

XV.—*Report of an Expedition made into Southern Laos and Cambodia in the early part of the year 1866.* By H. G. KENNEDY, Student Interpreter at the British Consulate, Bangkok.

(Communicated by the FOREIGN OFFICE.)

MR. J. THOMPSON, a photographic artist, having arrived in this country, towards the close of last year, for the purpose of visiting the interior of Cambodia and taking views of the ruins which exist there, I availed myself of the permission which her Majesty's consul was good enough to extend to me, and accompanied that gentleman on what, to him at any rate, has been a most satisfactory expedition.

We left Bangkok on the 27th of January last, travelling by boat in an easterly direction towards the inland town of Prachin, distant about 88 miles or upwards from Bangkok. Our course for the first two days took us, as a reference to the accompanying map will show, through the Klong San Sëph, a long canal, cut to connect the Menam Chao Phya and Bang Phrākong rivers. It runs through a wide-stretching plain, the major part of which is totally uncultivated, but is of considerable importance as the high road by which much produce from Korat and Southern Laos, from the eastern provinces of Siam and the upper districts of Cambodia, is conveyed to this city. A want of proper care on the part of the Siamese to widen and deepen this channel and to keep it clear of weeds renders the journey along it tediously slow, and only boats of a small carrying capacity, except in the rainy season, can make use of it.

A great number of Malays have for some time been settled along the banks of this canal. It is strange how they can permanently endure the attacks of the mosquitos there,—so terrible that the cattle and even the dogs pass the night in the water. No traveller, I believe, has ever spoken of this canal without some allusion to its mosquitos.

At nightfall, on the second day, we emerged from the above creek into the Bang Phrākong River. There was very little cultivation to be seen on either bank of this broad and deep stream. Some attempts were formerly made to people the barren plains through which it flows by planting captive Cambodians there; but, though these settlements still exist, their occupants have as yet progressed but little in the cultivation of the possessions assigned to them. The town of Petrin, however, set a little above the mouth of the river, is worthy of notice, much sugar being manufactured from canes cultivated



by Chinese who are settled there. It is the residence also of a Roman Catholic priest, and contains a numerous community of native Christians.

The river higher up divides into two branches: that running northwards conducts to the town of Nakhonajok; while a second branch flows from an east-by-south direction through the districts of Krabin and Prachim.

Of Nakhonajok, I am told that it is a town of some extent, containing both Chinese settlers and natives of India. Sugar-canes are grown there, and the forests adjoining contain various kinds of woods, particularly that called Mai Tin sa-hin, so much prized by the Siamese for boat-building and other purposes. There is also a brisk trade in firewood, which is supplied thence to the sugar-mills at Petrin. A few silk sarongs are the only articles of manufacture, and the place is mainly important as one of the three outlets for the silk, ivory, and other produce brought from Korat and the northern districts of Laos.

Nakhonajok is reckoned to be one day's journey from Saraburi, one from Prachim, four from Korat, and three from Bangkok.

Following the eastern branch of the Bang Prākong, we arrived, on the evening of January 29th, at the settlement of Prachim. This town is the capital of a province, or, as the Siamese term it, a Muang Luang: that is to say, that while itself under the immediate jurisdiction of Bangkok, it in turn owns authority over various smaller towns, each the head of an extensive district. In the present instance, Chantakham, Krabin, Watsana, and Aran are towns superintended by the Governor of Prachim. A great deal of rice is grown at this place, and some rosewood and timber of other kinds is cut: but the trade on the whole is inconsiderable. The neighbouring forests afford a shelter to numerous bands of robbers.

The authorities at Prachim, on seeing our passports, advised us to continue up-stream to Krabin, distant two days' journey by water and one by land; accordingly, we did so. The river became very tortuous, but the tedium of the journey was relieved by the extremely beautiful scenery which the lofty and richly-wooded banks presented.

We were now upwards of 100 miles from Bangkok, and the aspect of the country—no longer extending in swamps and dreary flats, with low mangrove jungles or a dark belt of coco-palms to bound the view—here, as throughout the rest of our journey, has a dusty white soil of fine sand. The cultivated districts, except in the rainy season, are dry, clear, and healthy, though the want of water is often severely felt. Coco-nut

trees being scarce, the want of oil is supplied by the general use of torches.

On the north these districts are bounded by a range of forest-clad hills, crossed by roads which conduct to Korat; while towards the south a vast plain stretches, with a scarcely perceptible slope, to the borders of the great Cambodian Lake. This plain is, for the most part, overgrown with forests, but the dryness of the soil stunts the growth of its trees; and many a flat, which the rains convert into a swamp, is so parched by the heats when the floods have subsided that nothing but jungle-grass will spring up there. Groups of low hills, thrown up apparently by igneous action, break here and there the continuity of this extensive plain.

We reached Krabin late in the evening, January 31st. This town is of some importance; many Chinamen and other traders resort to it for the purchase of produce, which is not only grown in the locality but brought here for sale from Korat, from Northern Laos, and from the upper provinces of Cambodia. The residence of the governor of the town proper is planted on an elevation some three miles distant from the river, which at this point breaks up into two inconsiderable streams and is no longer navigable. The market, however, and all the business of the place is conducted at the waterside, where I found a large number of cargo-boats, whose occupants, having disposed of the manufactures which they bring for sale, and having purchased such produce as they require, return to Bangkok as soon as the waters have risen high enough to allow them to start.

Krabin is a province of the Laos race, a people distinguished from the Siamese both in their dispositions and customs. Being far removed from the influences of civilization, their wants are few and their habits simple. Rice, fish, and fruits are the food they subsist on, and water forms their principal beverage. They spin for themselves the clothes which they wear, and they supply the lack of earthenware and iron vessels by the dexterity with which they construct utensils in wickerwork. It is only the leading men whom frequent intercourse with Bangkok has taught to covet greater luxuries. It must be added that these people are excessively idle, as might be expected in a country where the mere necessities of life are so readily procured, while the task of clearing the land for extensive cultivation is exceedingly laborious, and offers but little remuneration.

Needles, thread, and other indispensable articles of foreign manufacture are introduced by the Chinese, who are planted in great numbers all over the country. Ponies are plentiful, but not commonly employed, buffaloes and oxen being the universal

beasts of burden. The soil being sandy, roads, except in the mountain and forest districts, are easily constructed. Goods are conveyed in carts drawn by buffaloes; but to Korat and some other distant towns access is so difficult, that all merchandise is transported in panniers on the backs of oxen. Long trains of these slow-footed beasts meet the traveller in the Korat forests. They appear but ill adapted for this use, being easily fatigued, and unable to endure thirst in districts where water is often extremely scarce; yet the people of the country have neither the energy to clear the difficulties which obstruct their mountain routes, nor the wit to substitute mules, or asses, for their own more clumsy beasts of burden.

Gold-mines were some few years back discovered in the immediate vicinity of Krabin. They are the exclusive property of the Chao Phya Umerat of Bangkok, who every year dispatches an officer to superintend the works, and collect the duty from those who resort there. The gold is obtained by washing. After the discovery of these mines one or two parties of Europeans proceeded thither from Bangkok; but the business is so trying, and the locality so fatal, that few of the adventurers lived to return, and the practice has consequently been discontinued. At present, owing to the death of his Excellency the late Umerat, the mines are closed. It is only in the dry season that they can be worked, and a duty of a fuang, for every fuang's weight of gold extracted, is collected from the miners—among whom Chinese, Siamese, Cambodians, and natives from all the neighbouring races, are to be found.

A cattle disease, which prevailed extensively throughout Laos and Cambodia during the previous year, not only carried off oxen, buffaloes, and ponies, but committed even worse ravages amongst the elephants.

At the small inland towns four or five only of these beasts are usually to be found; and, having been all in the present instance destroyed, we were compelled, not at Krabin only, but till our route brought us to the rivers of Cambodia, to travel with carts drawn by buffaloes, thankful if at occasional stages we were so fortunate as to procure ponies for our own riding. Buffalo-carts travel much more slowly than elephants; the cattle, on their part, require frequent rest; and the vehicles, being made only of wood and wickerwork, with not a nail or other piece of metal about them, are constantly breaking down and causing vexatious stoppages.

From Krabin a broad, level, sandy road extends right to Nakhon Siemrap, the modern capital of the province in which the ruins are situated; this road, the natives say, was constructed many years back by a celebrated Cochin Chinese

General; it passes at first through a wide forest of stunted trees, known as the Phā Kok Sai, and subsequently through barren flats. It was, however, *our* object—as the heats were every day becoming greater, as we had no elephants to help us on our journey, and as water and places of shelter were alike difficult to meet with—to push on with all speed till we should reach some spot on the streams flowing down to Cambodia where we could once more journey by water.

Tigers are said to abound along this route. I, however, saw none; though the jungle, for many yards on either side, is carefully cleared that travellers may see round about them and avoid a surprise.

There was little traffic to be seen; occasionally, only, we overtook a caravan of Chinese, conveying manufactures to the interior for sale.

In the afternoon of February 8th, we reached the settlement of Watsana, the chief town of the province of that name. We made a temporary halt at this place, having to send back the carts which conveyed us from Krabin, and to secure fresh ones. It is the custom of the Siamese to insert instructions in a traveller's passport, directing the authorities at the various places he may visit to assist in purchasing such provisions as he may require, and to hunt up and arrange for the hire of conveyances. No Governor is, however, bound to do more than see the travellers safely to the next town; the vehicles and guides are consequently subjected to continual changes, whence frequent delays arise; but some such plan is unavoidable in a country where, without the co-operation of the authorities, no foreigner could procure vehicles or even persuade people to sell to him the necessaries of life.

This province contains about 2000 inhabitants, of whom 70 or upwards are Buddhist priests. The prison is empty, either because crime is infrequent among so simple a people, or because the neighbouring forests afford a secure place of refuge to offenders.

Rice is almost the only produce cultivated.

Leaving Watsana on February 10th, we halted at Aran on the morning of the 11th. This town occupies the centre of a wide stretch of paddy-fields, and is the head of a province containing about 1600 inhabitants.

Having passed the watershed, we now found a small stream running to the south-east; but the waters are, at this season, too shallow to admit even the canoes of the natives.

We left this settlement on the 12th of February, and soon after, emerging from the forest, pursued our journey for three days continuously through a dry sandy plain, overgrown with a

thin crop of parched jungle-grass, and, at rare intervals, diversified by a clump of stunted trees. The heats along this barren tract were excessive; while the stagnant pools of water, polluted by every passing drove of cattle, were unfit even to bathe in. Swarms of flies gave us unceasing annoyance. I was informed that in the rainy season this prairie is entirely submerged, so that light boats can travel over its surface.

On the 15th of February we reached Sisuphōn, a town planted on the high banks of a practicable river. This place is the capital of a Cambodian province, containing upwards of 1500 inhabitants, of whom about 60 are priests. It is three days distant from Korat, and is under the immediate jurisdiction of Bangkok. The famine which last year prevailed in Korat, driving the inhabitants to the border towns in search of subsistence, made its presence severely felt in this locality also. Even now, when the scarcity had long subsided, fowls, the commonest of live stock, were not to be procured; as all the poultry had been eaten up during the season of scarceness. In the immediate vicinity of this town rises a clump of three low hills, thrown up, it may be, by igneous action, and covered with an incredible number of curious fossils, shells, fishes, and coral.

Little can be said respecting the trade of this town, whose inhabitants desire nothing more than to raise rice, cotton, tobacco, silk, and such like produce, in quantities sufficient for their own consumption. Its river, like all other streams in Cambodia, swarms with an incredible multitude of fish; the villagers net them day by day, and swarms of aquatic birds unceasingly pursue them, but their numbers never diminish.

On the 17th of February, after a three hours' journey, we reached the town of Nakhonburi, the head of a small province of about 800 inhabitants, and under the authority of the Governor of Phra-tha-bong. Here, having procured two small boats, we once more took to the water, and, on the evening of February 18th, started down a shallow stream, running in a south-easterly direction, between high and darkly-wooded banks. For the next three days our journey was very monotonous; the river, little frequented by foreigners, but to the natives known as the Klong Hua Kwai, makes its way apparently through wide and desolate forests; and the only inhabited places we came upon were the stations temporarily established by families of Cambodian fishermen. I must be permitted, however, to observe that to a naturalist this stream must present a field of singular interest, from the number, size, and variety of aquatic birds which throng the stillness of its lonely banks.

On the morning of the 21st of February we came upon the scanty and shattered relics of an ancient Buddhist temple;

these were similar in style to the ruins which we visited subsequently in other parts of Cambodia; but the thickness of the surrounding forest rendered it impossible to form an idea respecting their original size.

Leaving this place, we emerged about mid-day into the broad river formed by the junction of this stream with that flowing from Phra-tha-bong, and at 7 P.M. on the same day halted at Dan Sema, one of the frontier custom-houses of the Phra-tha-bong Province, where duties are collected from all the trading vessels that frequent the waters.

The city of Phra-tha-bong is a day's journey from this point. We did not visit it ourselves, but I ascertained that it is a town of much importance, having many rich products, and a comparatively extended trade. A Roman Catholic priest, and at least one French trader, are already settled there, and the Governor is said by the French to be a man of considerable ability. Phra-tha-bong pays an annual tribute to Bangkok of 70 piculs of cardamums, which may be reckoned in money value to be about 11,200 ticals.

It has been said by a late writer that this town was founded at a very recent epoch, and by the orders of the King of Siam. This statement, so far as I know, is correct; but there are nevertheless ruins in the vicinity of the town of an era corresponding to those in other districts of Cambodia. From Dan Sema we were forwarded without delay in a commodious twelve-oared Cochin-Chinese boat. The river, broad and stately as the Menam Chau Phya below Bangkok, is enlivened by no inconsiderable traffic; its waters, now swelled by a confluent, now broken by a picturesque island, discharge about fifty miles below Dan Sema, into the head of the great lake. By 7 P.M. on the evening of the 22nd we could hear the winds roaring over this vast sheet of water, and in the calm of the succeeding morning we travelled about thirty miles over it in a nearly easterly direction, till we entered a small creek which conducted to Nakhon Siemrap, the modern capital of the province in which the celebrated ruins are situated. We reached this place on elephants on the following day, and thus brought our travels for the present to a close.

Nakhon Siemrap is one of the two Cambodian provinces which still form dependencies of Siam.\* It was in former times the centre of the Cambodian empire, and must have contained a dense population; but at present the inhabitants scarcely exceed

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\* There are one or two smaller districts, *i.e.*, Sisuphon, Nakhonburi, &c., which are called Cambodian, but they are on the confines of Laos, and partake quite as much of the one race as of the other.

ten thousand, a number singularly disproportionate to the size of the province. It embraces an area of more than 900 square miles (I myself travelled upwards of 30 miles across it without reaching the frontier), and in the vicinity of its capital is under an advanced state of cultivation. The major portion, however, of its territory is now covered with forests, broken only by the clearings round a few scattered villages, whose inhabitants grow rice enough for their own consumption, and produce palm-sugar in supplies sufficient for a considerable exportation. On the north this province is bounded by the Laos district of Sureen; on the west its frontiers stretch to those of Penamsôk and Phratha-bong; it is conterminous on the south with the kingdom of Cambodia; while the mountain ranges, which shut in its eastern borders, extend in no strictly defined limits to the banks of the Mekong, and the upper districts of Cochin-China. Nakhon Siemrap pays an annual tribute to Bangkok of ten piculs of beeswax and fifty of bastard cardamums; estimating the former at 50 ticals a picul, and the latter at 20, the value of the whole will be found to be 1500 ticals. This produce is yearly delivered in Bangkok to His Excellency the Phu Sara Pai, who presents half of it to the King. The capital itself consists of a walled town, half a mile square, placed on the banks of a small stream about 15 miles above the shores of the lake. The Governor, of course, resides within the walls; but by far the greater portion of the inhabitants have settled about the banks of the stream outside, finding it more convenient to be in proximity to the water. The Chinamen, who are found in some numbers amongst the population, have established a small market in the principal part of the town.

There being an abundant supply of Mai Takienne and of other timbers suitable for boat-building, many of the inhabitants are engaged in that employment. The vessels built carry from 50 to 100 piculs, and their prices range from 150 to 170 ticals; they are in general esteemed throughout the country, and are bought up both by the fishermen and by numbers of those who traffic about the Cambodian waters. In Bangkok, a boat of the same description would be worth about 500 ticals. It is to be regretted that the want of good water-communication offers a serious bar to those who might wish to engage extensively in cutting the timber of the forests. Many excellent varieties of wood are to be found there, and two, bearing the native names of Mai Chun-chat and Mai Katrao, are especially deserving of mention. These were the woods employed to construct the ceilings and other portions of woodwork required in the interior of the temple of Nakhon Wat. Fragments of the richly-carved beams are here and there remaining, and by their soundness

testify to the durability of a wood, which, for 1600 years, it may be, has thus resisted decay.

The province generally seems to be well adapted for raising rice, tobacco, cotton, and silk. Coco-nut palms thrive in the soil, and the castor-oil plant grows wild about the country. The neat homesteads, in the vicinity of the capital, are surrounded each by its stock of sugar and areca palms, mingled with coco-nut trees and rows of plaintains; while the goodly supply of buffaloes and oxen, stabled close at hand, give further testimony to the superior affluence even of the peasant classes. When we consider how large a profit they bring back from the fisheries, on returning at the end of each season to the cultivation of their rice-fields, I think the opulence of this people is satisfactorily accounted for.

I surmised at first, from the thriving aspect of the province, that its Governor possessed more discretion and less rapacity than is common amongst Siamese rulers. Subsequent enquiries, however, convinced me to the contrary, showing that the Governor, while as grasping as the rest of his class, was singularly unfitted for conducting the administration of a frontier province under the eyes of a neighbour so adventurous and aspiring. He is personally civil and obliging, but his faculties are impaired by advancing years; and he is much disturbed at seeing that each year brings foreigners in increasing numbers to visit the ruins of the province.

There are fifteen criminals in the prison, the major part of whom are under a life sentence for theft; but there were also three murderers just captured for a deed perpetrated four years ago, and waiting till the customary reference should have been made to the King, in whom alone is vested the authority to determine their execution. Debtors are made over to their creditors to work out their debt: they are seldom put in irons, unless they have attempted to run away, and are generally treated with lenience.

Numerous temples of modern construction surround the city of Siemrap; but they lack the solidity which marks the earlier structures, and are already in an advanced stage of decay. There can be little doubt that this place was formerly one of the great centres of the Buddhist worship, and the number of priests to whom, even at the present day, it affords a maintenance, is strangely disproportionate to the extent of the population.

On the 26th of February we quitted Siemrap, and, after a ride of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles through a sandy jungle-track, emerged suddenly from the forests upon the front of the temple of Nakhon Wat, the most famous and best preserved of the Cambodian ruins. I abstain from introducing here any lengthy description of the

remains we visited ; the particulars of which are already known, as I believe, to archæologists ; but I trust, on a future occasion, to append a short chapter to the present report, containing such details of what the great Cambodian empire has bequeathed to its descendants as may seem to me to have not yet been brought fully under the notice of those interested in the matter.

Our quarters during the chief part of our stay in the locality were in one of the numerous *salahs*, erected from time to time by merit-working visitors in the spacious enclosure which surrounds the great temple before mentioned, which the care of the architect who designed the whole has furnished with more than one reservoir of excellent water. About thirty or forty priests have fixed their habitations under the shelter of the ruins, and find a never-failing employment in conducting the obsequies of those whose bodies are brought to this highly-venerated sanctuary for cremation ; and when to the music and feasting, which forms part of such ceremonies, we add the constant influx of visitors who come to make offerings at the shrine, it will be seen that it was not in forest loneliness, but rather amid a busy scene of life, that we were established.

On the second day of our stay at this place we were visited by two French traders, who had come into these districts with the view of embarking in the fish-trade. They complained greatly of the present state of trade in Saigon, where, they said, the Chinamen were engrossing all the business : they added also that any one wishing to occupy a piece of ground in that city was compelled to deposit a heavy sum of money in advance, which they said was a great discouragement to small capitalists. These observations respecting the commerce of Saigon were confirmed to me on several subsequent occasions. While merchants from Europe reap but slender profits, Chinamen are able, in three or four years, to amass ample fortunes ; indeed I was told, on excellent authority, that the residences of Chinese traders at Saigon already exceed in their magnificence any that are to be found at Singapore.

On the 4th of March, and while we were still quartered on the premises of Nakhon Wat, Captain de Lagree, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in Cambodia, arrived on a visit to the ruins. He brought three French sailors and a draughtsman among his train, and took up his residence on the same ground as ourselves. I ascertained afterwards that this was the second time that Captain de Lagree had been in the neighbourhood.

During his present stay here he paid frequent visits to the ruins in the old city, but was chiefly employed in drawing up an accurate plan of the great temple and in taking plaster-casts of certain portions of the bas-reliefs. I discovered from con-

versation that he was intimately acquainted with the topography of the country, and with the ruins that are scattered everywhere over the districts which composed the ancient kingdom of Cambodia.

He was careful to explain to me that the original limits of that empire extended to the northern frontiers of Korat; and I found that he was furnished with large and accurate maps of Cambodia and Cochin China, recently compiled from surveys of these countries made by officers of the French Government. These maps have been published in Paris, and I subjoin a memorandum to this paper containing information as to where they may be procured.

Captain de Lagree quitted these districts about the same time as ourselves, and taking the overland route down the eastern shore of the Great Lake to the city of Kampon Sawai, he passed thence to where his gunboat was awaiting him in the river which runs from the outlet of the lake to Penompein.

On the 10th of March, and while ourselves and Captain de Lagree were still staying at Nakhon Wat, there arrived a Siamese nobleman, despatched by the King, as he informed me, on a special commission to explore the ruins and take drawings of the bas reliefs. He brought with him draughtsmen and other requisites for that purpose, and he delivered to us a message from his Majesty, enjoining Mr. Thompson to take elaborate and complete photographs of all that was interesting. These he gave out as the sole objects of his mission; but M. Lagree afterwards told me that he came charged with a secret political purpose, the nature of which I did not ascertain.

On the 11th of March we shifted our quarters and removed to the old city, which stands about a mile distant from the great temple, and encloses six square miles of ground within its lofty and solid walls.

This area is wholly overgrown with jungle and forest-trees, and is so thick with ruins of temples, palaces, and other buildings, that it would require at least two months to explore it satisfactorily. Deer and even tigers roam unmolested over the deserted city, whose only inhabitants are a few families of slaves, sent there by their masters to collect oil, ratans, beeswax, and other produce of the forests. Here, as at Nakhon Wat, numerous and extensive reservoirs, lined with walls of solid masonry, secure an abundant and never-failing supply of water. But the neighbourhood is unhealthy, and on the third day we were forced to fly from the fevers which had broken out amongst our party.

The preparation of a boat wherein to continue our journey being likely to detain us some days at Siemrap, we employed our leisure in a three days' excursion to the neighbouring mountains,

whence the stone used in the buildings we had visited was reported to have been procured. We found that the high ground about the foot of this range was covered with enormous boulders of the stone, which cropped up from the soil in every direction; but we were unable to penetrate the dense forests enveloping the hills themselves, and which are said to conceal, not only the chisel-marked quarries where the stone was cut, but also an immense image of Buddha, hewn from the solid rocks in the farthest recesses of the jungle.

On the 21st of March we were able to take a final leave of the neighbourhood of Siemrap, starting at daybreak, in a ten-oared boat, and travelling down the lake in the direction of Udong.

This great lake, which forms the most striking geographical feature of Cambodia, is upwards of 100 miles in length; and though its breadth is small when compared with its length, yet it is only at its extremities that the eye can see across it. It is bounded sometimes by a broad belt of forest, sometimes by low swampy lands, and in the dry season is so extraordinarily shallow as to be scarcely breast deep, even three miles from the shore. In the rainy season, however, there is a very considerable rise; the lake then spreads its waters far into the forests which gird it, and becomes navigable for steamers of considerable size. The bottom consists of mud and sand; and the currents, which are reported to be strong in the time of flood, become insignificant when the waters have subsided. Frequent and strong winds blow with regular alternations, according to the season of the year, and render both the lake itself and the banks round about it cool and healthy, even during the greatest heats.

Numerous families of Cambodians, Cochin-Chinese, and Annamites settle every dry season along the shores of this lake, and employ themselves in taking and curing the fish with which its waters are incredibly thronged. During the first three months, two sorts only of these fish are taken; during the last, they pursue a monstrous black species, not uncommonly twenty feet long. The latter is very plentiful, and not only forms an article of food, but supplies the oil in general use among the common people of Cambodia. Two or three families, to the number of twenty souls in all, will commonly associate together for a season's fishing. The nets, which are large, and perhaps worth some seventy ticals (10*l.* 6*s.* 5½*d.*) a set, they prepare anew by their joint efforts during the leisure of each rainy season.

The salt they purchase for about half a tical a picul at Penompein; and they are provided with two or three fine cargo-

boats, built for the purpose of Mai Takienne, and carrying from 70 to 100 piculs a piece. On the spot which they may each year select for their purpose, they build temporary residences with bamboo and ratans, at little outlay, either of labour or capital. In the course of three months, a party of fishermen will thus cure about 400 piculs of fish, entailing a consumption of 120 piculs of salt; and they will dispose of the whole at Penompein at the rate of about five ticals a picul. It will thus be seen that the business is far from unprofitable; indeed, several French traders are already engaged in it, and it is anticipated, as M. de Lagree has stated to the King of Cambodia, that next year will see no inconsiderable number of his countrymen established about the shores of the great lake. Having concluded this enterprise, and disposed of their stock, the fishermen leave their settlements to be swallowed up at the rising of the waters, and return to their homes in time for the cultivation of their rice-fields.

In many of the shallowest parts of the lake the water sinks so low that, during the last month of the dry season, a crop of paddy is grown in the rich muddy bottom, which a little later will be covered with several fathoms of water.

Early on the 24th of March we passed through the straits which terminate the larger lake, and emerged thence into a smaller one; having crossed this by about 3 P.M. on the same day, we entered the broad river which forms the outlet of these waters, and which, after running past Kampon Luon, and thence to Penompein, unites at this last place with the Mekong, the mightiest of the Cambodian rivers. The banks on either side of our course now became sandy and high, but the houses, though planted on their summits, were still carefully raised on piles some distance above the ground, to escape inundation when the floods set in. The principal occupation of the inhabitants of the frequent villages which we passed was the preparation of indigo-dye, and the manufacture of fish-oil. Both were very conspicuous employments; as, in the one case, the large pitchers of blue dye were set out to the sun in rows along the terraced banks, and in the other, the furnaces for preparing the oil were scooped out of the soil along the edge of the river.

Tigers are so numerous throughout these districts, that even in the largest settlements the inhabitants are afraid to linger about the outskirts of their dwellings so soon as darkness has set in.

At sunset on March 24th we came to where M. de Lagree's gunboat was awaiting his arrival, and as that gentleman had politely sent notice of our approach, we were received with the greatest kindness on board. This vessel is a small iron-clad

screw-steamer, carrying a crew of 35 sailors, and a single heavy rifled cannon in the bows. The French Government have placed her permanently in these waters; but the medical officer resides at Kampon Luon, where M. de Lagree also has a house, and his Government a military depôt. We reached this last place at daybreak on March 26th, and found it to be of some importance, and the seat of a considerable trade.

A market runs nearly the whole length of the town, which is formed of a double row of houses stretching upwards of a mile along the right bank of the river, and of a multitudinous fleet of boats, moored along the shore, and laden with produce from every corner of the country. A fine paved causeway is carried through the town, at right angles to the central part of which a broad smooth road conducts, with a gentle rise, to the city of Udong, lying on a slight eminence  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant from the edge of the river. The trade is similar to that of Penompein, particulars of which may be found in the table to my original report. Numbers of Malays have, for several centuries, been settled in this locality; and many other races are represented amongst its population. All the respectable inhabitants are clad in the bright-coloured silk fabrics which are extensively manufactured here; and as they hurried to and fro, sometimes on ponies, occasionally on elephants, but more frequently in light carts drawn by fleet Cambodian cows, they presented a busy and brilliant scene of life, such as we had not hitherto encountered. If these people are dirtier in their persons than the Siamese, they certainly surpass them in municipal cleanliness. Their roads are bright, and in good order; their markets are everywhere free from the offal which pollutes the bazaars of Siam; the King's steamer and his palace are patterns of neatness; while their temples neither inside nor outside exhibit a trace of the slovenly neglect which defiles even the most sacred and sumptuous of the shrines about Bangkok.

A small French steamer plies once a month between Kampon Luon and Saigon, starting from this last city on the arrival of the mail by the Messageries from Europe, and reaching her destination three days afterwards. The King of Cambodia, shortly after his accession, procured a coining-press from Europe and commenced to issue a silver currency, modelled after that prevailing among the Siamese. Finding, however, that his coin drifts steadily into the hands of the Chinese traders, by whom it is exported to China, he has thought fit to close the mint, and to allow the old Cochin-Chinese currency to come once more into circulation; this consists of three singular pieces of coin, manufactured at Huè, by Thu-duc, the Emperor of Cochin-China. The commonest is made of a brittle composition, whereof

the chief ingredient is antimony. Each coin is a little bigger than a farthing, and is bored with a hole in the centre, so as to allow numbers to be run together on a string; 2400 of these little coins make up the value of one Siamese tical (about 2s. 8d. sterling). They are universally in use among the people of Cambodia, who may be seen carrying them in cumbersome bundles from place to place. In Bangkok the same coins are employed as counters at the public gaming-tables. In a country where so much false coin is in circulation, and where the adulteration of money is commonly practised, it is yet hardly worth the while of any to tamper with pieces of such insignificant value, so that there is, at any rate, one advantage which they possess. Besides the above coin there is stamped bar-silver, each bar being worth 30 Siamese ticals; and lastly there is stamped bar-gold, each bar representing 187½ ticals of Siamese currency. This last coin is scarce, as may be supposed; but it is an exceedingly handsome piece of money.

We found at Kampon Luon that his Majesty the King of Cambodia was at present residing at Penompein; and that his uncle the Somdetch Chao Fa Thon La-har was left in charge of the capital. We determined to visit this gentleman, and accordingly left for Udong on ponies during the afternoon of March 26th. Half-an-hour's ride brought us to the gates of the city, which, having been built by the late King while Cambodia was the theatre of constant disturbances, has never attained anything but the most insignificant proportions. The walls consist simply of a double row of hoarding, 10 feet high, and inclosing in a space of about a square half-mile the palaces and premises attached thereto, the residence of his Majesty's uncle, and those of one or two other of the principal personages, together with a good-sized market and four reservoirs or sheets of water. The noblemen, the courtiers, and all the rest of the inhabitants reside either at Kampon Luon or in hamlets scattered over the country outside. There is not even a temple within the walls of the city, which, during the absence of the Court, is almost entirely deserted; and whence the bazaar also has migrated with his Majesty to Penompein. Even the palace consists of a few thatched wooden residences, scrupulously clean, but wholly unworthy to be the dwelling-place of a monarch. Finding so little of interest in this place, we returned in about an hour to Kampon Luon, where we were hospitably received by Dr. Henuart, the French surgeon attached to that station.

On the morning of March 27th we quitted Kampon Luon, and continued our course down the river to Penompein, which we reached at ten o'clock on the evening of the same day. This is the most important town in Cambodia. His Majesty the King

has lately taken up his residence there, and has employed a French architect to build him a large and substantial palace, which is now in process of construction near the bank of the river.

A reference to the accompanying map will show that this settlement commands the junction of four rivers ; that which runs from the Great Lake, and which forms the high road for the traffic of Upper and Central Cambodia, here uniting its waters with the main branch of the Mekong ; the confluents, dividing where they meet, thence send two branches southwards in the direction of Saigon, and the outlets in Lower Cochin-China. It will thus be seen that the King of Cambodia has been wise in selecting as his new capital a town whose site is of such great commercial importance ; and which has, in fact, long been the seat of a thriving trade, conducted with all the surrounding countries. It enjoys also further advantages : planted in a dry and sandy soil, on the lofty banks of the adjacent rivers, it is fanned day and night by frequent breezes, now blowing from the seaboard, now from the cool surface of the neighbouring waters. I was there during the hottest season of the year, but found the climate more salubrious and refreshing than that of Bangkok, or the other inland settlements in Siam. A great change, however, must take place in the aspect of Penompein during the period of the inundations ; the waters rising from 32 to 33 feet above their accustomed channel submerge the lofty banks, and flood such dwellings as are not elevated on piles beyond the reach of danger.

The presence of the Cambodian Court, which has lately fixed its residence at Penompein, is working a great and rapid transformation in the condition of the town. A broad and solid causeway, stretching through the principal quarter, will shortly supplant the original narrow thoroughfare ; a handsome and substantial palace is in course of construction ; and while the Mandarins are fast filling the eligible sites with private residences, the booths in the market are giving place to commodious brick dwellings which traders are erecting there.

The French Government has a small military and naval depôt at Penompein, and a postal agent resides there. Catholic priests are established in three separate missions, under the superintendence of the Bishop, Monseigneur Miche, who has charge of the interests of his Church in Cambodia. There are also a few French *employés* in his Majesty's service, and one or two merchants ; but the inviting prospects of the settlement have hardly as yet so grown into notice as to attract thither any great number of foreigners.

The native population must constantly fluctuate, but com-

prises native Cambodians, Cochin-Chinese, Chinese, and Annamites, besides sundry emigrants from Siam and her tributaries. One of the chief elements of the population is derived from the Malays introduced into the country some centuries back, and whose descendants are found settled in great numbers at Udong, Kampot, and other parts of Cambodia.

These Malay tribes still speak a corrupt dialect of their parent language, and retain many of the habits and manners of their forefathers; they are subject to the King of Cambodia, but have chiefs of their own stock, to whom the general control of their affairs is entrusted. But while thus preserving many of the distinctive features of their race, they have lost the courage and energy, the skill in navigation, and the superiority of intelligence for which the tribes of Malaysia are celebrated.

The Cochin-Chinese engage very actively in the fish-trade, and numbers of them are converts to the Roman Catholic religion; they are great gamblers, and own most of the tables which are set up nightly all over the bazaars: indeed, so far as I could judge, and considering the disparity in population, there is much more gambling carried on in Cambodia than there is at Bangkok.

The Court and Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia differ little from that established in Siam; both indeed, from what I ascertained by inquiry, or gathered from personal observations amongst the ruins, being modelled from that which formerly existed in the ancient Cambodian empire.

The Court of Udong is inferior both in numbers and sumptuousness to that of Bangkok. The Senabodi consists of four members, as contrasted with the six which compose the Siamese Council; but there, as in Bangkok, two officers of the highest rank divide the duties of the administration: and the principal gathering of the Court is held with closed doors at midnight in the interior of the Palace. There is at present no second king, and I took occasion to ask his Majesty whether it had, at any time, been the practice in Cambodia to divide the honours of royalty. He replied that such had frequently been done; and that, if his brother at Saigon were to come into the country, and there were a general wish for his elevation to the throne, it would be his duty to sanction the measure.

I was told by a Frenchman in his Majesty's service that the King's income may be reckoned at about 1000*l.* a month; but though M. Le Foucheur had ample opportunities for framing an estimate on the subject, I yet conjecture that he may have been anxious, so far as possible, to give me unfavourable impressions respecting the general affluence of the country. His Majesty, too, has many private sources of wealth, which it would

be impossible to ascertain precisely; but it must, after all, be admitted that neither the King nor his courtiers can at all rival the opulence of the authorities at Bangkok. But, if they yield to their neighbours in the extent of their revenues, they at any rate eclipse them in the politeness of their manners.

The French have already taught them to treat foreigners with a deference and respect, which is often found wanting in Siamese officials; they have imbued them with a taste for European habits and refinements; and, by raising a desire for the luxuries enjoyed in civilised countries, they have inspired them with a conspicuous anxiety to increase their revenues by the development of the produce and commerce of their country.

The treatment which I received during my visit to Penompein, at the hands of the King himself, and of the mandarins about his court, left nothing to be desired; and, though prompted so to act doubtless by a natural anxiety to cultivate the friendship of the English, yet the manner in which they carried out their intentions showed how rapidly French tuition is advancing them in civilisation.

On placing my letters of introduction in the hands of the proper authorities, I had not long to wait before the King's interpreter summoned me to his Majesty's presence. The conversations which I held during the various interviews with which I was honoured are detailed below.

His Majesty is a young man of about thirty years of age, and of exceedingly amiable manners. He is the eldest of the four sons of the late King of Cambodia, and was long detained with his three brothers in a sort of honourable captivity at Bangkok. On the demise of his predecessor, four years ago, he was placed on the throne by the present King of Siam, who detained the younger princes in Bangkok, as a guarantee for the fidelity of their more fortunate relative. The second son was carried off in a French gunboat to Saigon when Cambodia was ceded by the Siamese, in the spring of last year. He still resides under French surveillance at that city, greatly to his Majesty's annoyance and apprehension. The two younger princes remain at Bangkok.

His Majesty converses fluently in Siamese, and very courteously offered us every facility, both for expediting our journey and for enabling us to visit whatever was of interest in the neighbourhood. He placed a house at our disposal, and invited us to dinner at his palace that evening.

We made an eight days' stay at Penompein, and were not only the frequent guests of his Majesty, but were received by the French also with the utmost civility.

His Majesty maintained a small body-guard about his person.

and he invited me to see them exercise on the morning of our departure. He has no European drill-master at present; but he told me that he was anxious to engage an Englishman for that purpose. The troops are composed of twelve companies, which serve in monthly rotation.

His Majesty stated, in course of the inspection, that he would have ordered them to assume the sumptuous uniforms reserved for State occasions, had the day been a festival; but he feared that the French officials might conceive that an emissary of the Consulate at Bangkok was receiving military honours. I gathered from this and from many other circumstances that the King's authority is completely under the control of the French, who, besides establishing their officials in the country, and sending a gunboat to cruise upon the rivers, have introduced several of their *employés* into the royal service, themselves disbursing the major portion of their salaries.

His Majesty possesses a small iron screw-steamer of English manufacture, and purchased in Hongkong. The French engineer, in charge of that vessel, receives 40 dollars a month from the Imperial Government. M. Le Foucheur, the architect of the new Palace, is paid also, as I believe, by the French, but nominally for services as an explorer of the country. His Majesty has besides two interpreters in his employ; the first one a Spaniard, and the second a Portuguese half-caste.

I failed to discover any British subjects resident at Penompein; but it is certain that numbers of Mussulmen traders repair there at intervals, bringing precious stones, Bombay silk, gold-lace, embroidered muslins, and other valuable merchandise. These wares find as ready a sale at the Court of Cambodia as they do at Bangkok; indeed, it may be worth while mentioning that, in both countries, it is from the Mussulmen traders chiefly that they obtain the rich materials composing the Court-dresses, and the sumptuous costumes of their theatrical establishments.

The King informed me, when I visited his lakhon, that many of the crowns worn by the *danseuses* were of solid gold, and taken with the jewels that studded them were worth as much as 1000*l.* a-piece. These crowns, however, are made either in France or China, according to the patterns supplied by the Cambodians.

Few English manufactures have as yet found their way into the country, the requirements of the King and his nobility being supplied almost entirely from France. In the shops, however, not only at Penompein, but also in the remotest corners of the kingdom, English needles and sewing thread, and German lucifer-matches are to be met with. Small looking-glasses are, next to these, in demand; but it is not easy to fix the country from whence they were imported. The willow-pattern plate and other

cheap specimens of English earthenware are found mingled with crockery and glasses from China, which country supplies also the brass and iron ware required for domestic uses, and the tools employed by carpenters and in the cultivation of the ground.

Chinese coolies may be hired in Penompein for about 20 cents a day; the wages thus fall short of those paid in Bangkok, where 30 cents per diem is the average rate. This deficiency is, however, fully compensated by the much cheaper prices of fish, rice, vegetables, and the other ordinary necessities of life.

Formerly many junks visited both this place and Saigon, bringing coolies and other emigrants in large numbers from China; of late years they have ceased to arrive. There is, however, still a large importation of teas and silken fabrics, which, they assert, are both cheaper and superior in quality to any that may be purchased in Bangkok.

Among the domesticated animals of Cambodia is found a breed of cows of peculiar excellence; they bear a much higher price than the ordinary cattle of the country, and are run in light carriages by the nobility, who prize them for their strength and fleetness. Nowhere in Siam, Laos, or Cambodia are the people acquainted with the use of milk. Cattle are abundant and cheap, but are employed solely as beasts of burden; while goats, in that respect useless, are to be found only at Bangkok amongst the foreign community.

Mons. de Lagree, who has paid some attention to the subject, expressed an opinion that Cambodia had derived its chief wealth from its mineral resources. The relics of that empire testify at once to the denseness of the population, and to the opulence of their rulers. It is scarcely probable that, in those early days, extended maritime relations contributed much to the riches of the kingdom, and it is perhaps on these considerations that Mons. de Lagree bases his theory; I am not prepared to endorse these views, yet I think that gold, silver, antimony, and other precious metals are concealed beneath the forest-clad mountain-ranges. At the present day, however, iron forms the only mineral produce of the country. The mines are in the mountain districts of Kampon Săwai, and are the exclusive property of the King; the metal produced there is of the finest quality, but is much reduced in value by improper smelting. It is sold in rough fragments in the markets at the rate of 15 to 20 ticals a picul.

It happened on one occasion, while I was residing at Penompein, that a conflagration swept off a great portion of the Malay settlement there. I was told that such occurrences were common, and that they might often be traced to the work of some incendiary, who, having arrived in the market with a large sup-

ply of bamboos, adopted the above expedient for bringing them into demand.

I had the good fortune, during my stay in Penompein, to fall in with a Buddhist priest of high rank, who has lately been studying the inscriptions found amongst the ruins scattered over Cambodia. Having heard that I had procured copies of some of these, he called, and requested to see the same; and it is to his kindness that I am indebted for the interpretations before alluded to. This gentleman was many years resident at Bangkok, and was a companion of the King of Siam, when his Majesty was a member of the priesthood. By special request of the sovereign of Cambodia he has taken up his residence in that kingdom; and, while deeply read in the languages and archæology of the East, he possesses a gentleness and refinement in his manner which is one of the marked characteristics of those indoctrinated with the tenets of the Buddhist religion.

Having decided to proceed to Kampot, and from thence by sea to Bangkok, we took leave of his Majesty at mid-day on the 4th of April, and set out with elephants and buffalo-carts to complete our journey. There has long been a fine road from Udong to Kampot; but it is not till recently that a route has been opened by way of Penompein; the distance is about 120 miles, which it requires about five days to accomplish; and the road, which was still under construction, forms a junction with that which leads to Udong, about 15 miles above its termination. It is broad and level, passing for the most part across a sandy plain, where jungle-grass, shrubs, and stunted forest-trees abound. No important towns are met with along this route; but the villages are frequent and of considerable extent. The inhabitants are chiefly employed in the cultivation of rice and the manufacture of palm-sugar.

We had now reached the hottest period of the dry season, and had not only to travel beneath a scorching sun, but to encounter some difficulties from the scarcity of water, as the rivulets had all run dry, and only a few stagnant pools were occasionally to be met with; these sufficed, indeed, for the wants of our servants and cattle, but we had ourselves to drink sugar-palm juice and the milk of coco-nuts. We fell in daily with parties of traders conveying produce, in bullock-carts, between Kampot and Penompein, or by numerous cross-roads from the settlements in the interior; so that there is every sign that this important highway will prove of material advantage to the commerce of the country.

On the 8th of April we encountered a token of the troubles which for a long time distracted the country: a human skull,

impaled where two roads meet, marks the spot where, three years back, a band of rebels were overthrown.

A fugitive slave, named Issawa, having gathered to himself a party in Southern Cambodia, set up a claim to the throne. He had sufficient influence to secure the countenance of the Cochin Chinese, but was ultimately defeated and driven from the country. He still enjoys an opulent and influential position in his place of refuge in Cochin China, and is by many deemed the real heir of the Cambodian monarch, whom in person he closely resembles. The advanced guard of his troops being routed in this locality left two of their leaders in the hands of the enemy; their heads were at once struck off by their captors, and set up to whiten upon the field of battle.

We were by this time nearing the lofty clumps of mountains which rise in the vicinity of Kampot. These hills, mantled in impenetrable forests, save where stony precipices forbid all vegetation, are the haunt of elephants, rhinoceros, and many other wild animals.

Defiling through the passes on the evening of the 8th, we halted at the borders of a fertile plain, about 20 miles distant from the coast; thence a short march next morning conducted us to Kampot, and ended the heat and thirst of a really toilsome journey.

The town of Kampot stands in a fertile plain, under the shelter of a lofty range of mountains, and on the borders of a river ten miles distant from the sea. This stream, rising in the hills a few miles above the town, resembles an arm of the sea rather than an inland river; the tides extend their influence to its sources, and fill the broad and deep channel with clear green sea-water.

Rice and palm-sugar are raised in the surrounding plains, but it is to the pepper plantations along the banks of the river that the place owes its principal importance. These latter are wholly in the hands of the Chinese, who cultivate them with their usual industry. I am told that the vines surpass those of Singapore, but that, by culling the berries before they reach maturity, they considerably impair the quality of the pepper. Coco-nuts, betel-vines, areca-palms, and pine-apples, are grown abundantly also throughout the plantations.

During the disturbances which preceded the French invasion of Cochin China, and while the new comers were still regarded with dread, traders flocked in numbers with their produce to Kampot; the commerce there was thus forced into briskness, and European vessels often loaded at the port. But latterly these influences have ceased to operate, and Saigon has been found by many to be a more convenient market. It is not,

however, to these circumstances alone that the decay of the settlement is due; many local considerations have contributed to impair it. The seaboard swarms with pirates, and the rulers, for their own profit, secretly countenance their depredations.

The Christians look only to the authority of their priests; the Malays have chiefs of their own blood to rule them; the Chinese monopolise the market, and are too numerous and turbulent to obey any one whatever. Hence the legitimate governor, whose very title is dubious because conferred at Bangkok, is in a great measure destitute of influence, and the town consequently suffers from the divided state of its government. The whole of the commerce of the place is engrossed by the Chinese; and their extensive godowns, filled with pepper, rice, and other varieties of produce, testify to the wealth which they derive from the monopoly. But even this close body is divided within itself; and the Hainam Chinamen, by steady persecution and frequent riots, are driving the Fookheins out of the settlement. If the former party be permitted to consummate their endeavours, I think little will be wanting to complete the ruin of the port. It is worthy, however, of remark that here, as in many other Eastern markets, a Swatow Chinaman is the foremost amongst their merchants.

On the coast, 30 miles below, is the rising settlement of Kankhao. This formerly belonged to the Cambodian territory, but was seized, 40 years back, by invaders from Cochin China. Its exports are pepper, sugar, and rice, but above all the matting and gunny bags which are made extensively in the interior. The proximity of a foreign port is a further source of injury to the commerce of its neighbour.

His Majesty the King of Cambodia proposes to pay a short visit annually to this part of his dominions; and, so soon as he shall have completed his palace at Penompein, a similar residence will be erected in the vicinity of Kampot. We may hope that the occasional presence of the court will not only lend a stimulus to the traffic of the settlement, but remove in some degree the difficulties which keep it down. On being ceded by Siam to its present ruler, his Majesty appointed his brother-in-law to superintend its administration. This nobleman, however, resides permanently about the court, and little therefore is gained by the arrangement. It was formerly the custom to send tribute to Bangkok at this season of the year; but Cambodia being now freed from her allegiance to Siam, the right can no longer be enforced. The boats, however, were loaded and ready for sea when I was at Kampot, and they had been six weeks awaiting the final instructions of the King, who was apparently undecided whether to send them or no.

I cannot say for certain whether any British subjects are to be found among the Chinamen of this place; but I think that such is probable, as many of them have been educated at Hongkong or Singapore. Several, at any rate, are agents for English houses, and receive frequent consignments of their cargo.

On their complaining to me bitterly of the depredations of the pirates, I advised such of them as were concerned with British property to represent the case, in writing, to the consul at Bangkok, who would assist them in the matter. Owing to the general dread of these piratical cruisers, cardamums, silk, and other valuable produce, are no longer brought down here for exportation.

So considerable is the bar at the mouth of the river, and so shifting and uncertain are the channels across it, that ships are obliged to anchor in the roads outside, and to have their cargo conveyed to them in lighters. Even these craft, at low water, are unable to come out.

Having procured a small cargo boat, and six sailors to man it, we quitted Kampot on the 12th of April. Favouring winds brought us rapidly to Bangkok, where we landed in health and safety on the evening of the 17th.

I propose to offer a few remarks on some miscellaneous subjects which could not conveniently be introduced elsewhere.

The King of Cambodia told me that the population in his dominions might be reckoned at a low estimate to comprise 600,000 Cambodians, 10,000 Cochin Chinese, and a multitude of Chinese settlers. He could furnish, he said, no precise information of the extent of his territory, nor of the number of days in which an elephant could cross it. I ascertained, however, subsequently, that it is made up of fifty-five towns; and a list of the most important of these, with the titles of their rulers, will be found in the Appendix.

Silk forms perhaps the most important branch of commerce: a fine quality of the raw material is already exported in considerable quantities, and the country, being eminently adapted for the rearing of silk-worms, the trade is capable alike of improvement and extension.

Cambodia, however, enjoys a still greater reputation for the beauty and excellence of the langoutis and other silken fabrics which are largely manufactured in the vicinity of the capital. In the richness of their dyes, and in the elegance of their designs, they evince a striking superiority to the neighbouring nations, among whom the silk cloths of Cambodia are in considerable demand.

The proprietors of machinery in these countries are obliged, as is well known, to send from time to time to Europe for the leathern belts which they may require. Such well-dressed hides, however, are to be found in Cambodia that I know of one instance, at any rate, in which they have been applied to that purpose. The presence in Penompein of an extensive collection of timber, to be employed in the erection of the palace, afforded me an excellent opportunity of inspecting the different sorts of wood which are to be found in the country; these are not only numerous, but embrace, as I believe, many valuable varieties. I observed several descriptions of rosewood, together with a species of pine, and one or two samples also were shown to me of woods highly serviceable for resisting the effects of water. The French traders are already realising handsome profits by the exportation of these woods to Saigon, where they meet with an advantageous market. His Majesty seems to consider that the timber trade will prove a great source of wealth to his country, and he assured me that he was most anxious to induce foreigners to embark in it. On my asking whether the authorities would be likely to grant protection and assistance to any English subjects who might come to work in the forests, he promised readily to supply to such persons the permit which they would require, and to render them any further facilities that might be proper.

On a subsequent occasion, I inquired of the King what conditions would be demanded of British subjects desiring to rent or purchase land in his dominions. His Majesty replied that he could allow no foreigner to buy land in absolute ownership; but that, having first obtained his sanction, they could lease either the crown land, or that of private individuals, for terms of 30 years or less, according to agreement. He said that the river frontage about Penompein was principally his own property, and that any foreigner might rent such a portion of it as he might require, at the rate of ten salungs (6s. 8d.) per annum for every square sen of ground (16,900 square feet). His Majesty dwelt with frequency and emphasis upon the troubles that were occasioned from time to time by the overbearing proceedings of the Roman Catholic priests. It may be remembered that the cruelties practised upon the French missionaries in Cambodia and Cochin China furnished France with a plea, in the first instance, for interfering in those kingdoms. The outrages committed may be palliated to a certain degree by considering what the conduct of the priests has been ever since they set foot in the country.

Wherever a priest may have set up the Cross he makes haste to gather as many converts as possible under its shadow; his

exertions, carried on with the diligence and ability which characterise the emissaries of his Church, and seconded by the adaptability of his faith to the requirements of its worshippers, soon enable him to draw some hundreds of the population to his vicinity. Over these he in a wondrous manner gains supreme control, and claims them as subjects of the Imperial Government. Ever ambitious to extend the influence of his Church, and to magnify his personal authority, he foments petty disturbances, and is unceasingly at war with the rulers of the country: these, not unnaturally, view his aggressions with jealousy, and are neither inclined to confer on an intruder the power which he lays claim to, nor to allow that their own people have changed their nationality in embracing a different religion. At the present day these priests, both in Cambodia and Siam (where similar conduct has led to similar results) are regarded with the greater odium as they presume upon the support of the much dreaded French officials in the cases with which they are continually harassing the authorities. We can scarcely feel surprised if, when first they introduced themselves into the country, the native rulers took such measures as they deemed would most effectually put a stop to their aggressions.

Following in the footsteps of the Siamese monarch, the King of Cambodia last year issued a decree prohibiting the exportation of rice. This injunction (which was withdrawn in Bangkok in the month of August) was still in force in Cambodia when I was at Penompein. Each, however, of the Frenchmen who are engaged in trade at that place had been indulged by his Majesty with leave to continue the exportation.

The effect of the prohibition was of course to cheapen rice in Cambodia, and to raise its price at Saigon; and we may therefore conjecture what a golden harvest was being reaped by the favoured few.

In the conversations which I held with many of the Cambodian officials, I could not fail to remark the complacency with which they dwelt upon the ancient grandeur of their empire, pointing out how it had included the provinces of Siemrap and Phra-tha-bong, and had extended its frontiers beyond the city of Korat.

I believe that the French Government are already aware of the value and importance of Cambodia, and that while they entertain no design of taking it absolutely into their own possession, yet that they think both to add to their riches and to strengthen their influence in the East, by erecting it into an important monarchy under their own superintendence. With these ends in view, they are busily engaged in exploring its remoter districts, searching out practicable routes, and investigating the

navigable rivers. M. Le Foucheur was employed to conduct an expedition to the tribes of the interior; and it was not till he had brought a strong party to the wealthy city of Wieng Xan that he was forced to desist in his undertaking. Armed with new and more imperative passports he is about to journey a second time to the same regions, while a scientific commission is to be organised by M. de Lagree, and despatched next cold season, if possible, to explore the sources of the Mekong, in the heart of Southern China. It cannot therefore be denied that they are doing good in the country.

I was able, in the year 1865, to pay a visit to the city of Korat. This capital consists of a large walled town, occupying the centre of a plateau which is girt by low ranges of mountains, and by a magnificent belt of forest. It is the seat of an extensive trade, the great emporium for the silk and other products of Laos, and forms, next to Bangkok perhaps, the most important city within the Siamese dominions. It may be reached most rapidly by way of Nakhona Jok, but even on that route eight days must be expended. Carriage roads could be constructed thither with little expense or trouble, and while the delay in the communications would thus be considerably abridged, much encouragement would also be given to the traffic, which is hampered at present by the difficult nature of the approaches. But the Siamese have as yet taken no measures to bind this important outlying province more closely to themselves.

The port of Chantaboon seems to offer a natural outlet for the produce of Phra-tha-bong; from three to four days are at present required for crossing the forest-clad mountains which divide the one of these settlements from the other; and the road is so difficult that most of the merchandise is conveyed down the lake to Udong, or transported across country to Krabin. I found during my stay in Siemrap that two Frenchmen had established themselves in that district for the purpose of entering into the fish trade, and that they were anxious to buy or rent a small allotment of land.

The governor took occasion to inform me of the matter, and to ask me for my opinion thereon. I told him that, as long as his province belonged to the dominions of the King of Siam, any proposition from French subjects respecting the acquisition of land should be made through the agency of the consul at Bangkok, and that as the parties in this instance had come from Udong, I presumed that such had not been the case. He told me that I was mistaken, that reference had already been made to Bangkok, and that he had been instructed by his Government to intrust the matter to M. de Lagree for adjustment, when that gentleman should pay his intended visit to the ruins.

On the demise of his late Majesty, the second king, orders were despatched at once to the remotest provinces directing each to fell and convey to Bangkok a supply of their finest timber, to be used at the ceremony of cremation. Several thousand logs will by these means be gathered together, and it is ordered that they should be of the largest possible sizes.

Krabin, Watsana, and Aran have each to furnish two hundred, and when we consider that the two last-mentioned towns have to drag their timber with buffaloes several days' journey overland, we may conjecture that the people will find their duties laborious as well as unremunerative. While, as each year seems to open at Bangkok with some extraordinary festival, it is rare that a twelvemonth passes in which they escape this imposition.

I conclude this memorandum by remarking briefly on a matter which, at the last moment only, has presented itself to my notice. It has been stated by the late Monsieur Pallegoix \* that, at a particular season of the year, a large and savoury fish called "Pla Sawai" is taken by the fishermen of the Cambodian lake; and that, being cured by them with the ashes of the palm-tree, it derives a sweet and agreeable flavour from the process. I much regret that my attention was not called to this subject till I had returned from Cambodia, and that I therefore made no enquiries about it on the spot. I subjoin, however, such information as I have since been able to gather.

There are several varieties of fish which are classed by the natives under the name of "Pla Sawai," and all of them are taken and cured in considerable numbers; of these a small portion is annually prepared by the process above alluded to, which may be described more particularly as follows:—

When the sugar-palm, which is found abundantly in the adjoining districts, has become so lofty and aged as to cease yielding sugar, the fishermen fell and burn the trunk, and steep the ashes for a few days in water; having made ready their fish by cleaning and decapitation, they soak it twelve hours in the above solution, and afterwards dry it in the sun. Fish cured in this way are reported to be exceedingly savoury, but their price considerably exceeds that of the ordinary kind, owing, as we may presume, to the difficulty in obtaining an abundance of the palm-wood. Few of them, I believe, find their way to Bangkok, as they obtain a ready market among the wealthier classes in Cochin China, to which country the bulk of them are exported. It is said also that they form acceptable presents to the noblemen and government authorities.

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\* 'Royaume Thai ou Siam.' Par M. Pallegoix. Paris, 1854, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 31.

## APPENDIX.

## A TABLE of WEIGHTS, MEASURES, CURRENCY, &amp;c., used in CAMBODIA.

*Measures of Weight.*

A Siamese Picul	=	133 $\frac{1}{3}$ lbs.	Avoirdupois.
A Siamese Pound	=	2 $\frac{2}{3}$	"
A Chinese Pound	=	1 $\frac{1}{3}$	"

*Dry Measure.*

A Siamese Khanan	=	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ English pint.
A Siamese Bucket contains		20 Khanan.
and therefore	=	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ English gallons.
A Siamese Coyan	=	375 "

*Measures of Length.*

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Siamese Wah	=	6 feet 6 inches.
1 Siamese Sok	=	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
A Siamese Kam is the breadth of a man's fist.		

This last measure is used in determining the diameter of a log of timber: this is ascertained by the somewhat inaccurate process of measuring first the girth of a tree, and then counting the number of Kam, or fist-breadths, in half that circumference.

*Currency.*

A Siamese Tical may be calculated at	
2s. 8d. sterling, and weighs 236 grains Troy.	
1 Tical	contains 4 Salungs.
1 Salung	" 2 Fuangs.
1 Fuang	" 4 Pais.

The Siamese Months contain 29 and 30 days alternately. The first month generally commences about the middle of December, but is subject to a little variation.

*A List of the Twenty-nine Chief Towns in the Kingdom of Cambodia, with the Titles of their present Rulers.*

Name of Town.	Title of Governor.
Kampong Sawai.*	Phya Daixô.
" Siam.	" Montri Fakdi.
Muang Borai.	" Seng Khao Fa.
" Sling Trong.	" Rajah Xô.
" Ching Phrai.	" Phet-dai-xô.

These five towns are under the supreme jurisdiction of Sombetch Chao Fa Talahak.

\* Ten smaller towns are under the jurisdiction of this capital.

*A List of Cambodian Chief Towns, &c.—continued.*

Name of Town.	Title of Governor.
Muang Krang.*	Phya Phusalôk.
" Bati.	" Wongsā Angxit.
" Phrai Karabat.	" Chaijuthā.
" Pottēmāt.	" Utthra Thi Bōdi.
" Piem.	" Rajah Sābthā.
These five towns are under the supreme jurisdiction of the Phya Umerat.	
Muang Sābung Khāmoom.†	" Orāchune.
" Sambok.	" Nājōk Chantakhram.
" Simboom.	" Montri Chonlābot.
" Chālōng.	" Sena Chōnābot.
" Kunchor.	" Montri Nīkhōm.
These five towns are under the supreme jurisdiction of H. E. the Phya Wang.	
Muang Bah Pēnôm.‡	" Tharāmā Daixō.
" Phrai Weng.	" Nara Thibōdi.
" Ramdooen.	" Loo Chākkri.
" Sāwai Thiep.	" Chaiju Song Khram.
" Piem Xō.	" Thibōdi Song Khram.
These five towns are under the supreme jurisdiction of the Phya Kralahome.	
Muang Pōttīsat.§	" Songkhālōp.
" Lapeja.	" Sāren thi bōdi.
" Boriboon.	" Sena thi bōdi.
" Krong.	" Rīthi Song Khram.
" Kampong Sôm.	" Thībet Songkhram.
These five towns are under the supreme jurisdiction of H. E. the Phya Chākkri.	
Muang Kampot.	" Sena Nāchit.
This town is under the supreme jurisdiction of Phya Tssarāpint.	
Muang Samrong Thong.	" Othai Thīrāt.
This town is under the supreme jurisdiction of Phya Phīpat Tksārā.	
Muang Tāwēk.	" Sen Sēnā.
This town is under the supreme jurisdiction of Phya Rāksā Tksārōr.	
Muang Penompein.	" Rajah Mairī.
This town is under the supreme jurisdiction of Phya Tksārā.	
Sākdā Chao Krōm.	

\* Four smaller towns are under the jurisdiction of this capital.  
 † Four smaller towns are under the jurisdiction of this capital.  
 ‡ Four smaller towns are under the jurisdiction of this capital.  
 § Four smaller towns are under the jurisdiction of this capital.