Missionaries have been spread over the country; and the sacred volume has been translated into some of the na­tive languages, and distributed amongst the natives. The greatest obstacle to their conversion arises from their brut­ish ignorance and their debased habits.

The commerce of Siberia consists in those products which are consumed at home, and of those which are exported to European Russia, in return for foreign products. The exports are chiefly metals and furs, besides those com­modities from China and the East, of which Siberia is merely the dépôt in their transit to Europe The two staple commodities of export, namely, metals and furs, are chiefly monopolised by the government, to whose officers the tribute of the wandering tribes is paid in furs; and for these no return is made, unless in the salaries of the civil and military officers, or the pay of the troops.

Siberia is divided into two governments, namely, To­bolsk and Irkutsk, which are again subdivided, the former into the four circles of Tobolsk proper, Tomsk, Yeniceysk, and Kolyvan; the latter, into Irkutsk proper, Nertschink, Yakutsk, and Okhotsk, in which last is included Kamts­chatka, with the islands.

SIBYLS, in pagan antiquity, certain women said to have been endowed with a prophetical spirit, and who delivered oracles, showing the fates and revolutions of kingdoms. Their number is unknown. Plato speaks of one, others of two, Pliny of three, Ælian of four, and Varro of ten ; an opin­ion which is universally adopted by the learned. These ten sibyls generally resided in the following places : Persia, Lybia, Delphi, Cumæ in Italy, Erythræa, Samos, Cumæ in Æolia, Marpessa on the Hellespont, Ancyra in Phrygia, and Tyburtis. The most celebrated of the sibyls is that of Cumæ in Italy, whom some have called by the different names of Amalthæa, Demiphile, Herophile, Daphne, Man­to, Phemonoe, and Deiphobe. It is said, that Apollo be­came enamoured of her, and that to make her sensible of his passion he offered to give her whatever she asked. The sibyl demanded to live as many years as she had grains of sand in her hand, but unfortunately forgot to ask for the enjoyment of the health, vigour, and bloom, of which she was then in possession. She had already lived about seven hundred years when Æneas came to Italy, and, as some have imagined, she had three centuries more to live before her years were as numerous as the grains of sand which she had had in her hand. She gave Æneas instructions how to find his father in the infernal regions, and even conducted him to the entrance of hell. According to the most authentic historians of the Roman republic, one of the sibyls came to the palace of Tarquin the Second, with nine volumes, which she offered to sell for a very high price. The mo­narch disregarded her, and she immediately disappeared, but soon afterwards returned, when she had burned three of the volumes. She asked the same price for the remain­ing six books ; and when Tarquin refused to buy them, she burnt three more, and still persisted in demanding the same sum of money for the three that were left. This extraordinary behaviour astonished Tarquin ; he bought the books ; and the Sibyl instantly vanished, and never afterwards appeared to the world. These books were pre­served with great care by the monarch, and called the si­bylline verses. A college of priests was appointed to take care of them ; and such reverence did the Romans enter­tain for these prophetical books, that they were consulted with the greatest solemnity, when the state seemed to be in danger. When the capitol was burned in the troubles of Sylla, the sibylline verses, which were deposited there, perished in the conflagration ; and to repair the loss which the republic seemed to have sustained, commissioners were immediately sent to different parts of Greece to collect whatever verses could be found of the inspired writings of the sibyls. The fate of these sibylline verses, which were

collected after the conflagration of the capitol, is unknown. There are now many sibylline verses extant, but they are universally reckoned spurious ; and it is evident that they were composed in the second century by some of the fol­lowers of Christianity, who wished to convince the hea­thens of their error, by assisting the cause of truth with the arms of pious artifice.

SICERA, a name given to any inebriating liquor by the Hellenistic Jews. St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theo­philus of Antioch, who were Syrians, and who therefore ought to know the signification and nature of sicera, assure us, that it properly signifies palm-wine.

SICILIANA, the name of an ancient dance in 6/8 time, slow in movement, and simple and touching in its melody.

SICILY, a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, ad­joining to the southern extremity of Italy, and extending from latitude 36° 25' to latitude 38° 25', and from longitude 12° 50' to longitude 15° 40' east from London. Its greatest length is 210 miles, its breadth 133, its circumference 600. For a description of the island, see Naples.

SIDDONS, Mrs. (whose maiden name was Sarah Kem­ble,) the greatest actress that ever trode the stage, was born at Brecon, in South Wales, on the 5th of July 1755. Roger Kemble, her father, was manager of a provincial com­pany of players, and amongst this class of persons he seems to have held a highly respectable rank. Sarah, who was his eldest daughter, appeared very early on the stage, and went the usual round of juvenile characters without exciting much expectation. At the age of eighteen she married Mr.Sid- dons, an actor in her father’s company, soon after which event she removed to Cheltenham, where she attracted some attention, and was recommended to Garrick. Her first ap­pearance on the London boards was not successful, simply because she never had a proper part assigned her. Mrs. Siddons accordingly returned to the provinces much mortified; but the praises showered upon her by such audiences as those of York, Manchester, and Bath, induced the managers of Drury Lane to re-invite her to the metropolis. Her re­appearance took place on the 10th of October 1782. The character which she chose was that of Isabella in “ The Fatal Marriage.” The effect of that performance was ex­traordinary and unparalleled. It gave a shock of wonder and delight to the public mind, like the news of some great and unexpected victory. On that night, Mrs. Siddons at once took possession of the tragic throne, on which, for thirty years, she reigned without a rival. Some idea of the ex­citement which she created may be learned from the fact, that “ the grave and reverend seignors” of the English bar presented her with a purse of one hundred guineas. Dur­ing the season, Mrs. Siddons played *Euphrasia, Jane Shore, Calista,* and, for her two benefits, *Belvidera* and *Zara.* In all of these characters she greatly added to her fame; the public were astonished at the vastness of her powers, and tragedy became the fashion. In subsequent seasons she encreased her circle of characters, adding from shakespeare those of *Lady Macbeth, Constance, Isabella, Queen Kathe­rine,* (the most chaste, beautiful, and perfect performance that ever drew a tear,) *Rosalind,* (not in her line, for she was altogether too stately and heroic for comedy,) *Desde­mona, Volumnia, Portia, Hermione, Imogene,* and a few others. This list shows, that her range was surprising, but she was not equally excellent in all her parts. Her come­dy never gave great satisfaction, although there was occa­sionally much to admire in it. When the metropolitan sea­son closed, it was the custom of this, as it is of every great actor, to visit the principal cities of Ireland, Scotland, and the provinces of England. Every where she enchanted the lovers of the drama. She became a favourite with their majesties, and was in the habit of reading plays to them, an occupation of more honour than emolument. However, Mrs. Siddons. by her professional exertions, realized a for-