradise; but comparison is vain.' Fainting with astonishment, the hunters resolved to give a full account to the king Chumbauk Rachareteret, that the prince might become her partner. Who was so worthy, as the son of so great a lord? While they were thinking thus, they lingered and looked in deep silence, that they might see

plainly, and be certain. At the same time, the governesses were following the royal daughter, who had swam far away, to snatch her from the danger. While they were thinking, they were scattered; some swam, dived, and rose to rejoin her; the eyes of some were shut, and they could not see; others passed her; others cried, 'catch the princess!' but nothing was heard of her. Finally, when they reached her, the princess praising their zeal, said, 'maidens, do not hurry, nor complain that you do not see me; wait a little, and I shall return.' And so she dived, came up, and dived again, grasped the hand of the governesses and maid servants who had been shocked at her going so far, and had exerted their utmost to induce her to return. She was very dextrous in the water, and superior to all of them, to the great astonishment of the maidens, who remained speechless.

"When the afternoon was come, the attendants prepared to return to the palace. Some soldiers were chosen to pluck flowers of different kinds for the princess, which she was to present to her illustrious parents, to whom she had to pay her respects. When they arrived at the palace gate, the parents heard of it, and his majesty went down to receive his royal daughter, who had been perfumed by the flowers. He stroked and caressed the child, saying, 'dearly beloved daughter of your father, what have you brought to present him?' The child replied, 'nothing but a few flowers, among which is the lotus; these I come to present to my father.' Whilst fragrance perfumed the whole, the king commanded, saying, 'my good health and strength be given to you, and no sickness or weakness ever trouble you. Maid servants be of good cheer.' All understood the meaning, and they began to sing harmoniously, and enjoyed the bliss, and till late at night, made the earth shake with their exultations. During the time of the tranquil night, they praised the merits of the illustrious king, till exhausted and wearied, like a man who is carrying a thousand pounds and puts them down from off his shoulder unable to speak, they looked around and saw the princess among them, fair and shining as a nymph, endeavoring to gain merit and applause by being among them.* Then the king beginning to slumber, commanded the princess to lie down on the couch to sleep, and wander in dreams. The princess walked into her chamber, and stretched herself on the couch, after fastening the door. In her dream, she being astonished, called for the help of her governesses, saying, 'my ladies, assist your younger sister, whose whole body is shackled.' The women, greatly surprised, rose and came. The princess related the dream which she had seen, that a prince had entered the room, and begged her to become his spouse. The women answered and said, 'the dream at which your highness was so astonished is very lucky.' The princess replied, 'tell me about the matter, do not fear, hide nothing, I shall not be angry.' The women said, 'we will tell you; did not your highness see a serpent winding

* On solemn occasions, the Cambojans spend a whole night in singing and music: this they call meritorious, and boast of their generosity.

itself around your body? Now this signifies a king who has received an account of you, and comes to petition an alliance of love; do not tarry to accede.' The little princess replied, 'is this the good fortune you tell me of; do not talk so to your young sister.' And the women were silent." * * * *

ART. IV. *The Bonin islands: their situation, productions, &c., as noticed by the Japanese in 1675 and subsequently; by Captain Beechey in 1827; more recently by a correspondent of the London Metropolitan; and in August, 1834, by Mr. ———.*

These islands, which are about twenty-nine degrees east of Canton, and eight south from Jedo, 'are most conveniently situated for watching the trade of China on the west, the Philippines on the south, and Russia on the north; and if any intercourse is soon to be opened with the Japanese, they form the position from which it could be most easily effected.' The earliest account which we find of the Bonin islands is contained in Kämpfer's history of Japan. "About the year 1675," says the historian, "the Japanese accidentally discovered a very large island, one of their barks having been forced there in a storm from the island Fatsio, from which they computed it to be 300 miles distant towards the east. They met with no inhabitants, but found it to be a very pleasant and fruitful country, well supplied with fresh water, and furnished with plenty of plants and trees, particularly the arrack tree, which however might give room to conjecture, that the island lay rather to the south of Japan, than to the east, these trees growing only in hot countries. And because they found no inhabitants upon it, they called it *Bunin sima*, or the island Bunin, [in Chinese *woo jin* 'without people,'] the uninhabited island. On the shores they found an immense number of fish and crabs, some of which were from four to six feet long."

The following description of the islands is from a Japanese work published in Jedo in 1785. 'The group is composed of eighty-nine islands, of which the most considerable are two large ones, two of middling size, and six smaller. These ten are spacious, and covered with herbs and trees; their plains offer an agreeable residence for man. As to the other islands, they are nothing but steep, sterile, and uninhabitable rocks. This archipelago is in latitude twenty-seven degrees north; the climate is warm; and the vallies, situated between the high mountains, are fertile and watered by rivulets. The islands produce vegetables, grain of all kinds, great quantities of sugar-cane, with extensive pastures. Some of the trees are large, and the wood is hard and beautiful. Palm trees, cocoa nut, the betel nut, camphor, red sandal wood, mountain fig, mulberry, cinnamon,

the tallow, and the wax trees, are found there. Among the plants are the *Smilax china*, and others used in medicine. Few quadrupeds are seen; but birds are in abundance. There are several kinds of parrots, also herons, and partridges. The chief productions of the mineral kingdom are alum, green vitriol, stones of various colors, petrifications, &c. In the sea are whales, great lobsters, enormous shell-fish, and sea eggs. The largest of these islands is about forty miles in circuit, another is thirty-two, the other eight are from six to twenty miles around.' (Canton Register, March 20th, 1833.)

In his voyage to the Pacific, captain Beechey, while steering eastward from the Lewchew islands, on the 8th of June, 1827, had the satisfaction to descry several islands extending north and south as far the eye could reach. They all appeared to be small, yet they were high and very remarkable, particularly one near the centre. On the 9th, the Blossom entered a secure harbor, and came to an anchor in eighteen fathoms, almost landlocked. "This harbor is situated in the largest island of the cluster, and has its entrance conspicuously marked by a bold, high promontory on the southern side, and a tall quoin-shaped rock on the other. It is nearly surrounded by hills, and the plan of it upon paper suggests the idea of its being an extinguished crater. Almost every valley has a stream of water, and the mountains are clothed with trees, among which the *Areca oleracea*, and fan-palms are conspicuous. There are several sandy bays, in which green turtle are so numerous that they quite hide the color of the shore. The sea yields an abundance of fish; the rocks and caverns are the resort of craw-fish and other shell-fish; and the shores are the refuge of snipes, plovers, and wild pigeons. At the upper part of the port, there is a small basin, formed by coral reefs, conveniently adapted for heaving a ship down; and on the whole it is a most desirable place of resort for a whale ship." By a board nailed against a tree, it appeared that the port had been entered in September, 1825, by an English ship named the Supply. Captain B. could not allow so fair an opportunity to escape of taking possession of the islands; and accordingly, in due form, he "declared them to be the property of the British government by nailing a sheet of copper to a tree, with the necessary particulars engraved upon it." The harbor he called Port Lloyd, 'out of regard to the late bishop of Oxford,' and the island in which it is situated he named after sir Robert Peel.

They continued in Port Lloyd till the 15th of June; and enjoyed frequent opportunities for examining the surrounding country. Peel's island is entirely volcanic, and there is every appearance of the others to the northward being of the same formation. Basaltic columns were noticed in several parts of Port Lloyd, and in one place they were divided into short lengths as at the Giant's Causeway. Many of the rocks consist of tufaceous basalt of a grayish or greenish hue, frequently traversed by veins of petrosilex, and containing numerous nodules of chalcedony or cornelian. Zeolites were not wanting; and the stilbite, in the lamellar foliated form, was