door to door. They are confined at night within a circle formed with stakes, and are obliged by turns, and at short intervals, to call out their names.

The religion of Siam is the same system which has dif­fused itself so extensively over the east and north of Asia, which is variously designated in different countries, as the doctrine of Boodh or Buddha, or of Gaudama, and in Tar­tary of Shamanism. The language of their sacred books, like the Sanscrit and the Zend in Persia, differs entirely from that in ordinary life, and is called Bali, apparently the same Indian language which is called Pali by the Burmans. The creed is singularly severe ; but the common people escape from its austerities, as they believe that a rigid ad­herence to its maxims is only prescribed to the priests, to whose mortifications they trust as an atonement for their errors. They have an order of monks professing celibacy, and residing in convents. They harangue the people from morning to night, who not only express their feelings in murmurs of applause, but load the preacher with costly gifts. Their temples are distinguished above all those in Asia, by their magnificence, and by the gigantic statues which they contain. The principal pagoda in the city is of a long and narrow form, covered externally with tin, whilst the interior is one complete blaze of gold, and contains an idol, forty-five feet in height, which reaches to the roof, and is said to be composed entirely of that precious metal.

The Siamese have made scarcely any advances either in science or literature. Their progress in mathematics is not great, their attention being confined chiefly to arithmetic, on account of its utility in commerce. They know little of astronomy beyond some of its humblest practical appli­cations. They first learned from Cassini to find out the place of the sun and moon by calculation. But they have not turned their knowledge to any account in navigation, their junks making use merely of the compass, and creep­ing where they can along the coasts for safety. Time is measured by vessels having a small hole perforated and placed in a tub of water, the construction of clocks being beyond their mechanical powers. Their system of medi­cine is equally imperfect, consisting chiefly in certain re­ceipts, the virtues of which they say have been ascertained by experience. They are entire strangers to anatomy, hav­ing a religious scruple against opening dead bodies. They are fond, like many other barbarous nations, of music and poetry, and their bards are chiefly exercised in songs and in impromptu recitations. Their festivals and pleasure ex­cursions upon the water are always enlivened with music. Their taste, however, appears to be equally rude in this as in all other arts or sciences. Instrumental music is chiefly valued on account of its loudness ; the organ is preferred on this account to any other European instrument; and next to it hautboys, drums, trumpets, and fifes. Their theatrical amusements are, as might be expected, extreme­ly rude, consisting of extravagant tables or gross carica­tures, often levelled against the reigning monarch, or against persons in power, who choose to wink at these li­berties, being the only vehicle of public opinion. Dancing and wrestling are amongst their most favourite amusements; and their puppet shows, the theatrical exhibitions in which they chiefly delight, are got up with great parade and ex­pense by the king and the nobles for the amusement of the people.

The moral character and habits of the Siamese are rated extremely low by those travellers who have visited the country. From the highest to the lowest, they are, accord­ing to their account, mean, cowardly, and mercenary. Like most of the Eastern nations, they have no regard to truth. These bad qualities are perceived in every action of their lives ; and their rapacity in their intercourse with strangers is well known. To increase their wealth and promote their own interest, form the lasting object of all classes, which is pursued by every indirect and fraudulent practice. Timi­dity is a remarkable characteristic of the nation, insomuch that two Europeans would put to flight fifty of them ; and the doctrine that cruelty and cowardice go together, is ex­emplified in their treatment of those who are made prison­ers in their wars with the Burmese, or are kidnapped on the frontier ; they are employed in public works of the most servile nature, with chains about their necks, legs, and feet, and are condemned to this degradation for life. Amongst their other evil propensities they carry on gambling to a great excess ; and some have attributed the low state to which trade has occasionally fallen, to n species of lottery, in which all classes engage, and which is countenanced by the king. To such a length is the rage for these gambling speculations carried, that it is the cause of serious disorders. The victims of this vice, impoverished, and reduced to naked­ness, betake themselves to open and lawless violence for sub­sistence. They follow robbing as a trade, and herd together in bands, so that it is not safe to venture out in decent attire, as they plunder openly, and commit daily murders.

Europeans have no very accurate knowledge of the sta­tistics of Siam, and the estimate of the population by differ­ent travellers is rather conjectural. According to such im- perfect statements as have been received, the entire popu- ation of the country was stated at four millions. The in­habitants resemble the Chinese and Mongols in their features; they have a broad face, and very prominent cheek bones, whilst the remainder of their cheek has rather a hollow ap­pearance. The eyes are small, with a deep yellow tinge in the white part ; the mouth large, and the lips thick and full. Both males and females take as much pains to blacken their teeth, as the Europeans do to preserve them white. The men eradicate their beards, but allow their nails to lengthen like the Chinese. They are extremely gross feeders, eat­ing rats, buzzards, grasshoppers, and other insects. They are, as has been already stated, indolent, and have made no progress in mechanical arts, nor in agriculture. It is chief­ly by the Chinese that the country is cultivated, and that sugar and other productions are raised. They, along with the Portuguese settled here, manage the commerce that is carried on. They are strangers to the making of silk and woollen cloths ; and even the fabrics of cotton are not near­ly on the same scale as in Hindustan. Their artists in gold are however remarkably expert, and their fillagree work is extremely beautiful. They also excel in beating out gold leaf, which is greatly employed in adorning their temples and idols.

The Siamese annals affect to detail with much minute­ness the events that have occurred in Siam and the adja­cent states and countries for the last fourteen hundred years ; but these, like most Eastern histories, consist of fa­bles or gross exaggerations. The kingdom of Siam was un­known in Europe until the discovery of the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope. The first traces of their his­tory were received through the Portuguese, who frequently acted as auxiliaries to the contending factions. In 1684 ambassadors were sent from Siam to Louis XIV., and in consequence M. Cerbcret and La Loubère were dispatch­ed as ambassadors to Siam, where they arrived in 1687, and immediately attempted to make a proselyte of the king to the Catholic faith. The monarch declined the religion so freely proffered to him by the French, but entered into a strict alliance with them, and allowed them two garri­sons, Bankok and Mergui. In 1688, the king was, however, by a sudden revolution, dethroned and murdered, which was fallowed by the expulsion of the French. From this period Siam was the scene of much internal discord, and of many sanguinary massacres ; and in 1754 was involved in a seri­ous war with the Burmese, who having conquered Pegu, and enlarged their territories, came in contact with the do­minions of Siam. A long war ensued, which terminated al-