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pronunciation of the Chinese characters has been so completely mixed up with the original language of the country, that the present spoken language consists in great part of composite words, in which the words of both languages are united to express one single idea. Hence the language is extremely verbose. At first sight, it appears to differ widely from the Chinese, and to bear a greater resemblance to the Man chow; but, on nearer inspection, the reverse is found to be true. The Chinese has been so thoroughly interwoven with it, and so fully moulded according to the organs of the natives, that one may trace the meaning of whole sentences, after having been somewhat accustomed to the sounds wherewith the natives read the Chinese characters.

The resemblance between the Korean and Japanese languages is very striking. The Koreans study euphony to excess, and often omit or insert a letter to effect it. We may call the Korean a very expressive language; it is neither too harsh nor too soft. The Chinese language is sometimes unintelligible to foreigners, because it contains a great many sounds which are only half-pronounced; while the Korean is full and sonorous, and may be easily understood. The Koreans confound, interchange, and transpose, the letters *l*, *m*, *n*, and *r*. As they are a very grave people, they pronounce their language with peculiar emphasis. It is expressive, not on account of the great number of ideas which they can convey through this medium, for the natives are poor in thoughts, but because of its sonorous nature. We meet in it all the terms for abstract ideas which the Chinese language contains; but for many of those ideas they have nothing more than the sound of the Chinese characters, and not an original word.

It is remarkable that, not only the Chinese, but also the nations who have received their civilization from them, have taken the utmost pains to cultivate the Chinese language. To encourage the study thereof, it has been made a duty incumbent on all who aspire to literary honours, and thereby to officers in the government, to know the language thoroughly. This seems to be no less the case in Corea than in the other Chinese-language-nations; and hence it is that the Chinese character is so generally understood in a country which, in civilization, is far inferior to China, as it is also to Japan.—*Chinese Repos. Nov.*

Siam.

The *Singapore Chronicle* contains some extracts of a private letter from Bangkok, giving lamentable details of the miseries
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which the unfortunate Malays, captured during the late Siamese expedition to the east coast of the peninsula, are suffering in Siam:—

“ I have seen most of the poor wretched creatures, that have been brought up from the Malay coast, and were I even capable of conveying to you, in a slight degree, the miserable sights that I have seen, it would make you shudder. I even wonder that God permits such wanton cruelty and oppression to exist on the face of the earth.

“ The number of Malay slaves, brought up here within the last six weeks, will amount to between 4,200 to 5,000 souls, consisting principally of very old women and numbers of young children, and only a very few able-bodied men. Those, I suppose, who were able to run made their escape, and left the old, sickly, and very young to the mercy of the merciless Siamese invaders.

“ Out of compliment of course to their ally, the British-Indian Government, the poor, wretched, diseased creatures (and few indeed were free of disease), were quartered in what the Siamese style ‘the British factory.’ I occupy one side, and the Malays, to the amount of 400 or 500, were confined in the other until a conveyance could be got to take them up the country, or perhaps until they were given in presents to some of the great men here. They were counted in and out, just like so many sheep, and when an order was given, in presents to some of the Siamese chiefs, to send off forty or fifty, it did not matter whether they were sick or well, off they must go, the healthy carrying the sick, and in some instances you would see them counting out old men and women, in such a condition that it was scarcely possible they could have lived had they been left alone a single hour. Most of the Malays had immense large ulcers about their feet or legs, and the stench from them alone was enough to breed a plague. Besides that, they were all swarming with lice, and covered with the itch; and, to wind up all, had sore eyes. It is strange, that all my servants got sore eyes by only looking at them.

“ They have got here the rajah of Patani in irons and some of his family; also the rajah of Jella, and one or two others. At first, there was no respect of persons; but now the rajah of Jella is living by himself, and even the praklang allows him opium to smoke. He must have found his money-chest pretty heavy, or he would not have granted him this indulgence. The old rajah of Ligor has at last arrived. The rajah of Patani states, that the rajah of Ligor advised him to make war against the governor of Singora and kill him, in order that one of the rajah of Ligor’s sons might be governor in
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his stead, and then all the provinces south of Cape Liant, including Quedah, would be under the government of the rajah of Ligor and his sons. This, I believe, the king of Siam knows, at which he is sorely troubled. The rajah of Ligor, even now, if he pleases, is able to declare his independence, and support it too, against Siam. If the king of Siam loses him he loses the best and smartest officer in his kingdom.

The Siamese, when down on the coast, robbed the country of every thing they could lay their hands on; even the cattle they took away with them. My old friend the pra-kiang has feathered his nest pretty well. For the last six months, he has had thirty or forty goldsmiths making pots, cans, cups, boxes, &c., of gold, and he has scraped together, in silver, nearly 60,000 Spanish dollars, besides other odds and ends. The king got from Calantan 30,000 dollars and ten catties of gold, and I suppose the old pra-kiang got a good round sum also. The latter obtained about 2,000 slaves, and you may be sure he took care to choose the best for himself. The king gets about 3,000, but they are not worth much.

As to Captain Burney's treaty, the Siamese have no more regard for it than the man in the moon has. They paid attention to it for a short time, but now it is completely forgotten, and, I may add, despised. I am wrong when I say forgotten, for they have never once omitted to charge the 1,700 ticals per fathom, besides which they make the duties payable on all produce in the interior. The good of the treaty is this, we have now to pay besides all the duties on the produce as formerly.**

The Rev. C. Gutzlaff, in his "Journal of a Residence in Siam," and published in the *Chinese Repository*, gives the following particulars respecting the Laos, or Sians:

"In the capacity of missionary and physician, I came in contact with the Laos or Sians, a nation scarcely known to Europeans. I learnt their language, which is very similar to Siamese, though the written character, used in their common as well as sacred books, differs from that of the Siamese. This nation, which occupies a great part of the eastern peninsula, from the northern frontiers of Siam, along Camboja and Cochin China, on the one side, and Burmah on the other, up to the borders of China and Tonquin, is divided by the Laos into Lau-pung-kan (white

Laos) and Lau-pung-dam (black or dark Laos), owing partly to the colour of their skin. These people inhabit mostly mountainous regions, cultivate the ground, or hunt, and live under the government of many petty princes, who are dependent on Siam, Burmah, Cochin China, and China. Though their country abounds in many precious articles, and among them a considerable quantity of gold, yet the people are poor and live even more wretchedly than the Siamese, with the exception of those who are under the jurisdiction of the Chinese. Though they have a national literature, they are not very anxious to study it; nor does it afford them a fountain of knowledge. Their best books, are relations of the common occurrences of life, in prose; or object tales of giants and fairies. Their religious books in the Bali language are very little understood by their priests, who differ from the Siamese priests only in their stupidity. Although their country may be considered as the cradle of Buddhism in these parts, because most of the vestiges of Samo Nakodum, apparently the first missionary of paganism, are to be met with in their precincts, yet the temples built in the honour of Budha are by no means equal to those in Siam, nor are the Laos as superstitious as their neighbours. Their language is very soft and melodious, and sufficiently capacious to express their ideas.

The Laos are dirty in their habits, sportful in their temper, careless in their actions, and lovers of music and dancing in their diversions. Their organ, made of reeds, in a peculiar manner, is among the sweetest instruments to be met with in Asia. Under the hand of an European master, it would become one of the most perfect instruments in existence. Every noble maintains a number of dancing boys, who amuse their masters with the most awkward gestures, while music is playing in accordance with their twistings and turnings.

The southern districts carry on a very brisk trade with Siam, whither the natives come in long, narrow boats, covered with grass; importing the productions of their own country, such as ivory, gold, tiger skins, aromatics, &c; and exporting European and Indian manufactures, and some articles of Siamese industry. This trade gave rise, in 1827, to a war with the Siamese, who used every stratagem to oppress the subjects of one of the Laos tributary chiefs, Chow-vin-chan. The prince, who was formerly so high in favour with the late King of Siam as to be received, at his last visit, in a gilded boat, and to be carried in a gilded sedan chair, found the exorbitant exactions of the Siamese governor on the frontier injurious to the trade of his subjects and to his own revenues. He applied repeatedly to the

** The following are the articles of the treaty alluded to in the letter:—"If the vessel bring an import cargo she shall be charged 1,700 ticals for each Siamese fathom in breadth. If the vessel bring no import cargo she shall be charged 1,500 ticals for each Siamese fathom in breadth. No import, export, or other duty shall be levied upon the buyers or sellers from or to English subjects."