in which he who remains longeſt under it is eſteemed innocent. They have another proof, by ſwallowing pills, which their prieſts adminiſter with ſevere impreca­tions ; and the party who keeps them in his ſtomach without vomiting is thought to be innocent.

All theſe trials are made in the preſence of the magiſtrates and people ; and the king himſelf frequently directs them to be performed, when crimes come before him by way of appeal. Sometimes he orders both the informer and priſoner to be thrown to the tigers : and the perſon that eſcapes by his not being ſeized upon by thoſe beaſts, is ſufficiently juſtified.

They maintain the doctrine of tranſmigration, belie­ving in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, and that they ſhall paſs into other bodies till they are ſufficiently purified to be re­ceived into paradiſe. They believe likewiſe that the ſoul is material, but not ſubject to the touch ; that it retains the human figure after quitting a body of that ſpecies ; and that when it appears to perſons with whom it was acquainted, which they ſuppoſe it to do, the wounds oſ one that has been murdered will then be viſible. They are of opinion that no man will be eter­nally punished ; that the good, after ſeveral tranſmigrations, will enjoy perpetual happineſs ; but that thoſe who are not reformed will be doomed to tranſmigration to all eternity. They believe in the exiſtence of a Supreme Being ; but the objects of their adoration are departed faints, whom they conſider as mediators or interceſſors for them ; and to the honour of this nume­rous tribe both temples and images are erected.

The men of this country are allowed a plurality of women ; but excepting one, who is a wife by contract, the others are only concubines, and their children deem­ed incapable of any legal inheritance. Previous to eve­ry nuptial contract, an aſtrologer muſt be conſulted, who calculates the nativity of the parties, and deter­mines whether their union is likely to prove fortunate or otherwiſe. When his prognoſtication is favourable, the lover is permitted to visit his miſtreſs three times, at the laſt of which interviews the relations being preſent, the marriage portion is paid, when, without any religious ceremony performed, the nuptials are reckon­ed complete, and ſoon after conſummated. A few days after the talapoin viſits the married couple, ſprinkles them with water, and repeats a prayer for their proſperity.

The practice in Siam respecting funerals, is both to burs and bury the dead. The corpſe being laid upon the pile, it is ſuffered to burn till a conſiderable part is confirmed, when the remainder is interred in a burying- place contiguous to ſome temple. The reason which they give for not burning it entirely to aſhes is, that they ſuppoſe the deceaſed to be happy when part of his remains eſcapes the fire. Inſtead of a tombſtone, they erect a pyramid over the grave. It formerly was the cuſtom to bury treaſure with the corpſe ; but long­er experience evincing, that the ſacrilegious light in which robbing the graves was conſidered did not pre­vent the crime, they now discontinue the ancient prac­tice, and inſtead of treaſure bury only painted papers and other trifles.

The two principal rivers are the Menan and the Me­con, which riſe in the mountains of Tartary, and run to the ſouth ; the former paſſing by the city of Siam, falls into the bay of the ſame name, in the 13th de­

gree of north latitude ; and the latter running through Laos and Cambodia, diſcharges itſelf into the Indian ocean in the 9th degree of north latitude.

The capital of the country is Siam, called by the na­tives *Siyothoya,* situated in the 101st degree of eaſt longi­tude, and in the 14th degree of north latitude, being almoſt encompaſſed by the branches of the river Menan. It is about 10 miles in circumference within the walls, but not a sixth part of the ground is occupied by buildings. In the vacant ſpaces there are near 300 pagodas or temples, round which are ſcattered the convents of the prieſts and their burying-places. The ſtreets of the city are ſpacious, and ſome have canals running through them, over which is a great number of bridges. The houses stand on pillars of the bamboo cane, and are built of the ſame materials ; the communication between different families, during the winter ſeaſon, being carried on as in other tropical countries by means of boats. The grounds belonging to the ſeveral tenements are ſeparated by a palliſado, within which the cattle are houſed in barns, erected likewiſe upon pillars, to preſerve them from the annual inundation.

SIBBALDIA, in botany : A genus of plants be­longing to the claſs oſ pentandria, and to the order of pentagynia ; and in the natural syſtem arranged under the 35th order, *Senticoſae.* The calyx is divided into ten ſegments. The petals are five, and are inſerted into the calyx. The ſtyles are attached to the side of the germens. The ſeeds are five. There are three ſpe­cies belonging to this genus, the *procumbens, erecta,* and *altaica.* The procumbens, or reclining sibbaldia, is a native of North Britain, having never been discovered in the ſouthern parts of the iſland. It grows on Ben-Lo­mond and Ben-Mor, within a mile of the ſummit. It is diſtinguiſhed by a procumbent or trailing ſtem ; by three leaves growing on the top of a ſmall footſtalk, which are triſid at the extremity, and ſomewhat hairy. The flowers are yellow, and bloſſom in July or Auguſt.

SIBENICO, or Sebenico, the name of a city and province of Dalmatia. The province of Sibenico runs along the ſea for more than 30 miles ; reaches in ſome places above 20 miles within land, and comprehends above 70 iſlands. The city of Sibenico is situated near the mouth of the river Cherca, in the Gulf of Venice,

35 miles north of Spalatto, and 25 ſouth-eaſt of Zara. E. Long, 16⁰ 46', N. Lat. 440 17'. It belongs to the Venetians. It is defended on one side by a caſtle, which held out againſt repeated attacks of the Turks, and towards the ſea by a fort.

SIBERIA, a large country, comprehending the moſt northerly parts of the Russian empire in Asia. It is bounded on the eaſt by the eaſtem ocean ; on the ſouth by Great Tartary ; on the west by Ruſſia ; and on the north by the Frozen Ocean. It is about 2000 miles in length from eaſt to west, and 750 miles in breadth from north to south.

At what time this country was firſt inhabited, or by whom it was peopled, we are entirely ignorant ; but writings have been found in it when it was diſcovered, which ſhows that it muſt have been early known to a civilized people @@\*. The Ruffians, from whom we have received our knowledge, knew nothing of it before the middle of the 16th century. In the reign of John Bafilowitz I. indeed, an incursion had been made into Siberia,

@@@[m]\* Bell's Travels.