correſponding to a shift, nor any covering ſor their heads but their hair. The common people are almoſt naked, and wear neither ſhoes nor slippers. The women wear as many rings on the three last fingers of each hand as they can keep on, and bracelets upon their wriſts and ancles, with pendants in their ears ſhaped like a pear.

For an inferior to ſtand beſere a ſuperior is deemed inſolent ; and therefore slaves and people of inferior rank sit upon their heels, with their heads a little inclined, and their joined hands lifted up to their fore­heads. In paſſing by a ſuperior they bend their bodies, joining their hands, and lifting them toward their heads in proportion to the respect they would show. When an inferior pays a visit, he enters the room ſtooping, proſtrates himſelf, and then remains upon his knees, sitting upon his heels without ſpeaking a word till he is addreſſed by the perſon whom he visits ; for he that is of the higheſt quality must always ſpeak firſt. If a perſon of rank vilits an inferior, he walks upright, and the maſter of the houſe receives him at the door, and waits on him ſo far when he goes away, but never far­ther.

The higheſt part of the houſe is eſteemed the moſt honourable, and no perſon cares to lodge under ano­ther’s feet. The Siameſe indeed have but one ſtory, but the rooms rise gradually, and the innermoſt, which are the higheſt, are always the moſt honourable. When the Siameſe ambaſſador came to the French court, some of his retinue were lodged in a floor over the ambaſſador’s head ; but they no ſooner knew it, than they were ſtruck with the greateſt conſternation, and ran down tearing their hair at the thoughts of being guil­ty of what they conſidered as ſo unpardonable a crime.

The Siameſe never permit ſuch familiarities as are practiſed by gentlemen in Europe. Eaſineſs of acceſs, and affability to inferiors, is in that part of the world thought a ſign of weakneſs, and yet they take no no­tice of ſome things which would be looked upon as ill breeding among us ; ſuch as belching in company, which *no* man endeavours to prevent, or ſo much as holds his hand before his mouth. They have an extra­ordinary respect for the head, and it is the greateſt *af­front to* ſtroke or touch that of another perſon ; nay, their cap muſt not be uſed with too much familiarity ; for when a ſervant carries it, it is put on a ſtick and held above his head ; and when the maſter stands Rill the ſtick is ſet down, it having a foot to ſtand upon. They alſo ſhow their respect by lifting their hands to the head ; and therefore, when they receive a letter from any one for whom they have a great respect, they im­mediately hold it up to their heads, and ſometimes lay it upon their heads.

They are eſteemed an ingenious people, and though rather indolent than active in diſposition, they are not addicted to the voluptuous vices which often accompa­ny a ſtate of eaſe, being remarkably chaſte and tempe­rate, and even holding drunkenness in abhorrence.— They are, however, accounted inſolent towards their inferiors, and equally obſequious to thoſe above them ; the latter of which qualities appears to be particularly inculcated from their earliest youth. In general, their behaviour is extremely modeſt, and they are averſe to loquacity. Like the Chineſe, they avoid ſpeaking in the firſt perſon ; and when they addreſs a lady, it is always with ſome reſpectful epithet, inſinuating perſonal accompliſhments.

No man in this country learns any particular trade, but has a general knowledge of all that are commonly practiſed, and every one works six months for the king by rotation ; at which time, if he ſhould be found per­fectly ignorant of the buſineſs he is ſet about, he is doomed to suffer the baſtinado. The conſequence of this burdensome service is, that no man endeavours to excel in his buſineſs, lest he ſhould be obliged to practiſe it as long as he lives for the benefit of the crown.

The government of this country is extremely oppreſſive, the king being not only ſovereign but proprie­tor of all the lands, and chief merchant likewiſe ; by which means he monopolizes almost the whole traffic, to the great prejudice of his ſubjects. The crown is said to be hereditary, but it is often transferred by re­volutions, on account of the exorbitant abuſe of power in thoſe who exerciſe the royal office. In his palace, the king is attended by women, who not only prepare his food, and wait on him at table, but even perform the part of valets, and put on all his clothes, except his cap, which is conſidered as too ſacred to be touched, by any hand but his own. He ſhows himſelf to the people only twice a-year, when he diſtributes his alms to the talapoins or prieſts ; and on thoſe occaſions he always appears in an elevated ſituation, or mounted on the back of an elephant. When he takes the diverſion of hunting, he is as uſual attended by his women on foot, preceded by a guard of 200 men, who drive all the people from the roads through which they are to paſs ; and when the king stops, all his attendants fall upon their faces on the ground.

All their proceedings in law are committed to wri­ting, and none is ſuffered to exhibit a charge againſt another, without giving ſecurity to proſecute it, and anſwer the damages if he does not prove the fact againſt the person accuſed. When a perſon intends to proſe­cute another, he draws up a petition, in which he ſets forth his complaint, and preſents it to the *nai,* or heal of the band to which he belongs, who tranſmits it to the governor ; and if the complaint appears frivolous, the proſecutor, according to the laws of the country, ſhould be punished ; but the magiſtrates generally encourage proſecutions on account of the perquiſites they bring to their office.

Every thing being prepared for hearing, the parties are ſeveral days called into court, and persuaded to agree ; but this appears to be only a matter of form. At length the governor appoints a day for all parties to attend ; and being come into court, the clerk reads the proceſs and opinion of his associates, and then the governor examines upon what reaſons their opinions are founded ; which being explained to him, he pro­ceeds to paſs judgment.

When ſuſſicient proofs are wanting, they have recourſe to an ordeal trial, like that of our Saxon anceſtors : both the plaintiff and the defendant walk upon burning coals, and he that eſcapes unhurt is adjudged to be in the right : ſometimes the proof is made by put­ting their hands in boiling oil ; and in both theſe trials, by ſome peculiar management, one or the other is ſaid to remain unhurt. They have alſo a proof by water,