

missionaries there, zealous self-denying men, who were preparing themselves by a knowledge of the language and the people, for any future opening for more direct effort which might occur. They lived among the people, and were closely watched by the Japanese, upon whom a favourable impression would doubtless be effected by observing their simple and blameless style of life. For the first time in history, protestant worship had been established at Nagasaki within the past twelve months, and there was a probability of a church being built at Kanagawa. With the introduction of Christianity into that empire, we might naturally look for the disappearance of much that is at present so repulsive in the national character.

The second Paper read was—

2. *Travels in Siam.* By Sir R. H. SCHOMBURGK, COE. F.R.G.S.,
H.M.'s Consul at Bangkok.

SIR R. SCHOMBURGK left Bangkok in December, in company with two nephews of the King, who were students at the Baptist Missionaries' school in that place. He passed in barges up the Menam, which he describes as being on the whole a monotonous river. In three weeks' time he reached Rahaing, the most southern of the Lao states, which are presided over by petty princes tributary to Siam. Here the river was left on account of its being too low for further navigation, and the journey was pursued on the backs of elephants—a mode of conveyance of which Sir R. Schomburgk complains bitterly. Lahong, the battlemented capital of another Lao state, was reached in eleven days, after travelling along a mountainous road, “of a description that would have set a timid person into the most nervous state. The pathway up and down the high mountains has no greater breadth than from 5 to 6 feet, with ledges and shelves of rock resembling steps, and frequently a precipice on the right or the left. But the security with which that sagacious animal the elephant travels soon inspires confidence. He draws near to the ledge of the rock he has to descend, sounds its depth with his proboscis, and cautiously puts down one of his fore-feet, and, having acquired footing, the other follows; then the hind-legs are doubled, and he glides upon his haunches to the edge of the ledge, and the first hind-foot, then the next, is put down. If he were not to double up his hind-legs, the angle, when his fore-legs were at the bottom of the ledge, would be of that description that no person could keep on his back. As it is, one has to hold on with all force.”

Three days more of a similar road brought the party to Lamphoon, and one more, through fertile and highly-cultivated country, to Xiengmai, the largest of all the Laos cities, and about 3 miles in circumference. Sir R. Schomburgk states that there is a yearly export of 400,000*l.* worth of teak-wood from Xiengmai to Moulmein.

It is floated down the river Salween, and may be considered as the only source of supply to the navy-yards in Great Britain of timber of that description. Starting afresh with 150 men and 33 elephants, he passed for three days down the banks of the river Ping, and thence across the great pine-covered mountain-chain which divides Siam from Her Majesty's possessions in Burmah and Tenasserim, and reached Moulmein in twenty-four days.

The CHAIRMAN, after reminding the Fellows of the achievements of Sir R. Schomburgk through a long series of years, and after due praise of his present labours, called upon his friend Mr. Crawford, who knew so much about Siam, to speak on the subject under consideration.

MR. CRAWFORD said they had heard the nature of the country which Sir Robert Schomburgk had visited. That gentleman was twenty-four days upon his journey, and he travelled across the very same sort of country as that through which their friend Captain Sprye desired to carry on the whole of the trade of China. It was a country of extreme difficulty to traverse,—a pathless mountainous forest. His friend the Chairman told him that he ought to say something about the white elephants of the country, and he would do so shortly. The King of Siam had white elephants. He believed he had six when he was there; he saw four, and there were two he did not see. A white elephant was regarded by ourselves as a defective animal; but the Siamese believed in the transmigration of souls, and they believed that a white elephant contained the soul of a king on his way to beatitude. Alluding to the trade of Siam, he said that it had risen to the extent of half a million of exports, and half a million of imports. There was some of the best fruit in the world in the country, and much corn, but with respect to animal food the Siamese were not abundantly supplied.

The Meeting was then adjourned to March 25th.

Ninth Meeting, March 25th, 1861.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, VICE-PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

ON assembling the Chairman said, "Our gracious Patron the Queen having met with the first real affliction in her life, and the mother of our Sovereign having been interred this day, the Council of our Society has decided that all business be suspended, and that this our ordinary Meeting be adjourned.

"For my own part, let me assure you that the untoward conjunction of the day of our meeting with that of this Royal burial was not brought to my mind until the close of last week, when it was too late to call together a Council and announce publicly that the Meeting would be adjourned. Acting therefore for my friend, our President, Lord Ashburton, who is detained in the country by ill-health, I took upon myself to propose to the Council, this afternoon, that no business should be transacted in the evening, but that, out of courtesy to Members and their friends, who have had no notice of the postponement, I should take the Chair, and make the explana-