

King brought for the inspection of Sir J. Bowring the crown used at his coronation. It is very heavy, weighing about four pounds, and is of enormous value, being covered with valuable diamonds, that which terminates the peak being of very great size and splendor. The King also exhibited the sword of state, with its golden scabbard covered with jewels. When the sword is drawn, it is seen to be double, one blade being inserted into the other, as into a second sheath. The inner blade is of steel, and the outer of a softer metal. The handle is of wood, and, like the sheath, is profusely adorned with jewels.

The Siamese are among the most ceremonious people, and in this respect equal, even if they do not surpass, the Chinese and Japanese. Their very language is a series of forms, by which persons of different rank address each other; and, although there may be no distinction of dress between a nobleman and a peasant, the difference of rank is marked far more strongly than could be done by mere dress. It is an essential point of etiquette, for example, that the person of inferior rank should always keep his head below that of his superior.

Should a man of low degree meet a nobleman, the former will stoop at the distance of thirty or forty yards, sink on his knees as his superior approaches, and finally prostrate himself on his face. Should he wish to present anything to his superior, he must do so by pushing it along the ground, and, indeed, must carry out in appearance the formal mode of address in which he likens himself to a worm. Just as the peasants grovel before the nobles, so do the nobles before the king; and if either of them has a petition to offer, he must put it in a jar, and so crawl and push it along the ground as humbly as if he were a mere peasant. Siamese artists are fond of depicting the various modes of approaching a superior, and never forget to indicate the great man by two points. In the first place, he sits erect, while the others crouch; and, in the second, he leans on his left arm, and bends the left elbow inward. This most strange and ungraceful attitude is a mark of high birth and breeding, the children of both sexes being trained to reverse the elbow-joint at a very early age.

As may be expected from the progress of civilization, the Siamese have a tolerably complete code of laws, which are administered by regularly appointed officers. The laws are rather severe, though not much more so than were our own a century ago. Murder, for example, is punished with death; and in every case of murder or suicide, the houses within a circle of eighty yards from the spot on which the crime was committed are considered responsible, and fined heavily. This curious law forces the people to be very

cautious with regard to quarrels, and to check them before the two antagonists become sufficiently irritated to seek each other's life. This respect for human life contrasts strongly with the utter indifference with which it is regarded in China and Japan.

Nobles of very high rank are exempt from capital punishment in one way, *i. e.* their blood may not be shed; but, if guilty of a capital offence, they are put into sacks, and beaten to death with clubs made of sandal wood. Some punishments are meant to inflict ignominy. Such, for example, is that of a bonze, or priest, who is detected in breaking his vow of chastity. He is taken to a public place, stripped of his sacred yellow robe, flogged until the blood streams down his back, and then kept in the king's stables for the rest of his life, employed in cutting grass for the elephants.

Another similar punishment is inflicted on laymen. A cangue is fastened round his neck, his hands and wrists are chained, and he is taken round the city, preceded by drums and cymbals. The worst part of the punishment is, that he is compelled to proclaim his crime aloud as he passes through the streets; and if he ceases to do so, or drops his voice, he is beaten severely with the flat of a sword. Prisoners are mostly employed on public works, and at night they are all fastened together with one long chain.

Of the religion of the Siamese it is impossible to treat, because Buddhism is far too wide and intricate a subject to be discussed in a few pages. There is, however, one modification of this religion which must be mentioned; namely, the divine honors paid to the White Elephant.

By the Siamese, these animals are thought to be the incarnations of some future Buddha, and are accordingly viewed with the deepest respect. The fortunate man who captures a white elephant sends the news to the capital, and in return for the auspicious news is thenceforth freed, with his posterity, from all taxation and liability to military service. A road is cut through the forest, and a magnificent raft is built on the Meinam River, for the reception of the sacred animal. When the elephant reaches the raft, he is taken on board under a splendid canopy, and kept in good temper by gifts of cakes and sweetmeats. Meanwhile, a noble of the highest rank, sometimes even the First King himself, goes in a state barge to meet the elephant, accompanied by a host of boats with flags and music, and escorts the sacred animal to the capital, each boat trying to attach a rope to the raft. When arrived, the animal is taken to the palace, when he receives some lofty title, and is then led to the magnificent house prepared for him, where, to the end of his life, he is petted and pampered and has everything his own way, the king himself deeming it an honor if the sacred beast will condescend to feed out of his hand. On the