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GENERAL COLLECTION

OF THE

BEST AND MOST INTERESTING

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS

IN VARIOUS PARTS OF ASIA;

MANY OF WHICH ARE NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

DIGESTED ON A NEW PLAN.

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1819.

HISTORY OF SIAM.

From the French of TURPIN*.

CHAPTER I.—Of the Origin of the Siamese.

THE origin of the name of Siam is unknown to its own inhabitants, and those who rely on the aid of etymology to disperse the obscurity which veils the cradle of nations, derive it from the Pegouan language, in which the word *Siam* signifies *free*; therefore these people boast of having the same name with the French (Francks); and although always subject to despots who tyrannise over them, or neighbours who oppress them, they deck themselves with a name which can only serve to reproach them with their slavery and degradation.

It is suspected that it was given them by the Portuguese, who, before they entered this kingdom, already possessed settlements in Pegou. Geographers are not agreed as to its situation: it is known that it lies in the peninsula of India, possessing 120 leagues in length, and rather more than 100 in its greatest breadth. La Loubere, to the north, assigns it the country of Laos; to the east, the kingdoms of Cambaya and Keo; to the south, the great Gulph of Siam; and on the west, the peninsula of Malaca. It is in the form of a half-moon, 450 leagues in circuit. The maritime coasts are well known, but scarcely any thing of its interior. The whole of this country is bordered by high mountains, which separate it from the kingdoms of Laos, Pegou, and Ava. These chains of mountains leave between them a vast plain of near 100 leagues in extent, which forms the chief part of the kingdom.

The coasts of the Gulph of Siam are computed at 200 leagues, and those on the Bay of Bengal at 180. A country surrounded by such an extent of seas is well adapted for commerce and navigation. Bountiful nature has bestowed on it many ports, while she has been sparing to the opposite coast of Coromandel.

The origin of this people is concealed beneath a veil of mystery, which they are scrupulous of removing. Their claims to antiquity are a collection of fables, supported by popular traditions, which with them supply the place of historic monuments. They have neither books nor public archives where the chronicles of the nation might be deposited. It is true, that in 1685 they reckoned an era of 2229 years, which began at Sommona-Kodon, the founder of their religious worship; but their ignorance of all the arts should render their chronology doubtful; it cannot be determined if they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country. Those who

* Paris, 1771, 2 vols. 12mo.

Histoire Générale et Naturelle du Royaume de Siam et ses believe
révolutions qui ont bouleversé cet Empire jusqu'en 1770, publiée
par M. Turpin, sur les manuscrits qui lui ont été communiqués
par M. l'évêque de Tabraca, vicaire apostolique de Siam.

its kernel very flat and large; its odour approaches to turpentine. As its flavour is agreeable, and its quality heating, the Siamese eat it with vinegar, especially when somewhat large.

They make use of salted ducks' eggs, which they preserve several months without spoiling. They put a good deal of clay round each egg as a crust, and when they want to eat them, they take off this crust and harden the egg: it is thus they preserve their melons, which they salt in slices, and which they always keep excellent. They also use ginger, which grows abundant in this kingdom: the Dutch make an excellent preserve of it, which they export to Batavia; but it is too heating.

Silver and corries are what the Siamese prefer receiving in exchange for their productions; but they have a predilection for coloured linens, muslins, carpeting, and silks, especially those of China, which being gayer and lighter are more suitable to the climate. This taste, however, is not exclusive, as they anxiously seek for the scarlets and velvets of Europe; and it is with those articles our merchants might render the Siamese tributary to their industry.

Muskets, gunpowder, and flints would command a quick sale and considerable profit. The Siamese would willingly take them in exchange for their most valuable productions, and would even pay for them in the money of their country, which consists in small balls of silver, marked at the corner by the King.

The sale of opium is absolutely contraband: the forbidding the introduction of it into this kingdom originates in the disposition of the people to abuse the use of it. Its effects have at different times caused the greatest ravages: the present King has passed sentence of death on several of his subjects who had transgressed this law. The Siamese accustom themselves to take it, beginning by a grain, and encreasing the number to half a dozen. Some swallow it, but the greater part smoke it, which causes a sleepy drunkenness. They say then they have sublime and grand ideas; each has dreams agreeable to his temperament; the ambitious man beholds at his feet monarchs and slaves in chains; the bilious man is seized with visions of horror and dismay; the mild and benevolent man beholds all the world applaud him. However, there is nothing so sacred that the Siamese is not ready to break through to procure this root, which sells for its weight in silver, which is not surprising among a people who believe that dreams are books in which the fates are written.

Although all climates most exposed to the vivifying rays of the sun present us with productions which nature refuses to colder regions, she still dispenses her bounty, and northern countries have their peculiar riches. Throughout India are to be found peas, potatoes, cibol, radishes, small cucumbers, gourds, water-melons, parsley, balm, forrel; but all these vegetables only resemble ours in the name. They are not acquainted with our roots, nor the different herbs which compose our sallads, which should be attributed to the negligence of the people, and not to the fault of the soil. Since all our herbs transported to Batavia have not degenerated, it may be presumed they would have equally succeeded in Siam.

CHAP. X. — *Animals.*

AMONG all quadrupeds the elephant may be said to hold the first rank, whether as to its bulk, strength, and utility, or for the instinct which this animal seems to possess in a superior degree. No country in the universe produces finer than are to be found in Siam; the larger are as much as twelve feet high. Its bulk is proportionate to

to its height; its feet are as straight as columns, and the under part is very soft, so that you scarcely hear it tread. When it walks it puts forward the two legs of the same side, which gives an uncouth and fatiguing motion to its body, and consequently to those who ride it, particularly if they are not accustomed to it. It has been thought that they never lie down; but that is an error which is now corrected: they lie down like other animals, but they generally sleep standing and without support. With his trunk he blows the dust from the place where he would lie, and makes it much cleaner than if it had been swept by the most careful domestic. After he lies down, he puts the end of his trunk into his mouth, for fear the ants should get into it; and if, notwithstanding this precaution, any one has the address to penetrate into it, he becomes enraged, and blows with violence, to get rid of so troublesome a guest.

He uses his trunk as a hand, to carry whatever he eats to his mouth, which is small, when compared to the colossal form of his body; his under jaw in particular is very small. When he would drink, he takes in his trunk about half a pail-full of water, which he pours into his mouth. With his trunk he tears off the branches of trees, of which he eats the leaves or moss, and if he does not find them juicy, he beats them on one of his legs. When he finds a trunk of a banana tree, which is soft, but too large to put in his mouth he takes care to hold one end in his trunk, while he splits the other with his teeth, when he has made it fit to be chewed, he takes it to his mouth. In short no animal eats with so much cleanliness.

Their strength surpasses that of all other quadrupeds. Formerly they were loaded with towers, filled with soldiers, and they often decided the fate of battles. Their two teeth weigh about two hundred and thirty pounds. It is difficult to conceive how so strong an animal should be so easy to manage. A common rope confines him, tied by the hind feet to a tree, but when he is enraged, or frightened by any sudden noise; such as thunder or the report of cannon, to which he is not yet accustomed, he breaks ropes thicker than the wrist, as easily as he would break a thread. Only his keeper can calm his fury, and even his voice he despises when at heat. Fortunately nature has furnished him with the means of appeasing the burning flames which torture him.

Although the elephant is at rut, and always lives among females, they never couple in the houses; they then seek the woods and retired places; it seems as if their modesty was ashamed of their natural wants. When the male is enraged, it is sufficient to shew him a female, and he becomes quiet and tractable.

If a domestic female elephant is to be covered, she must be suffered to go into the woods, with trammels, that she may not stray too far; she does not fail to get covered, and she then immediately returns home. She goes twelve months, and when nigh bringing forth, they let her go into the woods, because they believe she would rather burst than bring forth in any inhabited place. She afterwards returns home with her young one.

The elephant has only two teats which are placed between the two fore legs; and as the young one cannot reach its mother's teats, it draws the milk with its trunk, and then puts it in its mouth. These animals never exert their strength against their keepers: a compassionate gentleness seems to form their character; and when they meet a flock of sheep, they disperse them with their trunk, as if they were afraid of crushing them with their weight. Although used for war, they never contract that ferocity which the custom of shedding blood inspires, and their natural wildness has an air of timidity.

The load of an elephant at Siam is not proportioned to his strength: in general he only carries twelve hundred pounds weight, and even with that, they cannot make him

him go very far. When he finds himself too much fatigued, he swells his belly, breaks in an instant all the girths and cordages, and throws down his load, rather from laziness, than being unable to support so great a weight.

The King and persons of quality generally ride on elephants. They either use a ladder to get on his back, or make him kneel down. He holds out a leg, on which they step, and he never rises till they are seated. His step is much longer than that of a horse: his trot is pretty quick: he never stumbles nor gallops. The use they derive from him has inspired the Siamese with the utmost respect for this animal; they have the same regard for them they have for the human species, and they would place them in equality with men if they had the use of speech: especially those belonging to the King are treated with most distinction: they have their slaves, the number of which is proportioned to their opinion of their sagacity. The white elephant, which is the first in dignity, has a hundred servants to take care of him: the sides of his palace are all gilt; instead of troughs, he has two basins of massive gold, and the most dignified mandarins do not think it any disgrace in devoting themselves to his service: the honours which are paid to him extend even to his relatives; for the Siamese distinguish these animals by the same family names which are used in Europe among men. This respect originates in the system of metempsychosis: they believe the souls of Kings and heroes pass into the bodies of elephants. The white are the most esteemed and are most rare. They set a great value on black ones, but there are few of that colour.

They use this animal also to draw water and large pieces of timber. When employed in this work he does not seem to make the least effort; he walks as easy as if he had no burthen to draw. They use him likewise to shove vessels into the water with his backside, and to throw down buildings, when there is danger that a fire may spread to the neighbouring houses.

The Siamese are themselves too idle to derive all the advantages they might from so useful an animal; they only seem to value it for the effect and pomp it gives to the travelling of their King. It is true they sell a great number every year at Mergui, and derive a great profit from their teeth, in which they deal largely with the people of Surat and Europe.

One of the exercises in which they instruct the Princes of the kingdom, is to ride the elephant, as the nobility of Europe are taught to ride the horse; it is more particularly in the manner of riding on the neck, that the most address is shewn. It is not possible to sit on his back, on account of its breadth; beside that, he could not be managed at such a distance. Instead of a stirrup, they make use of a thick cord which goes round his neck. The most skilful riders throw a noose running, with wonderful dexterity, to take those which are wild. This chase, which is the most noble, is only permitted the Kings and Princes, although the woods are full of these animals. A male always goes at the head of a great number of females, which excites among the males jealousies and battles. The females never interfere in these quarrels, and full of respect for spirit and courage, they abandon him that flies, and always follow the conqueror. As in these hunting parties, the King and Princes take a great many elephants, they keep the finest for their own use, and send the others to Mergui, to be sold to merchants who come from the coast of Coromandel to trade in them, and who bring in exchange the finest linens and stuffs from Bengal, Surat and Persia. There is scarcely a year that at least fifty elephants are not sold. This trade forms the most solid wealth of the Siamese, who by this sale, and that of their teeth, procure themselves foreign productions.

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The King reserves this trade to himself, and no one else may carry it on. There are tenants who are obliged to pay into the royal treasury a certain number of teeth. This obliges them to go a hunting for them, and obtain as many as will furnish the given number. They often conceal the produce of the chase, and sell the overplus clandestinely, but not without risk, both to the seller and buyer; they both are liable to be condemned for life to cut grafs for the King's tame elephants, a punishment the more severe, as all the descendants of those thus condemned remain for ever in this slavery, unless liberated by a special pardon from the King.

The instinct of the elephant places it above all other animals, and the Siamese esteem it so much, that many, to the disgrace of the human mind, are loaded with titles, and endowed with the first dignities in the kingdom.

It must be confessed that this animal without his trunk would appear most stupid; but as it serves him for arms and hands, it would almost be imagined that this prodigious mass thought and reasoned; so dextrous is he in the use of it to do whatever he is ordered.

Among fifty of these animals, that the King of Siam had sent to Mergui to be sold, was one more terrible, and more difficult to be conducted than any of the others: he knew no one but his keeper, and would obey no one else whatever. All these elephants were put into a large garden, near the Christian church: they were all tied by the hind feet, each one to a separate tree, some distance apart; that they might not annoy each other; and as these animals are always eating they put before them a bundle of grafs, and branches of the cocoa-tree and banana-tree. When this elephant, who was called Cerca, saw that his keeper was absent, he very dextrously untied the rope which fastened him to the tree with his trunk, and went and eat the grafs and banana-trees of another elephant. If the other keepers tried to make him return to his own tree, without minding them, he shewed his teeth, so that they were all obliged to retire; they could not accomplish it till his keeper came: as soon as the animal saw him, he returned to his place, and appeared gentle and quiet. After having played this prank for several days, his keeper beat him well with a stick, which he bore very quietly without the least shew of anger. The keeper afterwards was eating with some of his comrades, a few paces from this elephant; the animal took up a stone from the ground and holding it balanced in his trunk as if at play, threw it directly into the earthen pot that held his keeper's wine or brandy, which broke it and spilt all the liquor: this enraged the man and drew on him another shower of blows, which he again took very quietly. Every day these animals are seen to do every thing their keeper tells them to do, as to salute those they pass, pick up whatever their conductors who are seated on their neck, let fall, and immediately give it them. This animal takes an extraordinary affection to those who have the care of feeding him. An example was witnessed at Pondichery, in regard to a very drunken soldier, who every day gave some fruit to an elephant. One day this soldier, being drunk, after giving some fruit to this elephant, fell asleep at his feet. The animal began to gently rub him with his trunk. Some other soldiers, fearful that with his caresses he might hurt their comrade, would have taken him up: the elephant, far from permitting it, presented his teeth to whoever attempted to approach, and watched the man till he awoke, without ever allowing any one to come near him.

Similar traits are every day observed; which shew how grateful this animal is for any kindness shewn him. He has a natural affection for monkies: for the Siamese keep a monkey in the place where they have their elephants; they think that if any bad air should pass through it would fall on the monkey, and not hurt the elephants.

There are other animals he has in abhorrence. He cannot bear a fowl : which obliges them, in vessels which transport elephants, to take great care that the fowls do not get out of their coops. They relate, that on board a vessel that was carrying elephants, a fowl having got loose, and jumped upon these animals, they became so unruly, they were fearful they would destroy every thing ; fortunately the fowl fell under the feet of an elephant, who instantly crushed it, which restored tranquillity in the ship. They equally abhor the tiger and the crocodile ; for which reason the King of Siam sometimes gives a combat between an elephant and one of these animals. The fight draws an immense concourse of people. In this combat the elephant has the head covered with strong leather, to screen his trunk in it, and protect it from the claws of the tiger ; he rushes towards him, and endeavours to pierce him with his teeth, or to strike him with his trunk, which he takes care immediately to draw within this leather ; for if the tiger caught it with his claws, he would become the conqueror, but if the elephant can put his foot on the tiger, he immediately crushes and kills him.

In the same manner he fights the crocodile ; he endeavours to pierce him underneath with his teeth, or to take him up in his trunk, and throw him into the air, and crush him under his feet when he falls again. But his most formidable enemy is a species of tiger, very small it is true, but so active, that he springs on his back, and tears him till he drops dead. The usual amusement of the Kings of Siam is hunting elephants : they do it three ways ; one is to noose them as they run in the woods ; the other to lay snares for them, in which they are caught by one foot : the third mode, which is the most dextrous, and affords most sport, is to drive them into a circle, from which they cannot get out without being taken : they employ the females to attract them into this snare.

Much address is required to noose them, and it is in this exercise, the young Lords are chiefly instructed. The whole art consists in throwing the noose without being themselves entangled in it. They have schools where they instruct pupils in this art, and many become such adepts, that, mounted on one of these tame animals, they noose the wild elephant by the foot, although he does not rise it from the ground more than six or seven inches. When the animal is in the cord, they let him run in the woods, where he soon entangles himself in the brambles and roots of trees, in which the noose catches. They then try to familiarize him with domestic elephants ; they tie him to them when he is cowed by hunger : they take him from the woods, and carry him into the city, where, in a few days, he becomes as tractable as the others.

The second manner of taking wild elephants in snares, is generally used by those who are obliged to supply the King with a certain number of their teeth annually. Although according to their principles, it is a great sin to kill these animals, yet interest often carries it over religion, and the king allows those to be killed which are ill made, and have natural defects, for examples, the ears, &c. &c. The monarch, to exculpate himself from this sin, alledges that it is not he that kills them, and that he commits that charge to men polluted by iniquity.

They lay these snares thus. At certain distances in the wood they throw nooses quite open, along the path, where they presume the elephant will pass. These nooses, which are made of cord and buffalo's hide, on one part touch the ground, and on the other are elevated about a foot from it. At the end of the cord, which may be twelve or fifteen feet long, is fastened a piece of wood in the form of a small anchor. When the elephant has caught his foot in this noose he drags it for some time, till it fastens to the roots of the trees ; the more the animal strives to disengage himself, the tighter

tighter the noose embraces his foot : the pain this creates causes him to remain still : he then eats every thing around him within his reach, till he falls from weakness and dies.

The third manner of taking elephants is the most dextrous and most amusing. They drive them into a place surrounded with large stakes, from whence they cannot get out without being taken. In the suburbs of the royal city, near the bridge which joins it to *terra firma*, is one of these large enclosures : it is a long square, shut with two doors, made of strong bars : the door next the country is simple, but that opposite to it, on the outside resembles the pen, in which horses are placed that are difficult to be shod. This pen is proportioned to the size and strength of the elephants : it has two doors, one of which opens into a place surrounded with stakes, about a foot distant from each other : and the second is at the other end : to get out of it, the door lifts up and down in grooves. They call this invention *piniate*, which has given that name to that quarter of the city, and the bridge that leads to it.

When they would bring the wild elephants to get them into this enclosure, they send ten or a dozen female elephants into the woods, at the head of which goes that one which is best trained, who carries on its back a large bundle of boughs, in which a man is concealed, to give the necessary signals. They are no sooner in the woods than some male comes to keep them company ; then the man that is concealed, gives his elephant the signal to return towards the enclosure. They return slowly eating the leaves of the trees they meet with. The male elephants follow them, and if it happens, that they stray a little to seek for food, the females rejoin them, and take care to keep them in the midst of them. This sport sometimes lasts several days, when the males, more familiarized with them, follow them instinctively. By degrees they approach the enclosure ; the best trained elephant enters first, and the others follow, male and female. When they are all in, they drop the sliding door, and they are thus all shut up in the enclosure.

While the males are on the other side, they take out the females by degrees, but when they perceive that the number of females diminishes, they become enraged, beat those that remain, and run round the enclosure to find a place to get out at. The door of the pen which leads outwards is opened, and they shew a tame male elephant through the bars of the other. As soon as the wild elephant perceives him, he enters the pen to attack him ; but scarcely has he entered it, when the door is let down, and he finds himself taken, without being able to turn, because there is only just room enough for his body. They then put a noose round each foot, taking a half turn round each stake that corresponds with his legs. Then the tame elephant retires, the barred door is open, the wild elephant struggles, and makes vain efforts to rush on the tame one, who shews his teeth at him. They slacken the cords that hold him by the feet by degrees, and when all his body is out of the pen, two large tame elephants come and place themselves one on each side, and they tie them all three together. His new companions take care to give him smart blows with their trunk, to make him go on ; and when his pace is too slow, another tame elephant which follows him, pricks him with his teeth behind, which makes him quicken his steps. They thus take him to the river, from whence, after being well washed and refreshed, they take him to a stable, where they tie his neck and a leg to a stake, which turns on a pivot at top and bottom. His exertions fatigue and exhaust him, and by turning round with his stake, he becomes still and quiet. The tame elephants come and take him tied to themselves to the river the same as the first time.

To these ceremonies they add a rigorous abstinence, which, by exhausting his strength in a month's time renders him as docile and tame as the others. They only give him a sufficient quantity of food to prevent him actually dying with hunger. This diet makes him very lean, but as soon as he gets tame, he regains his condition in a short time. All the males that are in the enclosure are served in the same way. Tame elephants are so numerous in this kingdom, that they can easily find four or five for the service of each of the new ones. The King, as well in the city as in the villages, always maintains about five-hundred. This sport may be looked upon, as the only amusement of the court and nobles; it is besides very lucrative to the King, and when those taken are not handsome enough to be preserved, they are sold to the Mahometans, who come to buy them, to transport them into the empire of the mogul. This sport would cease to be a pleasure to them, if interest did not find its account in it. This lazy nation never emerges from its natural indolence, except when awakened by the love of gain. It is true they hunt crocodiles and tigers, but it is generally only after those cruel animals have devoured many men and beasts.

The manner in which the Siamese take these animals is very curious. Sitting one day on the shore, I saw a number of boats, in which they were shouting and splashing with their oars, to oblige the crocodile to go near the land, where they were to lame or shoot him. It is the most terrible of all amphibious animals. Its shape resembles the lizard, except that along the spine of the back he has as it were fins of two or three inches, which are as hard and as solid as the rest of his skin. This animal, which is generally eighteen or twenty feet long, has a large jaw, armed with murderous teeth. The King of Siam has them taken alive, and keeps them in parks, to fight with the tiger and elephant. This is one of the grand diversions of the court. The combat between the tiger and the crocodile terminates in the death of both.

Of all quadrupeds, the strongest and largest after the elephant, is the rhinoceros, who lives in the forests. His skin is a great object of trade. The animal, whose sense of smelling is very fine, always gets under the wind; it is in marshy places, which he inhabits by preference, that the hunters lay snares for him; he lies down to sleep or wallow in muddy waters. Though dangerous when enraged, he is very easy to surprise. His size is nothing extraordinary, he is in general the height of a large ass, and would exactly resemble it as to the head, if he had not above the nose a horn about a hand's breadth in length. When angry he swells, and appears hideous. His skin is brown, and so hard, that a musket ball cannot penetrate it. His tongue is bristled with such a rough membrane that he flays whatever he licks. He breaks with ease the hardest thorns, and his mouth is sometimes all bloody with them. The hunter aims his shot between his ears, because it is the only place the ball can penetrate.

It is an error universally received in Europe, that the rhinoceros is the declared enemy of the elephant. The Siamese have never remarked this antipathy, and when in travelling I have been obliged to stop near springs of water, which are found here and there in the woods, I have often observed quite fresh marks of the feet of elephants and the rhinoceros, and my guides have never spoken of that natural aversion, which it is said divides these animals. I could discover no signs of those bloody combats which always costs the life of one of the adversaries. If these conflicts were real, trees would be observed overthrown, and the earth torn up, as is observed in places where elephants have fought against one another: and yet it is in places where there is water, that the two species might easily meet. The elephants frequent them to bathe, and the rhinoceros goes there to seek the thorny wood, on which they feed.

The Siamese sometimes rear these animals, to make presents of them to the Emperor

of China. They are obliged to take all those caught in the woods to the King's court, and this commission is very dangerous, unless they take the precaution to kill the dam, who protects them with fury. She never has but one young one at a time, and it is not known how many months she goes, because they have never had the females when with young in a domestic state.

The rhinoceros commonly feeds on the sharpest thorns: he never lies down but in muddy places and in the thickest forests: he turns up the earth like the pigs to find different roots. The Siamese find his flesh exquisite, which is not surprising, as he feeds on nothing but roots. It is a delicate present they make their friends; and when it is smoked, they make it an article of commerce. They are also very careful to preserve its blood, and especially that of the heart, believing it to be a sovereign remedy for complaints in the breast, and disorders incident to women. They dissolve a little of the blood in brandy or rice-water, and take a small dose every morning: and from his horn they make cups, which they regard as a powerful antidote against all kinds of poison; and it is in consequence of this belief that most of the Kings of India will only drink out of cups of this substance; and some horns sell as high as a hundred crowns. When split through the middle, different figures are observable; and the eye, deceived, fancies men, animals, trees, and fruits: in short, every part of its body is considered medicinal.

The Siamese make light shields of his skin, which are bullet-proof: they prefer the skin which covers the thighs and shoulders, which are more scaly than the other parts of the body. The rest of the skin is not useless; they dry it in pieces, and when they would eat it they boil it; it becomes very tender, and when well done they attribute to it the quality of purifying the blood. So many useful qualities would render the rhinoceros a valuable animal if he could be as easily tamed as the elephant; but art has yet never succeeded in conquering his natural ferocity.

There are several species of tigers in the woods of Siam; and though India in general seems to be the country of these savage animals, it may be said that the kingdom of Siam is their dwelling in particular; the species are there more various. The royal tigers are the most dangerous; they make cruel war with men and horned cattle: their body is covered with black and yellow stripes: they are but three feet high, but very long: their paws are immense, and their claws very large; they withdraw them or put them out like the cats: their horrid and fiery countenance betrays their restless and furious disposition; their sparkling eyes discover them in the night, by being perceivable at a considerable distance. They beat the ground with their tail while watching their prey, and spring on it as the cat does on a mouse: they say that if he misses his prey in the three springs he makes, he quits it for ever. His cry is sometimes shrill and sometimes dreadful: he has the cunning to hide himself among the bushes, from which he seldom misses the prey he marks.

The terror of his countenance damps the stoutest courage. Men have been found, till then intrepid, who have let their arms fall from their hand, and suffer themselves to be devoured, without thinking of defending themselves. This terror that he inspires extends to all animals: they lose their strength and become motionless at his look, and have not even power to fly. It is however certain, that if one has the courage to remain firm, and not to fly, he himself loses his intrepidity, and seems to respect valour in others, and only to delight in easy conquests.

They distinguish another kind, which they call biba: they are the size of our common dogs: their skin is yellow, and spotted with round black spots: he seldom attacks

men or cattle, but is very destructive to fowls, goats, deer, and young pigs; for the old ones do not fear him, and even stoutly defend themselves against the strongest tigers.

During my residence in this kingdom they told me of a combat between a large tiger and a strong boar, in which they both died of their wounds. There are several other kinds of small tigers, not larger than our cats; they get into the houses at night, where they make great havoc among the poultry: when the dogs can lay hold of them, they do not spare them. I saw one entirely spotted with a deep violet colour: I never saw so beautiful a skin: to feed it, it required a fowl every day, which it soon devoured.

They have also a kind of pole-cat which yields musk, but whose quality is much inferior to that of the musk-cat. On our return to Europe we had one of these pole-cats on board the vessel, which very much annoyed us by the smell it emitted: it had a particular passage by which it distilled its musk, and whenever that part was touched it uttered doleful cries. At Siam there is also, as in all India, musk-rats, which get into the houses. Every time they utter a cry they give an exhalation of musk, which by its strength causes the head-ach; and if it continues its cries the smell becomes insupportable.

The Siamese breed but few cattle, because their religion forbidding them to eat their flesh, the trouble of breeding them becomes burthenfome; nevertheless, they have domestic oxen, but the wild ones, which they call catins, are much stronger and larger. Their terrible horns, which they use dextrously against tigers, are their common arms. When the Siamese kill them in the woods, they smoke the flesh, because it is the only way to preserve it in a country where the excessive heat spoils every thing: but they have no great sale for it; for the continual perspiration so weakens their stomachs, that they cannot digest so strong and gross a food.

It is not so with the flesh of the buffalo, which they use without experiencing any inconvenience from it: perhaps the reason is, the buffalo is a very hot animal; even its milk is heating; therefore it is to be presumed its flesh has the same quality. It is larger than the ox; its colour is an ashy black, the muzzle much lengthened, and the horns flat and very long, which almost form a semicircle round his head. They use it for labour the same as oxen; with this difference, that it cannot bear the fatigue in excessive heats: he then runs into ponds, with which this country is covered; he remains there whole days, only shewing the end of his nose above the water, as if he feared he would be required to work; but in the rainy season nothing disheartens nor fatigues him. His lowing is shrill and weak, and nothing answers to the size of his body. An Indian child leads flocks of them, and makes them obey him at pleasure; but when they see whites they run at them, unless their conductors prevent them: red cloaths frighten them and enrage them. Europeans do not like the flesh of this animal, although the Indians find it more delicate and more juicy than that of the ox.

In the woods of Siam are also bears, but few are met with on the coasts. They have no lions; these animals are banished from all parts of India, and it appears that Africa is their favourite soil. Wild boars are also very rare; but wild hogs are extremely multiplied in the woods. At the rising and setting of the sun they are seen coming from the woods, and spreading themselves in droves over the neighbouring plains. At the head of each drove are always two or three boars, who seem to act as guides. It is dangerous to hunt them; for if you only wound them, they rush on their enemy with fury, and determine on taking his life. The Siamese never meet them without being armed with good lances to defend themselves from their attacks. These animals are black, their legs short, the back arched, and their bellies nearly touch.

touch the ground. The domestic hogs are better to eat, both fresh and salt, than the hogs of Europe; the flesh is lighter, and the fat never hardens: it is all melted into lard, and is used instead of butter, which is very scarce and dear in this country: fresh oil one or two days old is the only kind they can use. The wild hogs only feed on roots, which makes their flesh more delicious. As the Siamese seldom hunt them, they have nothing to fear but the tigers.

Stags are very numerous in the woods. The species would be very much multiplied if the Siamese did not make cruel war on them. When we cross the woods of this kingdom, we remarked that the dung of the tigers was full of the hair of stags. They are exactly like those of Europe.

All the shores of the Minan are covered with monkeys of different kinds and sizes: some have tails, and others are born without that ornament. These animals go in squadrons, and never less than twenty or fifty are seen, who unite for the execution of their enterprizes. When they fall on a field of sugar-canes or rice, the harvest is over in a single night: they are not contented to satisfy their voracity, they likewise destroy every thing their gluttoned appetite rejects. They are obliged in harvest-time to have watchmen to frighten them and prevent their approach. They jump from tree to tree, and the noise they make gives certain information of their arrival. They generally keep in thick woods, where they find fruit enough to feed on; but when cloyed with their ordinary food, they wish to regard themselves, they fly to the cultivated fields, where they find more delicious fruits. They sometimes form fishing parties: the sea-side is then seen covered with these animals; some break the oysters with stones; others catch lobsters, of which they only leave the scales and shells. When on a march the females carry their young ones under their bellies, who with their arms embrace the mother's body, and her loins with their legs. Modern travellers have confirmed the wonders the ancients have related of the extreme affection of these animals for their young ones: the mothers hold them to their breasts, and never abandon them, not even when mortally wounded by the hunters. Naturalists have observed, that they are the only animal subject to the same inconveniences as women. There is a second kind as ugly as they are mischievous: their general height is two feet and a half. A third sort goes single, or in pairs; they always hide their face; the Siamese look upon them as animals of ill omen. They do not eat their flesh; but the others are considered by them as delicate food. Another kind of monkey is observed which most resembles man; they call them onke: they are implacable enemies to the others. They are either all black or all brown; the hair of their hands and feet is white: they always keep in woods of lofty trees; they spring from tree to tree with great agility: their arms in proportion to their bodies are much longer than those of other animals, and especially than those of other monkeys: when they walk they hold one arm lifted up in the air. They must be taken at the breast to make them tame; for when once their character is formed, their natural ferocity can never be softened. The hair of their body is very long and thick; the fingers and nails of the hand are exactly like those of men; their nose is flat, and the eye entirely black: they lie at length, and put one arm under their head to serve them as a pillow; but when they are in the trees they sleep sitting, their head between their knees, their hands on their stomachs, and the length of their hair serves them for a covering; the heaviest rain cannot penetrate their skin; they have only to shake themselves to be dry. They take delight in rearing these kind of monkeys, because, being more mild than the others, they are not so indecent. Careful and active, they never break or destroy any thing; lovers of peace and compassionate, they go and embrace those who weep, and their

their pity increases as they hear the sighs of the wretched; nor will they quit them until they have seen their tears dried up.

The woods of Siam present phenomena which are not observed elsewhere. There are found there flying cats, which much resemble our cats in size, form of the head, and by the whiskers. They mew and spit when angry; their tail is tolerably long; a fine membrane on each side, which spreads like a sail from the fore to the hind leg, folds under their belly when they walk on the ground, and opens out when they spring from one tree to another: it is covered with very fine and short hair. The Siamese use them as a damper to their string instruments.

There are flying lizards in every garden in Siam. The children play with these animals, which are not venomous; they are exactly like those seen in France. This lizard has two round bladders near his fore paws, and a third under the chin, which is oblong, and which he fills with air when he would go from one tree to another. It seems that the one under his chin supports his head, as the others support his body; when at rest, these bladders retire and hardly are visible.

The cameleon is a large lizard, about two inches broad and a foot in length. It stands higher on its legs than the common lizard, and its claws are larger. Every garden is full of them; nothing can be more hideous than their face. At the least noise he raises himself on his paws, lifts up his head, looks bold and dauntless, and changes colour. At first he appears all green, then quite red, afterwards all violet colour, and sometimes all yellow. When exposed to the rays of the sun his colours appear more striking, and give him a terrible appearance. He seldom bites any one, though they do not venture to catch him.

The toqué is also a large lizard, six or eight inches in length and one and a half in breadth; its back is in square compartments, each of a different colour, as red, green, yellow, violet: its head is large, and enamelled with white and a dark brown. This animal, so beautiful to the eye, is very dangerous to touch: they kill it wherever they find it. Its claws are so piercing that it sticks them into glass. It walks along boards with its back downwards, to which it even fastens its eggs, which are flat on one side, and as large as the end of the thumb. Its ordure has this singular quality, that if any of it gets into one's food, it entirely takes away the voice, which lasts near a month. If any of its urine falls on the hand or skin of any person, it causes black spots, which can never be got out. When it bites it never lets go its hold, and its claws never come away without taking out the piece. It begins its cry by chirping, which continues increasing, and afterwards diminishes in the same proportion.

Tortoises are of several kinds; the rarest is about eighteen inches broad and as many long; the back is covered with equally-distributed compartments. They have six paws, four of which, longer than the other two, about six inches high from the ground, serve them to walk on. There are many other tortoises which are only met with at Siam; they are only about ten inches long and as many broad. Their singularity is, that as soon as they hear any noise, whether of man or animal, they draw themselves in. The tortoises, like those seen in France, are very delicate eating.

The sea-tortoise may be mentioned here, as they ascend the rivers of Siam from thirty to forty leagues, to look for beds of sand to deposit their eggs in. It is forbidden to kill them, because they bring the King a great profit, who farms out each bed of sand where they are accustomed to lay their eggs as high as forty eggs per annum. The flesh of young turtles, roasted under live coals, while their shells are only as yet soft cartilages, is very good eating.

Hedgehogs are found in all the woods; also porcupines; and an animal the Portuguese

Siamese call *bicho-vergonhoso*: this is more curious than the others; it is a kind of porcupine; only with this difference, that, instead of thorns or darts, it has impenetrable scales, which serve it for defence against all other animals. This animal digs deep holes with an industry it would be impossible to imitate. When surprised, it becomes like a large ball, neither showing head nor feet, and remains in this state, to take all chance from his enemy, till he hears no more noise. It is not less delicate eating than the porcupine, which in this country is looked upon as very wholesome food; and it is from this animal they obtain the most esteemed bezoar, and which is much dearer than that obtained from the most valued monkey. A great distinction between these bezoars is, that produced by the monkey must be scraped a little to be taken as an antidote against poison, while it is sufficient to soak that of the porcupine in water, to which it soon imparts its bitterness, and makes it an excellent antidote. The porcupine bezoar is so subtle, that though you hold it shut up in your hand, you perceive its bitterness when you put it near your mouth, and that is the best way to know if it is good or bad: for the other kind, put a little slacked lime, and dilute it in your hand, and then rub it with the bezoar: if the lime does not change colour, it is a stone; but if it turns yellow it is real bezoar. *

Fish is so plentiful in all the rivers of Siam that otters breed very fast on their banks, because they are sure of always finding plenty of food. They rear them sometimes in the houses; they go to the river to feed; they return for some time; but at length, tired of a domestic life, they prefer a free and wild one, and return no more.

The country produces few horses, and those in the army are brought from Batavia. The Siamese are bad horsemen; they wish to be as much at ease on a saddle as if they were sitting or lying down. An officer never gets on horseback but what he has two slaves by his side, to support him and prevent his falling; therefore they prefer elephants to horses, because on them they find the same ease as in their chambers: besides, horses cannot be of much use in a country so intersected with rivers and under water six months in the year. The difficulty of feeding them, as well as oxen, makes their service bought at too dear a rate, where neither hay nor oats is produced. The King always keeps a few, which are treated with much attention; and those which are white share the honours bestowed upon elephants of that colour.

CHAP. XI. — *Birds.*

THE kingdom of Siam possesses many birds, from which the inhabitants derive great advantages, whether as food or in trading for their feathers with the Dutch and Chinese, who come for them to take to Japan; or as those which are carnivorous cleanse the country from carcases whose putrefaction might infect the air.

The most beautiful bird of this country is called *caïpha*, which means the fowl of heaven: it is very large, and about the size of a turkey, but is much finer shaped: it has red legs; all the feathers of the back and the upper part of the wings of a velvet black: the under part of the belly is purple mingled with blue and yellow: its tail, enamelled with various colours, is set up like that of the cock: its long neck is covered with feathers of a glossy black; its eyes are red, and it has a tuft on its head of the same colour.

As the *caïpha* is rare, so is the peacock common: its plumage is of the greatest beauty, and its flesh of an exquisite flavour. Thus the Siamese have a double advantage in hunting it, but it is difficult to take them, especially when it is only wounded: it