

FRANCE AND TONGKING

A NARRATIVE OF
THE CAMPAIGN OF 1884
AND THE OCCUPATION OF
FURTHER INDIA

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WITH MAP AND PLANS

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS book has been very hurriedly written; in a variety of places, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Canton, in the hottest time of the year in China. If, therefore, there are any slips or repetitions, it is hoped the reader will be lenient. At the same time no care has been spared to make the book as trustworthy as possible. The greater part of it is the result of personal observation; but whatever French books were available have been consulted, and I now, once for all, acknowledge the assistance so received. No correct picture of French colonies in Indo-China, of the Tongking campaign, or of French projects in that remote part of the world, has been laid before the English public. It is therefore hoped that the following pages may be of interest and value.

HONG KONG,
September, 1884.



NOTE.

DURING the absence of my brother on his journalistic duties as Special Correspondent in Tongking, the passing of the present work through the Press has been entrusted to me. To have made any effectual revision (if such be necessary) would have required the knowledge of an expert, to which I can lay no claim. The book therefore appears as it left the Author's hands.

The two plans, one of the triangle formed by Hanoi, Sontay, and Bacninh, the other of the Citadel of Sontay, are reduced by photo-lithography from two of a series of maps supplied to the French Officers for the campaign. These maps were compiled from native sources, and have therefore an interest of their own. The originals, which were on coarse native paper, having suffered from the wear and tear of the campaign, the names of towns in one or two places are almost effaced. The characters on the cover form the Chinese visiting card of the Author. The sounds represented are "Tsz" and "Kut."

R. F. S.

V.I.P. 14



CONTENTS.



TONGKING.

CHAPTER I.

OUTLINES

	PAGE
Early History—Early French Conquests—Operations of Dupuy— Victories of Garnier—M. Philastre—Expedition of 1882—De- scription of the Country, River Basins—Lakes—Climate	1

CHAPTER II.

HANOI

Early History—Garnier seizes the Citadel—Death of Garnier— Riviére seizes the Citadel—Black Flag—Tsin Jung-Fu's Pro- clamation—Fights with Black Flag Bands—Death of Riviére— —Awaiting Reinforcements	22

CHAPTER III.

WALKS IN HANOI.

<i>Rue des Incrusteurs</i> —Annamese Cash—Annamese Flattery—The Inhabitants—Mystic Symbols—A Marriage—Marriage Coro- monies—A Mandarin—Temple of the Grand Buddha—Interior of a Joss-house—A Wend Priest	101

CHAPTER IV.

THE SONTAY ROAD.

Scenery	Death of Rivière	Village of Phu Hoa—The Fight of the 15th August, 1883	Village Superstitions	Capture of Phong	—A Leafy Shrine	First Impressions of Sontay	Capture of Sontay	A Chinese Night Attack	Fortifications of Sontay	After the Capture	82

CHAPTER V.

NAM-DINH.

Capture by Garnier	A Classical Victory—Native Inland Work	Scamped Work	Ceremonies after Death—An Annamese Funeral	Ancestor Worship	Superstitions	The New Year	87

CHAPTER VI

KE-SŌ AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Cathedral and Mission	Christian Villages	Phu-Ly—Fortress of Ninh Binh	M Hanoi	107

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE BAC-NINH.

Military Value of the Position	Reconnaissances	Balmey takes Thai Binh	Capture of Hai Dong in 1883	Preparations for the Attack	118

CHAPTER VIII

THE FALL OF BAC-NINH.

Chinese Defence Works—Difficulties of the French Troops—An Annamese House	Delays in the Advance	Fighting at I ist	The Chinese evacuate Bac-ninh	Description of the Town	The Citadel and its Contents	123

CHAPTER IX

THE LANG-SŌN ROAD.

French Advance—The Treaty of Piontsin—Advance on Lang-sŏn	The Retreat from Bac Lé	The Road beyond Bac Lé	A debatable Land	111

CHAPTER X.

THAI-NGUYEN.

	PAGE.
The Country English Larks and a Scotch Moss—Attack on Yen-Té—Contents of the Citadel—Friendly Christians The Village of Liang First Sight of Thai Nguyen Thai Nguyen captured—Description of the Town Future of the Town	156

CHAPTER XI

HUNG-HOA.

General Nègrier's Energy—A Sham Fight before the Battle—A Cannonade Strong Fortifications A Burnt Town—A Hill Fort Country north of Hung Hoa The Black Flag Chief	176

CHAPTER XII.

UNDER THE WESTERN HILLS.

Rural Shines Vast Embankment Works Strange Cliffs—In Quest of Gold A Mountain Glen A Terrible March Offerings to "Mr. Tiger"—Village of My-Luong—Prospects of Gold Mining	193

CHAPTER XIII

HAIPHONG.

Sanitary State of the Town—Analysis of the Trade Returns—Principal Exports—Trade Prospects—Rice Silk, and Sugar Trades River Traffic	212

CHAPTER XIV.

QUANG-YEN AND THE COAST.

Halong Bay—A Pirate Haunt—Universal Piracy—Cape Pak-Lung—The Town of Mong-kai—An Annamese Town	225

CHAPTER XV.

THE TIRAILLEURS ANNAMITES

Difficulties with Native Levies—French Menaces—Daily History of the Corps— <i>Un Régiment de Femmes</i> —The superiority of the Chinaman—First Trials of the Corps Successes of the 'Coolie Brigade'	298

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY.

	PAGE
General Impressions—The Faults of the Conquered—The French of the East Fondness for Sport National Dress The Head-dress Strict Etiquette A Strange Battle The Parentage of the Race	253

CHAPTER XVII

THE FRENCH COLONIAL ARMY.

Foreign Service Corps Numerical Weakness of the Force Difficulties of the Territorial System The Balloon Corps The French Soldier Mixture of Classes in the Ranks	272

ANNAM.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNTRY.

Provinces—The Village of Touiane—Cave Sanctuaries Postal System—System of Government	285

CHAPTER XIX

HUÉ—THE CAPITAL.

Defences of Hué—The Town and Citadel—An Audience with the King A Striking Ceremonial Protests of the Regent A Suspicious Embassy	296

SAIGON.

CHAPTER XX.

Capture by the French The Rue Catnat Comparison with Rangoon—The Saigonnais The Gardens The Ubiquitous Chinaman—Trade Returns	308

CAMBOJA.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAPITAL AND THE PEOPLE.

The Fish Industry—The Palace and the King	PAGE 823

HAINAN.

CHAPTER XXII.

General Description of the Island Mr. Henry's Passage of the Shui Tau An Unknown County The Southern Coast—A Chinese Ex'portation to Agriculture Mines The Old Hakkas —The New Hakkas Chinese Description of the Li The Wild and Tame Li Li Traditions—Their Houses Absence of Graves Hoilow Harbours Trade Prospects	329

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PROPOSED KRA CANAL

The Survey of 1888—Difficulties of the Scheme Advantages and Disadvantages	362

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ENDO-CHINESE EMPIRE.

The Future of Siam French Interest in Burma—The M'okong Valley—Anxiety of the Siamese Government—Callousness of the Indian Council—Rocks Ahead	369

MAP OF TONGKING

PLAN OF TRIANGLE FORMED BY HANOÏ.

PLAN OF CITADEL OF SONTAY

FRANCE AND TONGKING.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE BURMAN

HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS

BY

SHWAY YOE
Subject of the Great Queen

2 VOLS

MACMILLAN AND CO



CHAPTER I.

OUTLINES.

THE Tongkinese, or GIAO CHI, the ancestors of the Annamese, begin their annals in the year 2879 B.C. They were called GIAO-CHI by the Chinese, because their big toes were strikingly separated from the others. They were governed for centuries by their own kings. The annals of these sovereigns are exceedingly dry where they are not wildly imaginative. About two hundred years before our era the Chinese invaded and settled in the country. Then for a thousand years Tongking and the greater part of Annam were governed by Chinese rulers, more or less independent of the Imperial power, or simple functionaries. It was in this period that the Annamese race, as we now find it, was really formed.

Somewhere about the year 1418 a prince of the name of LI-LOI, whose fabulous strength and valour are sung to the present day, raised the people, and eventually not only shook off the Chinese yoke, but almost freed Tongking of the presence of Chinamen. He founded the great LI dynasty and made Hanoi his capital.

Little over a hundred years afterwards we find the LI

dynasty overshadowed by the power of the Mac family, who, descended from a commander-in-chief of the army, gradually became hereditary *maires du palais*, regents or Chua of the Hanoi kingdom. Later the Macs were supplanted by the TRINH, and at last, in 1674, the empire founded by LÊ LÔ broke up into two: Tongking, which retained Hanoi as the capital, and Annam, with Hué as the royal city. The LÊs still reigned on in Hanoi. The NGUYENS, sprung from a NGHÊN family, established themselves in the southern kingdom.

The LÊs still kept the TRINH family as hereditary regents. They did a weaker thing still. To stave off Chinese attacks they agreed to accept the suzerainty of China, and accordingly from that time forward received investiture from the HIWANG TI. In those days Tongking was stronger than Annam, and it was therefore natural for the new kingdom to follow the example of the power from which it had so recently been separated. If suzerainty was of any value the Chinese had abundant proofs against the French that they had exerted it long enough over Annam.

It was about this time that Europeans first visited Annam. It does not appear that Ptolemy knew anything about the country. His information did not extend beyond the Gulf of Siam. Sei Marco Polo, the king of travellers, apparently was the first European to visit the country. He touched the coast of the kingdom of CHIANG, the modern province of BINH THUAN, which has been buffeted backwards and forwards between France and Annam, but has finally remained protected and not annexed. Three hundred years later CAMOENS, returning from exile in Macao, was shipwrecked at the mouth of the DONNAI river, and celebrates the fact in the *Lusiad*, which he saved from the waves on the occasion.

Fifty years after this, in 1610, a Jesuit mission was settled in Annam, and in 1650 the reverend Father Alexandre de Rhodes published a map of the country. Nineteen years later Pallu, the Bishop of Heliopolis, Vicar Apostolic of Tongking, proposed to Colbert to establish a French Colony in his see. This is the first suggestion of Gallic influence in the country, but in 1688 the Dutch, in the person of Korael Mortsinck, had already established a factory at Fo-YEN, the modern Hong Yen, which then was on the sea-board. In the previous year the French had obtained a short-lived footing in Indo China, by the occupation of Bangkok and Mergui (now a part of British Burma). A regiment and five ships held the two places for a few months, and then were forced to leave. It must not be forgotten that at this time AYUTHA, and not Bangkok, was the capital of Siam.

During all this time Annam, originally merely two provinces wrested from the old kingdom of CAMPA, was finding more and more to separate itself from Tongking. At first the NAUXENS called themselves CHUA, regents. Then they elaborated this with VUONG, laudatory kings. The TRINIS of Tongking were far from acquiescing in this ambition. They marched several armies south, but could not reduce the NAUXENS. For the whole of the seventeenth century, therefore, and the greater part of the eighteenth, Tongking and Annam, including latterly Cochin China (annexed in 1658), were to all intents and purposes separate states and thoroughly hostile to one another, notwithstanding their common origin.

Somewhere about the year 1773 a merchant named NAO, of QUI NHON, a port on the Annamese coast south of HUÉ, raised a rebellion and overthrew all the three ruling families. The TRINIS seem to have been exter-

minated altogether. The last of the Lés remained king for a couple of years by permission of the leader of this so called TAY SON rebellion. Then he fled to China, and died in Peking in 1798, occupying the post of Chinese mandarin of the fourth class. He left no children, but a brother of his, HOANG BA, found friends among the hill tribes and waged a guerilla warfare for years against the TAY SON usurpers. He is the presumed ancestor of the various LI claimants that have raised numerous revolts in Tongking during the present century.

The NGUYENS were driven out, and the head of the house, NGUYEN ANH, or NGUYEN LINH, fled to Siam. There he met the Bishop of Adran, Monsignor Pigneaux de Behaine. The bishop was a patriot and a politician. He sent home to France NGUYEN ANH's son, and in 1787 this prince concluded a treaty with Louis XVI., according to the terms of which France was to restore the NGUYENS to Annam, and to receive in return the Bay of Touane and the island of POULO CONDOR, off the mouth of the Saigon river. The French Revolution prevented the execution of this treaty, but the energetic bishop managed to bring round from Pondicherry two merchant ships with munitions of war and eleven French officers of various ranks. Under the guidance of these officers, NGUYEN ANH raised an army and a fleet, defeated and beheaded the TAY-SON leaders, and conquered Tongking. The Annamese dominions were now greater than ever they had been, and the new sovereign assumed the dignity of Emperor, and, in accordance with national custom, assumed a "reigning name," GIA LONG. HUÉ became capital of his dominions, and HANOI was simply chief town of a province.

GIA LONG was tolerant of the French though he did not like them, but his successors all more or less per-

scouted the missionaries, French and Spanish, who flocked in great numbers to the country. There were therefore a number of punitive expeditions of French ships of war to revenge these martyrdoms and relieve the fathers.

It was not, however, till 1858 that France made any serious attempt to claim the "rights" conceded by the treaty of 1787. In August of that year Admiral Rigault de Genouilly destroyed the Annamese forts and occupied Tourane. The following year he captured Saigon. Then the Italian war and the Allied war in China put an end for the moment to conquests in Cochin China. In 1860 the unhealthiness of the place and the need of reinforcements in Saigon led to the evacuation of Tourane and the massing of the troops in Saigon, where the Annamese, entrenched in the lines of Ki-Hoa, held the feeble garrison in a state of siege.

The end of the China campaign need four thousand men, and with these and the assistance of a handful of Spanish troops the lines of Ki Hoa were carried, in February, 1861, with a loss of 225 men killed and wounded. This was followed by the taking in succession of My Tho, Bien-Hoa, and Vinh-Long. This brought about the treaty of 1862, whereby the three provinces of Saigon, My Tho, and Bien-Hoa were ceded to France along with Poulo Condore. A series of insurrections, fomented by the Hué court, kept the army of occupation in constant trouble until 1867, when Admiral de la Grandière occupied and declared annexed the three adjacent provinces of Vinh-Long, Chaudoc, and Haïen. The Protectorate of Cambodia followed immediately. Since then the insurrectionary troubles have been comparatively insignificant.

Already in 1868 France had designs on Tongking.

The islands of Gow Tow and the Thousand Isles of Fitzelong Bay had always been the haunt of pirates, Chinese and Annamese. Admiral de la Grandière proposed to King Tu Duc to send a French expedition thither to expel the pirates, and at the same time settle Tongking, where new La rebellions were constantly sweeping over the country. Before anything could come of this, the war of 1870 put an end to all thought of such enterprises for the moment.

Nevertheless the SARGON authorities were tenacious of their designs on Tongking. Very little was known about the country then, but it was known to be the "granary of Annam," and therefore necessary to the establishment of that Indo-Chinese Empire, imagined for France by the Bishop of Adran, and never lost sight of by the Cochin China officials, whatever may have been the case in the home chamber, where many deputies did not know in which hemisphere to look for the country. Already in 1872 Admiral de la Grandière's projects were taken in hand again. The publication of Francis Garnier's great work on the exploration of the Mékong had lent a new interest to Tongking. That gifted and adventurous young officer had declared that, if wealthy and land-locked YUNNAN was ever to be opened to France it must be by the Song-ai, the Red River, the great artery of Tongking. Accordingly in 1872 we find the *Bourayne* at Hanoi, the first French warship which had penetrated into those waters. Under Commandant Senez it had been sent to inquire into the doings of the pirates on the Tongking coasts. But the *capitaine de frégate* did not concern himself with the pirates. At Hanoi he found M. Dupuis, and immediately proceeded to lend him all the aid he could.

M. Dupuis had already greatly interested himself in

Tongking. It is a point bitterly disputed between his friends and those of Garnier, which of them first had the idea of opening up Yunnan by way of the Song-coi. The decision of the question does not concern us. Suffice it to say that M. Dupuis was certainly the first who explored the river, and discovered what capacities it has as a water way.

Already in 1871, when his occupation as an army contractor for the Chinese had led him into Yunnan then in the throes of the Mussulman rebellion, he had explored the river as far down as LAOKAI, the so called Annamese frontier, though there never have been any Annamese there. He claimed to have proved the navigability of the river from MANHAI, in Yunnan, to LAOKAI. This navigability is only a very relative term, but it had aroused the energetic Frenchman's enthusiasm. He contracted to supply the Chinese commander with material of war from Europe, and to bring it up the Song-coi. The Chinese accredited him to the Government of Annam as their official agent, and furnished him with the necessary passports.

In the end of 1872, therefore, he appeared at HAT-PHONG with three small steam launches, two of them fitted out as gunboats, and a large cargo junk. The meeting with Captain Senoz was perhaps unfortunate. That gallant sailor had pushed up to Hanoi in spite of the opposition of the mandarins, had forced them to apologise for not viewing his arrival with delight, and had made them salute the French flag. Captain Senoz received M. Dupuis most cordially, and so led the mandarins to believe that there was a connection between the two, notwithstanding the Chinese passports. M. Dupuis, therefore, met with violent opposition all the way. Still he got up to Hanoi, transhipped his arms

there into river boats, added a large quantity of salt, left half his party under M. Millot, a Shanghai merchant who had associated himself with him, at Hanoi, and with ten Europeans and thirty Asiatics of various nationalities went on up the river, passed LAOKAI, and eventually, nearly three months after his departure from Hanoi, delivered his consignment of nims in YUNNAN-SEN.

The rebellion was subdued and the weapons were not wanted, but Marshal MA received M. Dupuis well, and offered him an army of 1,000 men to bring the Annamese mandarins to reason. This the merchant explorer refused, but he took 150 Chinese soldiers as a guard, loaded up his boats with copper and tin, entered into a contract to supply 75 000 piculs, say 4,250 tons of salt for an equal weight of copper.

But when he reached Hanoi he found this quite impossible. The mandarins were up in arms against the export of salt, then principal perquisite. M. Millot had been living in something very like a state of war with the mandarins. Complaints against M. Dupuis had been sent by the Hué court to Saigon. NGUYEN-TRI-THUONG, the best general of Annam, who had fought gallantly at the lines of KI-HOA, came to Hanoi and enrolled soldiers in great numbers.

M. Dupuis in his turn sent M. Millot to Saigon to complain against the mandarins. Admiral DURRI was then Governor of Cochin China. He had the colonial ambitious designs against Annam through Tongking. He called Francis Garnier down from Shanghai, gave him about ninety rank and file and two ships, and despatched him to Hanoi to arbitrate in the matter, "with *carte blanche* instructions."

Dupuis demanded, as a contractor with China, whom

the Annamese recognized as over-lord, liberty to fulfil his engagements and free permission to use the stream which flows from China into Tongking. China had for years been allowed liberty of trade in the interior of Tongking as well as on the river, and M. Dupuis only demanded the same liberty and on the same conditions. He asked no more, and he referred significantly to the force he might have obtained from the Yunnanese Marshal to enforce his demands.

Garnier arrived in Hanoi on November 5, 1873. For a week he endeavoured to persuade the mandarins of the justice of these claims, but he only met with stubborn resistance, and more than studied insults. He was a patriot and politician, and on the 15th of the month he issued a proclamation declaring the Song-coi open to general commerce. He was a lieutenant of the navy, and on the 20th he took the citadel of Hanoi by assault.

Then, in an extraordinary short space of time, he and his lieutenants captured the strong places of HUNG-YEN, PHU-LY, HAI-DZUONG, NINH-BINH, and NAM DINH. All Lower Tongking seemed at his feet. But the impetuous young soldier had not enough men, and he was not sufficiently supported. Admiral Dupré was scared at the doings of his envoy. The Annamese called in the assistance of the Black Flags. These hardy warriors came and attacked Hanoi, and in a sortie against them, on the 21st December, Garnier, rushing far in advance of his men, as if the enemy were mere cowardly Annamese, met his death. On the same day Lieutenant Balny d'Avincourt, his second in command, also fell.

Four days later reinforcements arrived at Hanoi. But hard on their heels came a civil commissioner. M. Philastre had been at Huế treating with Tu Duc's court. Voyaging northwards, he heard of Garnier's

death, and forthwith took charge of affairs. He immediately ordained the evacuation of all Tongking, and has earned the eternal execration of Frenchmen in consequence. His maligning of Gambet, who was his personal friend, cannot be too severely condemned. But it is certain that, with the forces they then had in the country, the French could not possibly have held Tongking. The Black Flags had even then been engaged against them, and though the Black Flags of 1874 were not aimed anything like their brethren of 1884, yet with their spears and swords and ancient matchlocks, they were not people like the Annamese, who could be overwhelmed by the single rush of half a dozen white men. The De Bioglio Government was lukewarm, if not actually hostile, to the Tongking undertaking. M. Philastre's settlement of affairs was therefore probably the best for the time, though it was somewhat dramatic in its suddenness. The Tongking question was only postponed.

But if, politically, M. Philastre's doings were on the whole the best under the circumstances, the details of his settlement, and his conduct generally, were open to very considerable condemnation. One of his first acts on reaching Tongking served to kindle a hatred against the French among the Tongking Chinamen which has gone on increasing ever since. On his arrival near Haiphong in the French gunboat he saw thirty junks a little below the town. He asked the Hué ambassadors, who were also on board, what vessels these were. The Annamese mandarins promptly declared they were pirates. Thereupon M. Philastre persuaded the French captain to fire upon them. Upwards of thirty of the head men were brought on board of the *d'Estries*. The rest, to the number of two hundred, were put into one junk, and were to have been kept prisoners alongside

the gunboat. As the junk drifted down, however she failed, designedly or otherwise, to catch the line thrown her from the *d'Estries*, and swept on down stream. At M. Philastre's suggestion, several guns were fired in the dark at the boat as it vanished in the night. Shrieks were heard, but what became of the vessel, with its two hundred lives, was never heard. The dead men on board the man o'-war were hung from the yard-arm, with the exception of one, who was able to show a port clearance from Saigon. These Chinamen were peaceable merchants, who had come with goods to Tongking on the strength of Garnier's proclamation that the Red River was open to trade.

This was bad, but it might have been a mere error of judgment. What followed M. Philastre's hurried evacuation was a blunder which the meanest intelligence might have seen would have terrible consequences. Garnier and his lieutenants, even in the short time they held possession of the country, enrolled many thousand Tongkinese auxiliaries, the majority Christians. M. Philastre, in his convention with NEUVEN-VAN-TUONG, the Huf plenipotentiary, was content with the assurance of that dignitary that these people would be amnestied. The result was obvious. The miserable French partisans were massacred all over the country, and the foundation was laid of a detestation of the French which lasts to, and is perhaps intensified at, the present day.

This was say the French, worthy of the man who could write of a dead friend in a proclamation, posted in Hanoi on the 10th January, 1874, three weeks after the gallant naval lieutenant's death:—"A man named Garnier was sent here to arrange trade matters. He knew nothing about such things and simply introduced disorder into the country by the capture of four citadels,

capitals of provinces. It was for this reason that the ambassador NGUYEN and M. Philastre have come to re-establish the peace which had been compromised. M. Philastre was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honour. Francis Garnier was for years spoken of as a hot-headed adventurer. M. Dupuis had his steamers sequestered. The French Government made no use of them, refused to hear his demands for redress, refused to see him, refused to receive his letters, endeavoured to prevent him from returning to France, and, when he got there, shelved his petition for years. When at last his stubborn energy forced on a committee to consider his claims, it was France that profited, and not M. Dupuis. France has seized Tongking, and M. Dupuis as yet has nothing but empty praise from geographical societies and sound abuse from Cochin China civilians. He is sprung from a simple French peasant family, but if France had more such peasantry she would be a more comfortable neighbour and a greater nation.

The result of this first attempt on Tongking was the signing of a treaty between France and Annam in March, 1874. Commercial conventions were added to this and signed in August and November of the same year. QUI-NUON on the Annam coast, HAIPHONG, and HANOI were thrown open to commerce, and a French consul was to reside in each, with a guard of one hundred men. France engaged to assist in the suppression of piracy and insurrections on condition that Annam made its outside policy square with that of France. In fact, as a French wit remarked, France became the policeman of Annam. The consuls had an unpleasant time. The first established at HANOI was so systematically insulted that he resigned his post, and thenceforward for a time France was represented only at Haiphong.

Matters went from bad to worse till 1882, when a new expedition was resolved upon. With the insinuation that this expedition was really organized because Le Myre de Villers, the Governor of Saigon, wished to obtain concessions of mines in Tongking from the Annamese Government, we have nothing to do. If it concerns anybody, ^{it} ~~that~~ concerns France, and she has chosen to take no open notice of the matter. Suffice it to say that the *projet de loi* authorizing the expedition merely says that "since 1880 the Republic has come to see the imperative necessity of putting an end to a state of things which, if prolonged, would seriously compromise our position in the far East. Circumstances have prevented the furtherance of our plans earlier than the beginning of last year. Then the Governor of Cochin China made arrangements with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Navy to give effect to our Protectorate over Annam. It was proposed to send to the Red River naval forces sufficient to expel the Black Flags, and so to secure free commerce. The Annamese mandarins, instead of recognizing in our troops auxiliaries coming to carry out a task they were incapable of, showed designs anything but friendly, and engaged in intrigue with our foes. The necessity of securing the safety of our soldiers forced Commandant Rivière to seize upon the citadel of Hanoi on the April 25, 1882."

Since then the course of events has greatly extended the original project. As it is proposed to give in succeeding chapters a narrative of what has since happened, it will be well here to close this brief sketch of Annamese history.

Detailed accounts of various parts of Tongking follow. It will therefore be unnecessary to give here more than a general outline. The Huế court calls the country

DANG HAI, the outside kingdom; also BAC-TANH, or BAC KI, the kingdom of the north. The Cantonese call it YUAN. The name Tongking comes from the Annamese pronunciation of the Chinese DONG KINH, "the capital of the East," another name for Hanoi. The country lies between the Tropic of Cancer and the eighteenth degree of north latitude, and between the 101st and 106th degrees of longitude. The outline is somewhat irregular. China is the boundary on the north technically, though Annamese rule has really never been felt on the China border. On the west the Laos States push in farther and farther till in the south the province of THANH HOA is only about a degree broad from the sea to the MUONG hills. Annam is the boundary on the south, and on the east the Gulf of Tongking, with a crescent bend from HA-TINH to Cape PAK LUNG in the north.

The whole country may be divided into three distinct portions. The first of these is the region of low lands, the delta country, forming an isosceles triangle, of which the base is on the sea, and the two sides are the DAU river and the NGA-BA-LUONG canal. SON-TAY forms the apex. Without the embankments, which form a network over all this area, this part of Tongking would be under water every year. This is the part of Tongking which is best known, the only part that is really known, in fact. North of these flat lands comes the region of plateaux rising steadily up from the SONG-COI and SONG-CAU rivers. The highest elevation is attained in the country north of DONG-TRINH and east of KWANG-YEN, and farther north between HUYEN BAC and LANG-SON. The farther north one goes the less tropical is the scenery, until finally the pine-clad mountains are reached. The highest elevations in this plateau coun-

ly visible from KWANG YEN are 3,500 and 4,500 feet high.

West of the 103rd parallel we find the region of forests. Extremely little is known of this part of the country, except from the stories of natives, which represent it as inhabited only by savages and wild beasts.

Tongking is divided into sixteen provinces. Those in the delta are BACNINH, SONFAY, HANOI, HAI-DZUONG, HUNG YEN, NAM DINH, and NINH-BINH.

The upland provinces are CAO-BANH, LANG-SON, THAI NGUYEN, TUYEN KWAN, and KWANG-YEN.

HUNG HOA is the forest province.

In the south there are three other provinces, which, from physical characteristics, would more legitimately belong to Annam. These are THANH-HOA, NAM AN, and HA-TINH. Except to the missionaries, who have been particularly successful in THANH HOA, this part of the country is comparatively unknown.

The Red River, the Song-cor, or Thao of the Annamese, the Hoang Kiang of the Chinese, is pre-eminently the river of Tongking. It rises near Tali Lu, in Yunnan, from a chain of hills which forms the watershed between it and the Mekong basin, and for some time flows at no great distance from that river.

The Song cor is a fine river, but as a water-way to open up YUNNAN it is a delusion. From HANOI downwards it averages over a thousand yards wide. At HUNG-HOA it measures about five hundred, with large sand-banks in mid-stream. At TUAN-KUAN (the Kouln-*et* of M. Dupuis, the TRAN-YEN of the Comte de Keigara-dec) the width is two hundred yards, and at LAOKAI, on the frontier, one hundred. But above TUAN KUAN navigation is rendered more and more difficult by what the French call rapids, which are,

however, really only places where the channel is narrowed by spits of sand, or by out-crops of rock, and the current runs swifter in consequence. As a matter of fact this part of the river is really only practicable between April and November. During the dry season it is really useless for purposes of trade, and even during the rains, when there is abundance of water, M. Dupuis found it advisable to choose a place where goods from the coast or from Hanoi might be transhipped into flat-bottomed craft capable of getting up to LAOKAI. This is the so-called *Havre-Dupuis*, a picturesque bend where the river flows between heavily wooded hills. It is situated between TUAN-KUAN and the first rapid.

The SONG COI has a current averaging about three knots. During the dry season the trade route to Hanoi from Haiphong is by the SONG-TAM BAC, a narrow but deep canal, rendered tedious and difficult for navigation by the extraordinarily winding course it follows. From this vessels pass into the LAC-TRAY, one of the mouths by which the THAI-BINH and SONG-COI rivers flow into the sea. Another canal, that called the THAI-BINH leads from this into the main river. It is here that navigation is most difficult, and vessels drawing more than six feet cannot pass between November and March. From about the end of May, when the river has already risen considerably, until September, the usual and shorter route from Haiphong to Hanoi is by the *Canal des Rapides*, otherwise called the Bacninh Canal. This leaves the main river a little above Hanoi, passes south of BACNINH, and joins the THAI BINH some distance above HAI-DZUONG. Thence the route taken is by the KINH-TAI arm, which passes Dong TRINH and reduces the distance to Haiphong by about five and twenty miles.

The HÉ-HO, or Black River, is the principal affluent

of the Song-cor on the right bank. It joins the Red River a few miles below Ilung Hoa, and at its mouth is considerably broader than the so-called main stream. But the Tongkinese, like the Chinamen, judge of the importance of a river not by its size, but by the amount of traffic which goes on upon it. Trade on the Black River is utterly spoilt by a huge cataract some thirty-five miles from its mouth. Annamese maps represent the Ilu-Ho as coming from YUNNAN; but very little is yet really known about its upper waters, which flow between huge forest-clad hills that give it the sombro look reproduced in the name.

The Tsin-Ho, the Clear River, is the chief tributary on the left. It enters a few miles below the Ilu-Ho. On its banks stands TUYEN KWAN, and the river is navigable for small craft some distance higher. The Tsin-Ho flows past KAI HOA, in Yunnan, and seems to rise from a small lake to the north west of that town. Unlike the other rivers of Tongking, its waters are clear and limpid whence the name. Mineral salts, however, render it nearly unfit to drink. Villages become scarce at a short distance from the embouchure, but the upper river, like the Ilu-Ho, is said to pass through a very rich mineral country.

In Central Tongking there is another river basin, that of the three streams, the SONG-CAU, passing about three miles north of Bacninh, and flowing under the walls of THAI-NGUYEN, the THUONG-CHIANG, and the LOU-NAN. They join at almost the same point, and serve to join the THAI-BINH. Except the SONG CAU, and that river only for a limited distance, they can barely be called navigable.

A third river basin is that of the LANG-MOON. This receives the drainage of the LANG-SON and CAO-BANH

provinces, but flows principally through Chinese territory. The LANG MOON forms, between PAKHOI and FU HAI NIN, a delta which is little known. The principal mouth, the LANG-MOON, which, for want of a better, gives its name to the whole stream, serves as the north eastern boundary of Tongking. It is navigable for thirty miles from Cape PAK LUNG inland. The river seems to rise in Yunnan, and passes by SE NING-FU in KWANG-SI. In another year we shall doubtless know more about it, but at present all the native maps represent the LANG SON and CAO BANH streams as flowing to China, insistibly suggesting the idea that the natural boundary-line between China and Tongking should run much farther south than it does along the LANG-MOON watershed. M. Romanet du Caillaud represents one branch of the river, which he calls the SONG-TAM, as flowing towards the archipelago of KWANG-YEN. Another arm of the delta certainly enters the sea so close to PAKHOI that it is only four hours' march distant. The Annamese assert that one can go from KWANG-YEN to the province of LANG-SON without leaving the rivers and canals, and without going out to sea. Captain Fournier's investigations seem to point to something of the same kind. The inhabitants of this part of the country are, however, so wild and turbulent that exploration for some years will be a matter of no little danger.

There are two small rivers down in the southern provinces, the SONG-MA in THANH-MOA, and the SONG-KA in NGHÊ-AN. It is so short a distance from the sea to the hills here that they have a very swift current, and are of no great size. Canals join the two rivers, and boats can pass from one to the other parallel to the sea, a circumstance which reminds one of Annam, as indeed

the flat reaches of sand and the rolling sand dunes, cooped in by the wall like range of hills covered with impenetrable forest, continually suggest the idea that it is only accident which has allotted these provinces to Tongking. NANNAN especially has the reputation of being a wealthy province, but the ports, like the place itself, are hardly known except by name. The Annamese talk of mines in this part of the country, and the timber is certainly more valuable than in any other part of Tongking.

There are few lakes in Tongking. The large sheet of water north of Hanoi is very shallow, and the same is probably true of the only others, known as the BA-BÉ, the "three seas," and CAO-BANH. During the rains it would appear that the three unite into one, with an island in the centre, which served in 1879 as a last place of refuge for the remains of LI-YUNG-CHOI's rebel army. In the dry season channels unite the three sheets, and a large portion of what a few months before was water is transformed into rice-fields. The surrounding country, from the report of Father Fuentès, a Spanish missionary, the only European who is known to have penetrated thither, would appear to be exceedingly fertile. CAO-BANH is a very interesting province, and if the true ancestry of the Annamese race is ever to be determined, it probably will be so from ancient monuments and inscriptions in this province.

The arms and canals of Lower Tongking are almost all navigable, but only for small steam launches. No nation surpasses the Tongkinese in ditching and delving, and very many of the communications are undoubtedly their work. The NGA-BA-LUONG Canal and that of the Rapids are the most important, and are comparatively recent, the latter dating back no farther than thirty

years. Other so called canals, such as that of "the Bamboos," or the THAI-BINH, are equally incontestibly the work of exceptional floods, bursting through an embankment to make new outlets for the mass of water. The immense rise of the river, beginning in May and ending in October, is as much due to the melting of snow in the northern hills as to the torrent rains.

Tides are felt all over the delta, and even in the SONG-CAU, where there is occasionally a rise of three feet in spring tides. The water is brackish five miles above Hanoi, but beyond this point it is more of a simple swelling than a regular tide. The tides are diurnal that is to say, there is but one high and one low tide during the day.

The extraordinary fertility of the delta lands is undoubtedly due to the river, and to the river alone. The soil is nearly pure clay, with hardly any traces of natural mould; and, were it not for the copious alluvial deposits, we should not hear of the two annual harvests of rice for which the country has become so famous. The immense volume of reddish soil which the Song co brings down all the year round is rapidly extending the delta. Two centuries ago the Dutch and Portuguese factories at HUNG-YEN were close to the sea. Now the town is quite thirty miles from the coast. Missionaries still living speak of villages which are now populous and agricultural on sites where, a couple of decades since, there was open sea. The isolated hills south of DONG-TRIEU, Elephant Mountain, DO-SON, and numerous others, have all the appearance on their sides and bases of having been washed by storms at no very remote time.

The estimated area of the country is about 60,000 square miles, and the population probably 12,000,000.

From its proximity to the temperate zone the climate is on the whole excellent. During the dry season the thermometer varies between 70° and 42° F. This from October till the beginning of April. During the hot and rainy weather it is exceptional to have a higher temperature than 95° , and 70° is the minimum. On the whole, the country is healthy, notwithstanding the abundance of standing water, no doubt because this water lies in paddy fields rather than in marshes. There is a certain amount of fever, but it is seldom of a dangerous type; and the dysentery from which several of the Tongking garrisons have suffered has been brought on by the imprudence of the soldiers, and rendered deadly by the comparatively little experience the French doctors seem to have of the treatment of the malady. The colony ought to be one of the finest in the East, if only the French will set about the right way to make it so.



CHAPTER II.

HANOI.

HANOI is not only the chief town in Tongking, but it is the finest in Annam, and, disregarding Saigon as admittedly European, in all French Indo-China, with the single exception of CHOLEN, the Chinese town of Saigon. Formerly the population was 150,000. ^{its} alarms and actual sacking reduced it for a time to an almost absolute desert, but it has now regained a great deal of its former population, and is without doubt destined to outstrip all other cities in the country. It stands on the right bank of the river, about eighty miles from the sea by the shortest route, and practically consists of two distinct parts, the commercial town and the citadel, a huge square of about a mile to the side, enclosing the Tong-Doc, the Government palace, the treasury, the court of justice, the Royal Pagoda, the prisons, the barracks and the public offices, and official residences.

It was the ancient capital, not merely of Tongking, but of all Cochin China, and, since its foundation in 767 A.D. by a Chinese governor under the name of Dai-

LA, has always maintained its superiority over all rivals. First fortified in 808, it had a chequered career for several centuries, being captured by Yunnan aborigines, re-captured by the Chinese, and finally once more taken possession of by the Annamese. Extension of the country led to the foundation, in the fifteenth century, of a rival capital, LAI-DZAI, the "capital of the West," whose imposing ruins yet exist in the southern province of THANH-HOA. It was then that the name DŌNH KINH, or Tongking, which has since become the name of the country, was assumed. Curiously enough To-Kio, the capital of Japan, has the same signification, "the capital of the East," and is written with the same Chinese characters. Triumphant over its rival in the south Hanoi, still under the name of Dŏnh Kinh, it once more became sole capital of the country in the middle of the seventeenth century. Then, like all other towns of Annam and China, it got a double name. Tongking remained the official style, and the common people called it Kŭ-cuo that is to say, the Market. By this name, until MM. Dupuis and Garnier penetrated thither in 1872, it was alone known to Europeans, and Kŭ-cuo still appears on very many maps with or without Hanoi added.

When GIA LONG annexed Tongking as a province of Cochin China, the town dropped from its pride of place and became no more than a simple provincial chief town. At this period the old citadel was reconstructed on European plans, and, on the lines of the Vauban system, assumed its present huge dimensions. It was at this time also that the name of HANOI seems to have been applied to the town.

Till 1872 Hanoi remained practically unknown to Europeans, except to the few missionaries, who for

many years had been labouring in Tongking. In that year, however, M. Dupuis brought it into very remarkable prominence. During the whole of 1873 he personally, or his men for him, were in practical possession of the town, as distinguished from the citadel. The former covers the whole mile and a half of ground which lies between the river and the fortified city. M. Dupuis had brought down with him from Hongkong a force of about 125 Malays, Manillamen, and Chinese. These were reinforced by one hundred of the Marshal of Yunnan's body guard, and later the energetic Frenchman took on over a hundred of the Chinese troops disbanded from Bac Ninh. Most of these were billeted in a street in the north east of the town, called the *Rue des Chinois*, and separated from the neighbouring quarters in the usual Chinese fashion by heavy brick and mortar gateways. One of these to the present day is called *Port Dupuis*.

Here and in his boats Francis Garnier found M. Dupuis established when he arrived in November, 1873. A very short time sufficed to show that the patriotic old Annamese Marshal, NGUYEN-TRI PHUONG, was as little inclined to be civil to the lieutenant and his soldiers as he was to the merchant and his train band men. He issued proclamations forbidding the people to sell anything to the "brigands from Saigon," and announcing that he was shortly going to chop them up into little bits. He flogged and imprisoned the captain of the citadel gate, who allowed Garnier to enter and force an interview on him. He did everything to show that a peaceable end to the naval lieutenant's mission was impossible.

Accordingly Garnier, with his usual determination, resolved to seize the citadel. He had only 180 men

available to attack a fortress four miles round the walls, and with a garrison estimated at 6,000 or 7,000 men, with numerous cannon mounted on the ramparts. The affair commenced with a bombardment of the north and west gates by the two gunboats, the *Scorpion* and *l'Espingole*, at six on the morning of November 20th. Sub Lieutenant Bain de la Coquerie, with thirty men, made a feint against the south-west gate. Garnier himself, with about sixty men and three one-and-a-half inch guns, attacked the south-east gate. A heavy musketry fire prevented the Annamese from serving their guns, which were mounted, *en barbette*—that is to say, on the ridge of the walls—without cover. The redan covering the gate was carried with the first rush. A few cannon shot, fired at four or five yards' distance, served to breach the city gate. NGUYEN-TRI-PHUONG showed great bravery till a shot in the thigh disabled him. Then all was over. The tricolour floated on the tower of the citadel at five minutes to seven. All the mandarins were seized and sent off to Saigon. The Annamese soldiery laid down their arms, and the citadel, with its huge store of rice, money, and other valuables, was in Garnier's hands. Only one life had been lost, that of one of Dupuis's Chinamen. Unwilling not to have a share in the fight, though the military men with true professional spirit had refused his offers of assistance, he despatched ninety of his Chinese to attack the east gate. Led by Mr. Georges Vlavianos, one of Chinese Gordon's officers in the Ever Victorious army, they carried the gate gallantly, and had just got inside when a shell from the gunboats burst among them, killed one and wounded another. That was all the loss on the French side. The Annamese, with their wretched arms, naturally suffered very severely.

Having once begun, Garnier could not stop. Rumours of barricades being constructed in the river to prevent him from leaving the country, forced him to send his lieutenants to the south, and eventually to go himself to the capital of NAM DINH. His small force was thus terribly reduced by the garrisons left in the different strong places captured. Meanwhile the Annamese had called in the assistance of the Black Flags, Chinese outlaws and rebels, who had established themselves on the upper waters of the SONG COI. They advanced to PHU HOAI, a small mud fort on the SONIAI road, which had been left by the French in the hands of the native auxiliaries, and easily occupied it. An attempt by the French under Midshipman Peirin to drive them out failed. This was the first check. Another band took possession of GIA LAM, a small village on the bank opposite HANOI. The French were glad now to accept M. Dupuis's aid. Still it required much shelling from his gunboat, the *Hong Kiang*, and an entire day's hard fighting to dislodge the enemy, who returned to their positions again almost immediately afterwards.

News of this brought back Garnier post-haste from the south. Two days after his return, on the 21st December, 1878, while he was engaged in discussing the terms of a treaty with the Annamese ambassadors, who had come from Hué, it was abruptly announced to him that the Black Flags were attacking the citadel, half a mile from the Catholic mission, where he was at the moment. He hurried to the ramparts, and found that the Chinamen had already passed the old city wall, an earthen rampart that runs to the south side of the citadel, and were keeping up a brisk but harmless fire. Shortly they got some small jingals into position, and wounded a man on the ramparts. A few shells, how-

ever, dislodged them, and they commenced slowly to retreat on the Annamese main body, under Prince HOANG KI VIEN, which throughout kept judiciously in the background. The enemy retired by two roads, one the regular SONTAY road, leading straight to PHU-HOAI, the other really the old city *enceinte* just spoken of, which at the village of THU-LI strikes an embankment also leading obliquely to PHU HOAI. The Black Flags showed an apparent intention of establishing themselves in THU-LI. Garnier could not allow them to remain so close to the citadel. Accordingly he despatched his second in command, Lieutenant Balny d'Avricourt, with twelve men, along the direct road, while he himself, with eighteen and a *pièce de quatre*, sallied on THU LI. Both had a certain number of native levies with them. For a certain distance Garnier followed the rampant path. Then, fearful that the enemy would escape him, he divided his party into two, sent nine men forward to clear THU-LI, and himself, with the other nine and the cannon, struck diagonally across the rice-fields to the other embankment. The cannon got bogged almost immediately ; but, with his usual fiery impetuosity, he left it behind in charge of two men and hurried on. His men were deployed in skirmishing order, and he was considerably in advance of them. When he reached the embankment there were only three men near him on his left. They rushed up the slope, and were met with a volley. Paymaster Sergeant D'orne was shot dead through the chest. Corporal Guérin had his temple grazed by a bullet. The other man turned and ran. Garnier disappeared over the ridge. His men heard the six chambers of his revolver discharged in quick succession, and a shout of " Rally, men, rally, we'll beat them." They waited for the men who had

been detached to skirmish through Thu Li. Then they went over the embankment, only to find the two dead bodies beheaded and mutilated. So died the most gallant and talented explorer of the century.

Two miles farther up the same embankment, Balny, with his party, was boldly met and defeated. Two of his soldiers were killed, and he himself, recklessly in front, was seized and carried off struggling. It was only with difficulty that Dr. Ghodan was able to rally the remainder of the party and retreat on Hanoi. If it had not been for M. Dupuis and his Chinamen, Hanoi would have been taken that night.

The treaty of 1874 gave France a concession in Hanoi, a small strip of river face, about quarter of a mile long, to the south of the town. It was not for over a year that anything was done, but the ground was then stockaded, a number of neat public buildings were erected, and a consul, with a guard of a hundred soldiers, established in the place. So matters remained till 1882. Notwithstanding that France had an extremely able consul at Hanoi, M. le Comte Lejumeau de Kergardec, the Sona-coi remained as closed as ever to commerce. All that M. de Kergardec was able to do was to make studies of the country, and this he did with a zeal and ability which French party politics have prevented from being sufficiently recognized.

At length, however, in 1881, M. le Myre de Villers, the best administrator Saigon has had, brought up the state of affairs in Hanoi before the Home Government. Changes of Cabinets, however, prevented anything definite being done till 1882.

On the 8th of April of that year Commandant Henri Rivière, with the *Drac*, a coast despatch-boat, and the *Parseval*, a gunboat, cast anchor opposite the

French concession in Hanoi. He had about five hundred men with him, all told. At Hanoi he found *Chef de Bataillon* Berthe de Villers with the two companies of the consular guard, which had been there since 1881. The mandarins were not to be overawed by this sudden increase of the garrison. They declared it was a violation of the treaty of 1874, shut themselves up in the citadel, and called in troops to the number of seven or eight thousand from the country round about. They would not recognize the presence of the new commandant, and developed daily a more insulting attitude. Rivière therefore was forced to adopt the same line of action for which Garnier had been so condemned. He sent in an ultimatum, and resolved to seize the citadel.

The attack came off on the 28th April. The three river gunboats, the *Fanfare*, the *Carabine*, and the *Mus-sue*, commenced the bombardment. An hour later the field artillery was got into position, and opened fire on the east and north gates. The Annamese stood to their guns manfully for a time, but they could do little against the French troops. With incendiary rockets, however, they managed to set fire to a great portion of the commercial town in the immediate neighbourhood of the citadel walls, and destroyed houses extending over an area of nearly three thousand yards, thus greatly hampering the French attack. The skirmishers, however, succeeded in driving the defenders from the ramparts and the glacis, and when at eleven o'clock the assault was made in two columns there was practically no resistance to their entrance by the breach and the shattered gates. The greater part of the garrison had already fled by the other gates, leaving forty dead and a great many wounded. The two chief mandarins hanged themselves from the branches of the aged ban-

yan, which stands by the Lr. Pagoda. The French had four men wounded.

When Rivière found himself in possession of the citadel he was at a loss what to do with it. He scanned his instructions, and found that by them he was ordered to reinforce the garrison at Hanoi, to establish a military post at the mouth of the Tsing-Ho, but, above all, to keep on good terms with the mandarins. When he looked round him he saw all these mandarins prisoners, but nevertheless warlike preparations were going on everywhere. There were rumours of barriers in the river, and raising of Black Flags in the north. He compromised matters. He left what mandarins there were in the citadel in office, and withdrew all his troops to the French concession, with the exception of one company which proceeded to fortify itself in the Royal Pagoda. He did not displace a single subordinate official, but he dismantled the walls. He allowed the yellow flag of Annam to be again hoisted from the tower, but he kept one gate of the citadel exclusively for himself and his soldiers. Then he awaited events. The governor was scared. He thought he had another Gannier in his hands. As in 1873 Saigon sent apologies to Huế, and King Tu Duc sent messages of friendship to Saigon. Both sides waited for the next move.

The French Government was afraid to go to extremities. The Annamese contented themselves with calling in the Black Flags and appealing to China. Then there was a lull for months. The Black Flags occupied all the creeks and villages round about. The Chinese flocked in in a mysterious way. They never seemed to come in bodies, but there was a perpetual flow of them, and soon all Hanoi was full of what were called Imperial troops. The French troops were practically prisoners in the

narrow limits of the concession, and messages to the company in the citadel were sent under a heavy guard. Rivière was a literary man of very high stinging imagination, and this silent pouring in of Chinamen was a regular nightmare to him. He wrote home and to Saigon about the huge Celestial camp, with its gongs of bronze and its trumpets of brass but he received nothing but stringent orders to do nothing whatever. Suddenly, however, he was relieved of this incubus. Without any apparent cause which could be ascertained then, or has been heard of since, the flight of Chinamen disappeared as silently and as expeditiously as they had come. Still the situation remained as much a deadlock as before. The Black Flags still held the suburbs, and Rivière remained as helpless as ever.

At length, after eleven months of this agony to an excitable man, the transport *Comète* arrived with seven hundred and fifty men from France. Before they set foot to earth at all there were signs of the activity Rivière longed for. Annamese mandarins at Haiphong refused to provide housing room for them. The captain of the transport came to take the two mud forts by force, but, before he could land, the Annamese took to flight.

This lull at hostilities was immediately followed up. The island of HONG-GAI, with its coal mines in HALONG Bay, was immediately occupied. Rivière himself, within a fortnight, went and took NAM-DINH by assault, a barrier which was contemplated in the river being the ostensible provocation. But just as Garnier had to hurry back to the capital after his capture of NAM-DINH, so it happened with Rivière. The Black Flags had not been camping round Hanoi for nothing. Their largest post was at GIA-CUOC, a small village on the spit of land

formed by the SONG-COI, and the *Canal des Rapides*. Here they had made entrenchments of the river embankments, and hence they issued on the night of the 26th March to attack the French company established in the Royal Pagoda. The fight went on till morning, and the French were only saved by their cannon. Two hundred men with more artillery from the French Concession drove the Flagmen off, and they were forced to cross the river under a heavy fire.

Berthe de Villeis followed them up the following day by an attack, with all his available forces, on GIA CUOC. The heavy guns and the Hotchkiss of the *Léopard* lent him weighty assistance. The Chinamen were driven out, their cannon were taken, and the village burnt.

Nevertheless, when four days afterwards Rivière returned, the GIA-CUOC entrenchments were already re-occupied. The Chinamen and Black Flags now adopted different tactics. They crossed the river and came in from PHU-HOAI in small bands, pillaged and burnt in the town, and made attacks on whatever small bands of Frenchmen they came across. Then for about a month again there was a lull. The Chinamen were engaged in raising earthworks on the SONGKAY road. But the Annamese knew what was coming, and fled from the town in such numbers that in a few weeks Hanoi was an absolute desert.

In the second week of May the storm burst. One morning the French found the gates and the stockade posts of the Concession covered with copies of the following defiant challenge from LIU JUNG-FU, the Black Flag chief.—

“ You French brigands live by violence in Europe and glare out on all the world like tigers, seeking for a place to exercise your craft and cruelty. Where there is

land you lick your chops for lust of it; where there are riches you would fain lay hands on them. You send out teachers of religion to undermine and ruin the people. You say you wish for international commerce, but you merely wish to swallow up the country. There are no bounds to your cruelty, and there is no name for your wickedness. You trust in your strength, and you debauch our women and our youth. Surely this excites the indignation of gods and men, and is past the endurance of heaven or earth. Now you seek to conquer Annam, and behind the dummy of international commerce cast the treaty aside and befool the world, that you may satisfy your lust for blood, capture cities, storm towns, slaughter Mandarins, and rob everybody. You kill the innocent, and you bribe in secret. Your outrages and cruelties extend everywhere. Your crimes are unspeakable. Not all the water of the West River would wash out your shame. He who issues this proclamation has received behest to avenge these wrongs. He has taken oath to exterminate you with an army which bears NI ('Justice') on its banners. His first desire was at once, with the speed of a thunderbolt, to descend on your rabbit holes and exterminate you without pity like the vermin you are. Such would raise rejoicing in the heart of man, and would be a symbol of Heaven's vengeance. But Hanoi is an ancient and honourable town. It is filled with honest and loyal citizens. Therefore could he not endure that the city should be reduced to ruins, and young and old be put to the sword.

"Therefore now do I, Liu Jung Fu, issue proclamation. Know, ye French robbers, that I come to meet you. Rely on your strength and rapine, and lead forth your herd of sheep and curs to meet my army of heroes and see who will be master. WAI-TAK-FU, an open

space, I have fixed on as the field where I shall establish my fame. If you own that you are no match for us; if you acknowledge that you cation Jews are only fit to grease the edge of our blades; if you would still remain alive, then behead your leaders, bring their heads to my official abode, leave our city, and return to your own foul lairs. Then I, out of regard for the Lord of Heaven, for humanity, and for my commission from Government to maintain peace, will not slaughter you for mere personal gratification. But if you hesitate and linger on, hankering for what you cannot take, one morning my soldiers will arrive, and with them dire misfortune for you. Take heed and yield while yet you may. Be not as mules and involve yourselves in ruin. Let each man ponder this well, while yet he may save himself from death."

Next day the French found that though the Black Flag chief wrote in 'Ercles vein, he was none the less a fighting man. On the night of the 11th May a regular bombardment was begun from GIA LAM, a village opposite the northern part of Hanoi, and concealed behind the swelling of the river bank. The Chinamen had nothing but round shot and old cannon of small calibre, which could not do much damage; but they kept up the fire for three nights and occasionally during the day-time. At last, on the 14th, Rivière received the reinforcements he had been waiting for, three hundred men of the naval brigade, and the same afternoon sent over a party which spiked the guns and destroyed the batteries.

On the 16th *Chef de Bataillon* Bertho de Villers, with some cannon, a Hotchkiss gun, and about five hundred men, proceeded against the works which had been thrown up on the Baeninh road, west of the Rapids Canal. The gunboats cleared the country before him with their shell, and so he marched over the whole five

miles which separates the SONG COI from the canal, burning the villages right and left, and storming the entrenched embankment about half a mile on the Hanoi side of the SONG KI.

With the exception of their artillery of which four honeycombed specimens were taken—the enemy had been found well armed. Remingtons and revolvers were found in the works, and altogether it was evident that the fighting now was to be of a different character from that in 1873. In sending his report of this affair home the last report he ever wrote—Rivière demanded reinforcements, and gave first voice to the foolish rumour, which was repeated all through the campaign, that the Chinamen, or at any rate the Black Flag Chinamen, had English and German leaders among them. It is scarcely necessary to say that the assertion had no basis whatever in fact.

The left bank of the river was now temporarily cleared. There remained the Black Flags at PHU-HOAI to settle with. These were genuine HAK-KI. The men at GIA-LAM and in the SONG-KI catthworks were almost certainly Chinamen from Bac Ninh, and not true followers of LIU JUNG-FU. The PHU-HOAI men on the night of the 18th May had made a descent on the town, passed the citadel, and for some hours kept up a violent fusillade on the Christian Mission, which was strongly protected with a ditch and a thick bamboo fence. The guard and some of the armed proselytes managed to beat them off, but it was evident that action on this side was as necessary as on the other bank of the river. Rivière had notions of attacking SONFAY. At the beginning of the month he had sent two gunboats, the *Léopard* and the *Carabine*, up the river to reconnoitre. Both of them, however, ran aground, and had some

smart exchange of shots with the Plagmen on the river banks before they got off and returned to Hanoi.

He now resolved to try the road, and this led to the reconnaissance, for it was nothing more, of the unlucky 19th of May. Four hundred men set out at four in the morning under the command of Bertho de Villers, Rivière accompanying the party in a chair, for the gay Parisian had not recovered from the state of nervous prostration which long inactivity and his chafing over the Chinese incubus had brought on. By midday the first troops came back. The rout was complete. They dribbled in in half dozens at a time, leaving the commandant dead at the Phu Hoa bridge, and bringing back Bertho de Villers only to die that night. It was a terrible night. There had been a council of war in the Concession at three in the afternoon, presided over by the lieutenant commanding the *Carabine*, so many of the superior officers having fallen or been wounded. It was resolved to clear away what houses remained near the citadel walls, and to destroy the European stores which had slowly grown up on the north side of the Concession, outside the log-stockade. The day was cruelly hot, and the men, parched with their march out and scurry back, poured the wine they found in the cafés down their throats like water. By nightfall many of them were hopelessly drunk. There were officers who stood on guard that night. A naval party, landed from the gunboats, worked desperately at the barricades, lighted by the glow of the still burning shops. If the Chinamen could have attacked as well as they defended their earthworks, they must surely have taken Hanoi that night. But the greater number of them were holding high festival over the thirty heads they had taken. A few came and attacked the company

established in the Royal Pagoda inside the citadel, but the Hotchkiss gun kept them off. Nevertheless a good many of the buildings within the citadel walls were destroyed, some by the French themselves, some by the attacking Black Flags.

The same day the *Ruimanu*, a chartered launch, was hurried down to Haiphong to bring up what reinforcements could be scraped together, a few men here and a few men there. The post of HENG-GAI, occupied only a couple of months before, was abandoned. QUI NHON, a port on the Annamese coast, which had been held since 1874, had all its garrison of 125 men transferred to Tongking. The situation was as desperate as it well could be, and not only in Hanoi, but in Haiphong and NAM DINH also.

Nevertheless the Concession was not attacked. It is difficult to say whether LIU JUNG-FU was right or wrong. On the one hand, he was never likely to have such an opportunity again. On the other, he had to consider that he outnumbered the French garrison of four hundred men only by about three to one, that he had no cannon, and that they had many, not only behind their abattis, but on the gunboats, whose revolving Hotchkiss guns had already done terrible execution. But if the Concession was not attacked, it was virtually in a state of siege. The Black Flags hold the town which now, but for them, was absolutely deserted. The company in the citadel was reduced to live on biscuits and tinned provisions, and could only be re-victualled by a regular expedition over the two miles of ground which separated it from the Concession.

Five hundred troops, three hundred of them Annamese *Tuanleus*, were hurried up from Saigon. Close after them came Bouet, the general commanding the

troops in Cochin China. He could not assume the offensive, but he occupied himself, pending the arrival of reinforcements from France, in perfecting the defences and in clearing and widening the street, the *Rue des Incrusteurs*, which led from the Concession to the citadel. At the same time also was raised the auxiliary corps of Yellow Flags, outlaw Chinamen like the Black Flags, but their deadly enemies. This arm, placed under the command of Captain Georges VLAVIANOS, the old Chinese Gordon soldier, did good service not only in fatigue work, but in furnishing information about the enemy's doings.

Shortly afterwards Dr. Harmand was appointed Commissary General of the Republic in Tongking. This was a terrible mistake. The doctor had seen some fighting under Garnier in Tongking; he therefore thought himself a soldier, and he also thought he knew all about the country. He had been consul at Bangkok, and had bullied the Siamese into obedience to his slightest nod; he therefore considered himself a politician. He came up with a flight of civil servants, French and Annamese, and wanted to commence the administration of the country, a year—or not more—before it was ready for it. His conceit and presumption eventually brought about the resignation of General Boubt, the best commander, with perhaps the exception of Admiral Combet, whom the French have had in Tongking.

Admiral Combet arrived in Tongking, with the newly formed Tongking naval division, in the early part of July. A few days before him had been landed the reinforcements from France, numbering between four thousand and five thousand men. Hanoi was now safe enough, and the French and other storekeepers returned

and built themselves new places of business. But the dubious fighting of August and September did not reassure the natives, though the enemy was driven farther and farther back, and it was not till after the capture of SONTAY, in December, that the Tongkinese really began to come back to their old capital.

The explosion of the reserve ammunition, brought back from that place to Hanoi and stored on the river bank north of the Concession, destroyed almost all the newly built foreign stores. It is a question, however, whether this disaster for the unfortunate tradesmen, thus burnt out twice in half a year, was not a benefit to the town in general, for the shops then necessarily huddled for protection under the log walls of the Concession, and are now scattered over a great part of the town, and greatly improve its appearance, besides tending to keep the place quieter, from the presence of Europeans among the natives. It is difficult to say what the population of the capital now is, but after the capture of Bacninh it had probably risen to 100,000, and since then it has been increasing almost daily.



CHAPTER III.

WALKS IN HANOI

HANOI is built on an absolutely flat stretch of ground, and one would not expect to find many elements of beauty in it. Nevertheless it is undoubtedly a fine town. It extends along the river face for a distance of quite a mile and a half, and covers all the space intervening between there and the citadel. In the centre of the town there is a small lake, between quarter and half a mile long. Most of the Annamese houses round the borders have been cleared away, and when the banks have been altered, and a roadway run all round, this must eventually become a very charming place, adorned as the two islands already are by picturesque temples. There are several other little lakelets, at present hardly to be got at, and serving for wallowing places for buffaloes, and spots where the Tongkinese, male and female, wash their clothes and themselves with a lack of modesty fortunately unusual among Orientals. These, with French taste to look after them, offer fine material for adornment. There can be no dispute that Hanoi will eventually far surpass Saigon, fine town as it is,

just as it is eventually destined to supplant Saigon as the chief town of the French possessions in the far East. At present, however, little but canteens and cafés are being run up. The *Rue des Incrusteurs*, the main street to the citadel, and the only street which as yet has the European Oriental appearance, is mainly lined with these establishments, except where there are others of a still less satisfactory character, interspersed with a few of the old native houses, where the inland ware manufacturers, who gave their name to the thoroughfare, still keep on their shops. In July, 1883, this street was only a mere mud-track, where the incautious pedestrian frequently sat down without premeditation and with discomfort. On each side ran a noisome open drain, over which one scrambled by precarious bamboo bridges to the houses on either side. Now all this is altered. The mud has become a spacious metalled roadway. The drains are filled up, and from the *Porte de France*, an ancient brick gateway with two dilapidated lions on the pillars, close to the Concession, one might drive two four-in-hands abreast almost all the way to the citadel.

This street is the most convenient from which to start to view the city. South of it there is almost nothing. On the river face is the French Concession, surrounded by its log-stockade; which to day encloses nothing but the public buildings and official residences. Farther west is the *SARRQUERIN*, the old mint, where the national "cash" were made under the superintendence of an official called the *CAI CUOC-DUC LIEN*. There is reasonable ground for belief that no more irritating coin has been inflicted on suffering humanity than the Annamese *sapèque*. They are round, a little smaller than a shilling, with a square hole punched through the middle. The best of them are made of copper, mixed with from

thirty to forty per cent. of zinc, but the majority are made of zinc pure and simple. They are cast, and not struck like European coins. Sixty of them make a TIEN. Ten TIEN make a QUAN, and when one has the whole six hundred they are only worth ninepence. These are tied together in a string with a bit of bamboo, which has an unhappy knack of breaking, and then it takes half an hour to gather a franc off the floor. Ten QUAN are tied up in a bundle like a brick to form a CRUC, and when one has this it is necessary to hire a coolie to carry seven and sixpence. The coolie gets a bamboo pole, fastens the CRUC to one end and a brick to the other, and carries it over his shoulder. In addition to this the dismal *sapèque* is, absurd as it may appear, liable to the most extraordinary fluctuations in value as compared with silver. Sometimes it falls to its own intrinsic value, which is a descent beyond the power of human language, even of Annamese language. At one time the cent, which was worth thirty nine cash in Haiphong, fetched forty-five in Hanoi. If we had had a small fleet of ships it would have actually been possible to make a small sum of money through the exchange. Lately copper has been very seldom introduced into the *sapèque's* composition. It is too much wanted for domestic utensils, and, *pace* M. Dupuis, very little copper comes down to Tongking from Yunnan. The consequence is that to its other drawbacks the Annamese cash adds the objection of being very brittle. One cannot pile any number of *quan*, or *liqatures*, as the French call them, upon one another without the certainty of breaking some of the detestable little coins. Then the bamboo strings have all to be undone and fresh *sapèques* strung on. It is small consolation to be told after all this that they are made on a perfect mathematical

system, and that twenty-seven of them placed edge to edge make up the Annamese unit of measure. Units of measure of this kind are altogether out of place in the nineteenth century. It may be hoped that the French will not make in Tongking the mistake they made in Saigon. There they actually struck off a number of cash with *Cochin-Chine Française* stamped on them, and kept the arsenal months at work punching holes through these anachronisms. It is one of the few things recorded to the national credit that the Cochin Chinese stubbornly refused to have anything to do with the *sapèques*, and, as far as is known, they still occupy several sheds in what remains of Saigon Citadel. It is also a redeeming point in the Tongkinese character that they infinitely prefer French sous or Hong Kong cents to their own coinage. This is, however, the less surprising, seeing how much more valuable these coins are. Nevertheless ancient cash are very much prized as amulets. Women hang those of WANG-MANG, dating from the year 9 B.C., round their necks to ensure the birth of a son, and there are always some old coins let into the back of the images set up in the places of worship. The fact that the *Sapèqueerie* is now utilized as barracks for the native troops induces the hope that the Annamese cash may be allowed to die out.

A little farther along the *Rue des Incrusteurs*, beyond the point where the Royal Road to HUÉ strikes to the south, is the CAMP DES LETTRÉS, the place where the biennial official examinations used to be held. In Tongking, as in China, official posts were only to be got by public examination, and it was here that the candidates for the higher grades were tested. One can still recognize the long rows of little cells where the aspirants were shut up, though the place, like the mint, is now

turned into barracks. On the other side of the road is the large mission compound, where there are a few houses, school buildings, and the like, surrounded by prettily laid out grounds. The church, which was burnt down by the Black Flags on the 18th May, 1883, has not yet been rebuilt, and an appeal to the soldiery for funds has not met with very satisfactory results.

It is, however, all to the north of this street, to the north of the central lake in fact, that the real commercial town lies. Hanoi does not differ very materially from other Oriental towns. The whole place has an essentially Chinese character about it, but it is in a way much superior to the majority of Chinese cities. The streets are fairly wide, for the most part paved with broad sun-dried tiles, and greatly superior to the narrow lanes of Canton, where there is barely room for a char to pass without incommoding the traffic. The houses, too, though seldom high, are substantially and neatly built of bricks covered over with white chunam.

The Chinamen keep themselves apart and form streets of their own, closed in the usual way with the gate under the PAIRANG portal at each end. They are the great traffickers—the bankers, usurers, and agents for Hong Kong and Canton houses. The principal trade is in silk and rice, and they usually mingle in their lordly way with the Tongkinese only to do business. Round about the big merchants, however, group the poorer Chinamen who have come to make their fortunes, and who start as clerks, or overseers, and sometimes as artisans, occasionally even as simple coolies. The mandarins always found them the most laborious and the most able workmen, and the few that have ventured to stay under French rule are mainly employed as contractors and purveyors. Their communities are pei-

fectly Chinese the streets lined with narrow, deep shops, the pendant wooden signboards with characters in red and blue and gold; the big swinging black and yellow and red lanterns, and the busy and animated crowd. Hanoi will not be really prosperous again till more of them come to settle there.

There is much less activity in the Annamese quarters. According to the common Eastern practice, and indeed as was formerly the case in Europe, each particular species of trader has his own special quarter. Thus one finds a whole street full of silk workers, where the women do elaborate embroidery and brocade work with bright-coloured and gold thread, fantastic patterns; where one has to be told which is the sun and which a simple cloud, which is the dragon and which the angel, and which a simple ordinary mortal, whether a thing is a mountain or a house, and so on, wild enough in design, but nevertheless with cleverly blended colours and a considerable amount of artistic sense. These silk-workers developed quite a new industry during the Tongking campaign. They worked fire screens and small table covers representing incidents in the war. The favourite design was a French soldier carrying a tricolour over his shoulder. Above were inscriptions varying according to the customers to be attracted. It might be *1^{er} bat. Legion Étrangère*, or *Fusiliers Marins*, or *32^{me} d'Infanterie de Marine*. On the sides appeared "SÖNTAY," "HUÉ," "NAM-DINH," "BACNINH," and so on; while others, to attract the blue jackets, added "PLUVIER," "ÉCLAIR," "TROMBE," "FANFARE," and the names of others of the river flotilla. Below finally was the device "*Un contre dix*." They were fairly well executed, but occasionally there was great trouble over the letters. One might appear lying on its face, or capsized on its

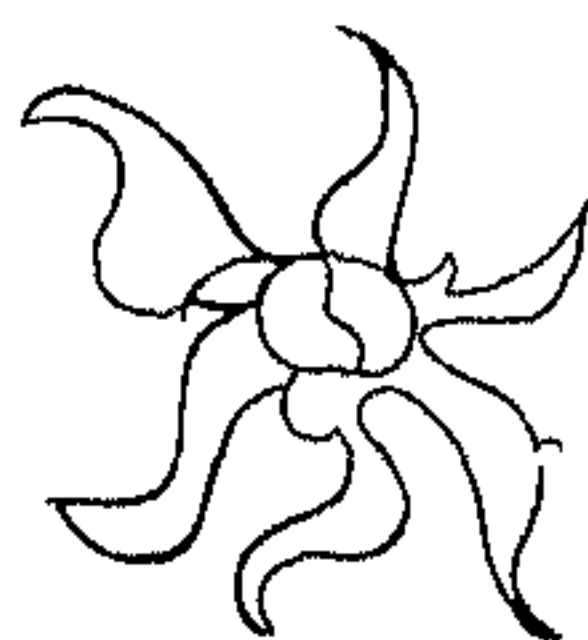
back, or turned wrong way first. On the whole, however, the work showed more skill and desire to make money than patriotic feeling. Little embroidered silk tobacco-pouches with ferocious Turcos and much bearded Frenchmen on them were also in great demand.

Alongside the embroiderers one often finds painters on a humble scale, men who execute the scrolls and mythological devices which the Annamese are so fond of hanging up in their houses. To the ordinary sketches of Fantaï, the god of war, the three Buddhas, and various illustrations of popular legends, the artists of 1888 added scenes of the capture of SONRAY and BAONINH, wherein the Chinamen were represented as flying helter-skelter. The citadels were curiously like the mediæval productions one sees in old tapestry, and all the French were in heroic attitudes. These enterprising gentlemen had even a greater success than their neighbours the embroiderers. The same people often make up the paper-offerings of boots and clothing and what not, to be offered up in the temples and on the ancestral shrine. Further along one finds a street full of turners, with a fairly satisfactory lathe with which they turn wooden drinking bowls and platters, but chiefly articles for pagoda worship. In another quarter one finds carpenters who manufacture nothing but boxes, of different sizes, round and square and so on, but still nothing but boxes. Other carpenters devote their energies to the production of coffins only, and in the cross-streets, running towards the Customs House, there is a whole quarter full of these dismal handicraftsmen. Blacksmiths, tailors, dealers in pottery ware—all have their special localities. There is a convenience in the arrangement in this way, that if one cannot get the precise thing one wants in one shop, it is only necessary to step next door to see a fresh selection.

But except the embroidery and the inlaid mother-of-pearl work, of which something will be said in the chapter on NAM-DINH, there is nothing specially worthy of notice in Hanoi industries. It is much more interesting to stroll about watching the people. They are not a race for which one can feel any enthusiastic regard, and it is as well to limit one's observations to inspection from a distance. They are frightfully dirty, and their neighbourhood is therefore unpleasant. They lie with the equanimity of Ananias turned auctioneer, they steal with a tranquillity which suggests the beginning or the end of all things, they have not morality worth a cent, and their company is therefore undesirable. It is to be feared that in Hanoi at any rate they are not improving. The habits of soldiers of any nation are hardly elevating, and the French soldier is, if anything, a little worse than his brethren of other nationalities. Consequently one finds the women either too familiar or too frightened. Half the men scowl and get inside their houses, and the other half hold one hand over the ear, as if they had the ear-ache—a motion intended to represent a military salute—and say, *Bon jour, Capitaine*. The little boys are too apt to mistake one for a Tunco, or a soldier of the Infantry of Marine in Mufti, and one would be glad to think that the lowest depth of gracelessness and depravity was reached by Annamese boys.

At the street corners, and in front of many of the houses, one notices the little shrines to the spirits, good and bad, who are so universally worshipped throughout Indo-China. Most of them, little dog-kennel-like things, have a few joss-sticks, some faded flowers, and a few grains of rice deposited in them, but some are very rickety, and there is nothing like the regard shown for them that one sees in Bangkok, for example. The

Annamese is not zealous, even in SHAMANISM the only faith he really has. Nevertheless, side by side with these signs of a degrading cult is to be seen the type of a mystical religion. On the gates of the joss-houses, painted on cloths hung from the gables of the houses, on the front part of the roofs of boats, there is represented a circle, whose mass is divided by a curved line into two convoluted and closely united parts. This is to be seen inscribed everywhere in China as in Annam. It is the emblem of Tao, of the supreme reason, explained by the philosopher LAO-TSU. It is the spiritual principle separated from the material principle of matter. It is

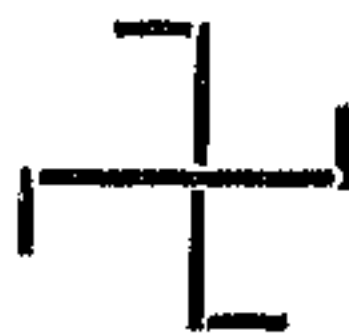


the personification of the supreme unknown Being who impregnated chaos and primordial matter. Lao tsu says of it — "It wheels about in boundless space without undergoing change. It may be considered the mother of the universe. I know no name for it, but I call it 'Tao, supreme, universal reason. I am forced to name it, and therefore define it by its attributes. I call it *grand, sublime*. This being granted, I say further, it is *that which extends through space*. This attribute being granted, I call it *the Remote, the Infinite and the Remote*; the Infinite is *that which is opposed to me*."

All this transcendentalism is lost on the Annamese. He regards the mystic symbol as little more than a picture which in some way brings good luck and protects him against evil spirits. He not unseldom adds rays to the simple emblem and imagines it gives greater virtue.

Another device which is found on old coins, and is sometimes to be seen on the interior walls of YAMUNS, and in the fresco painting of temples, is still more

curious and interesting. This is the emblem of loyalty, united to the sacred sign of ancient religion, to symbolize no doubt the temporal and spiritual powers joined together in the person of the sovereign. This religious sign, this cross with the limbs hooked at the extremities, is a heritage of prehistoric times. It is the SVASTIKA, the ARANI of the Aiyas, the life-giving staff from which issued, the pure AGNI at the prayer of the VĒDIC priest, under the influence of the rod PRAMATHA. It was the religious device of our most remote ancestors. It inspired, in the days of ŚAPIA SINDHU, the singers of the Rig Vēda hymns, and, strange to say, it is found, in an almost unchanged form, stamped on the baked earth bricks which are found mixed with stone axes at SOM-RONG-SEN in Camboja, which again seem to resemble wonderfully the specimens which Dr. Schliemann has dug up from under the ruins of Troy.



Such curious relics of antiquity are, however, altogether lost upon the modern Annāmose. He is much more interested in a marriage procession which comes down the street with much noise and tumult. In front walks the head of the bridegroom's family, who is to do the talking for the young man. Before him are two large lanterns suspended on sticks, and with the name of the family inscribed on their paper sides. Behind him comes the bridegroom, followed by a huge tray of betel and two bachelors, who may be called his best men. Then follows the MAI-DONG, the go between, who takes such a large part in most alliances in Indo-China. The father of the happy youth occupies a comparatively humble position behind the MAI-DONG, and is supported by four retainers carrying lanterns, who separate him from his own wife, likewise followed by lanterns borne

by blushing maidens. Then comes the go between's wife, and after her such of the family relations, as are supposed to be a credit to the name. Then come the tagrag and bobtail, among whom, however, must be no one wearing the mourning colour, white. That would bring misfortune on the young couple, so that all in mourning and all pregnant women are expected to get out of the way of such a *cortège*.

We see the party wheel into the young lady's house. There the marriage is fixed; for, though every other person in the procession has a huge umbrella held over him, this is not the real marriage day. It is the final binding over of the two to one another. This is the second rite. They have already been formally betrothed, perhaps some years before. Though, barring rice and fish, women are about the cheapest thing in Annamese markets, marriage is a very formidable matter. For mandarins, the *litterati* and distinguished people generally, there are six different ceremonies to be gone through, very much the same as those in China. People less exalted have less trouble, but even with them it is a fearsome business.

Marriages are all arranged for young people of any pretensions to family by their parents, usually through the go-between, but sometimes directly. Negotiations are entered into. There are mutual sacrifices at the ancestral altars. The young man sends jewels and finery, and the maiden sends betel-nut and cigarettes. When it is agreed that the two are likely to suit one another, which is settled by the old people the young man being considered very naughty if he endeavours to satisfy himself by rude, vulgar, personal inspection the betrothal day is fixed upon. This is done by a consideration of the respective hours and days on which the

two were born. A lucky time must be chosen. Then the young man goes in procession to the young lady's house. He prostrates himself before the family altar, lays on it a red paper stating his aspirations, and suggesting a day for the next ceremony. Then red candles are lighted, and everybody drinks rice spirit dyed red. Between this betrothal and the second formality, the passage of which we have just seen in the street, there are more presents exchanged, among which figures prominently a black pig.

This is eaten at the second ceremony; there is more burning of candles and prostrations before the altars of the fair maiden's ancestry, and every one drinks all the rice-wine he can carry.

Now comes the hard time for the youth. He has to go to the house of his future parents-in-law and work there for his wife. It is the regular biblical patriarchal business over again except that, though he may have to work for years, he cannot have any other than the veritable damsel contracted for delivered to him. He may not like her, but if he draws back now he has to pay smart-money. The same custom is said still to prevail among the TAGALOGS of Manila. Young Anna and I were wont to complain that they have a real bad time of it, and have such a terror of the mother-in-law, that they shun her from the moment she becomes so by law, as much as Westerns do a couple of years after marriage.

At length, however, the marriage day comes. There are more presents, among which must be a white goose and gander—rather bitter this. The MAI-DONG has also to deliver over to the girl's father the "marriage money," usually a hundred *ligatures*, £4. Parents who value their daughters higher are supposed to draw

down bad luck upon the couple. Then the marriage contract is drawn up on red paper. It is signed by the chief parties, by the parents, and is also, in cases of respectable bourgeois, furnished with the village seal. There is therefore something more than the mere publicity of the thing in the Annamese marriage rite. They are therefore perhaps a little in advance of the Burmese and the Indo-Chinese races, but divorce is just as common for all the written act of marriage.

The final procession on the marriage day is much the same as that already described. Only instead of putting on but one suit of clothes over his ordinary duty apparel, the bridegroom decks himself out in several. The outermost coat has wide sleeves, much too long in the arm, in the Celestial fashion. A young man who thinks himself very superior will often substitute for the usual black, silk-crape turban a turleted head-gear somewhat like a mitre.

The actual ceremony is not very impressive. It takes place in the bride's home. Candles are placed on the family altar along with the usual plate of betel. The girl's father delivers a speech, in which he announces to his forefathers that he is marrying his daughter HUYEN-TRAN (the Pearl of Jet), aged so many years, to NGUU, the son of DOAN-NUU-HAI. He invokes ancestral approbation and long life for the happy pair, and then, with the young man's father, prostrates himself four times before the altar. The two mothers go through the same prostrations. Then it is the turn of the bride and bridegroom; but after they have shown due regard for the ancestors of the family, they have to "knock their heads" before both the fathers, both the mothers, and a goodly number of their more elderly relations. Then the ceremony is over.

All then go in procession to the bridegroom's house, the newly married couple at the head, under festive umbrellas, the bridegroom with his two best men, the bride with her two maids and the box with her trousseau. The road is barred by children with a red thread, reminding one of the "gold and silver cord" of Burma. As in Burma, its safe removal must be paid for.

The entrance to the town is sprinkled with red dust. Inside, the ancestral altars are revered as in the bride's home, and the unfortunate pair have to "knock their heads" again. After this they are conveyed into the nuptial chamber, which has been carefully prepared and garnished beforehand with red candles, incense sticks, tea, wine, sweet stuff, and finally thirty six quids of betel. Their conductor is an old gentleman who has been selected because of the luck he is supposed to bring. He lights the candles and the joss sticks, pours out a libation, and invites the favour of Tò BA NGUYEN, the spirit of the red threads (symbolizing the marital bonds), and of the "lady" of the moon. Then they drink wine together. The bride offers a cup to her husband and says, "Drink that our union may last a hundred years. In everything I must obey you, and I will never venture to contradict you. The husband drinks and returns the compliment, saying, "Drink this wine. May we live a hundred years together. You must obey my father and mother, and live on good terms with my relations, be faithful to me in everything, and never deceive me." Then they set to work to get through the betel, and the jam, and the tea, after which formidable task they go out to the marriage party, who have been regaling themselves outside. That finishes the matter, but for the next three days neither husband nor wife may leave the house, nor separate for any

length of time. Then the wife goes to work, and the husband takes it easy.

It is always easy to know when a child has been born in an Annamese house, especially in the country villages. A shoot of bamboo is thrust into the ground in front of the door, and to this is fastened a bit of wood charred at one end. A glance at this determines the sex of the new arrival. If it is a boy the burnt end is turned towards the house; if it is a daughter the wood is reversed. This is to symbolize that the boy may one day succeed his father in the management of the house, while the girl is destined to go forth among strangers. As in China, each child is considered a year old when it is born, and another is added on the first day of the new year, the *Tet*. Thus a child born on the last day of the year is two years old next day. The result is to make New Year's Day a general feast, for every one is a year older that day. It is curious that savages as well as civilized people should rejoice because they are a year older.

A month after birth a lucky old man or woman is called in to name the child. The *Lư-Kh*, or some book of equal estimation, is passed, with a mumbled benediction, before the infant's lips, and then the dew from a freshly cut flower is sprinkled on its face. The child is then named, and its relations proceed to drink *Samsuoo*, and eat pig and dog. After a year the child is formally introduced to its ancestors, and these worthies are informed of its name and sex. They are often, whether boys or girls, set to work at five or six years old, and have then assurance and impudence enough for—whatever age may be supposed to justify impertinence.

We have drifted somewhat away from Hanoi streets. The sight of a mandarin passing through the capital is

somewhat rare now, but one does occasionally come across the Tong-doo making a visit to some French officer. He has still his grand palanquin, or cool hammock rather, with its big carved and gilded bamboo pole and its gorgeous red silk curtains and hangings, his two umbrellas in front of it, his military guard, his servants with their store of bundles and mysterious bamboo boxes and mats, his secretaries with their paraded brushes and platters for China ink. But he does not care to show them. His bearers have to get out of the way of any casual strolling French linesman; his motley train is sure to be laughed at, and even the townspeople are afraid to show any respect, lest they should be considered anti-French.

To be sure of seeing him one is forced to pay him a visit. He is humbly lodged compared with his former grand establishment inside the citadel, but still he manages to keep up some dignity. He gets up to receive his visitor, leads him to a seat, and then seats himself in cross-legged fashion on the other side of the little table, such as one finds in Chinese *Yanums*. On the outspread mats on the floor are scattered papers, betel-boxes, water pipes, tea-services, the big national conical hats, peacock fans, beer, brandy, and absinthe. He probably offers some of the latter immediately along with a cigarette, possibly rolled by his own dirty, long-nailed fingers. He is a skinny, insignificant-looking creature, with his chin and the upper part of his forehead swathed in a turban of black, national silk-crape. His large thick soled red sandals lie on the floor. Over his ordinary dress he has a fine embroidered blue silk tunic, lamentably soiled at the neck and the sleeves. If you are a Frenchman he does his utmost to be agreeable. He plays the *bon garçon*.

When he is not laughing boisterously he has a forced and repulsive smile. He has gusts of amiability, when he can hardly keep from clasping his guest to his bosom, and he talks in a beaming way of the happiness and prosperity which are already beginning to shine in the countenances of the population. He rattles away, in fact, to conceal what he thinks.

But with a foreigner, other than a Frenchman, his manner changes. He does his best to maintain a stolid silence, and, when he is not forced to answer a question, simply gains fatuously. He becomes terribly dense, and passes the time of the interview by having to get every thing laboriously explained to him, while he audibly scratches his legs and shoulder-blades with his two-inch long finger-nails. He tries nervously to look round impossible corners to see if there are spies about, and would fain keep you drinking to prevent you from talking. The Hué mandarins have always been a bad lot, but those that have retained office under the French, and profess friendliness to the Protectorate, are probably the very worst of them. The only time when he is sincere is probably when he speeds you on your way, and wishes you the Three Abundances and the Three Longevities. The Three Abundances are of days, goods, and children—that is to say, long posterity. The Three Longevities are for yourself, your children, and your reputation. The Annamese consider that there are three kinds of old age—supreme, middle, and inferior. To the highest degree is sacred the Cai-Mai, a kind of *Rhus*, a very rare tree, whose dried flowers are used to impart a flavour to tea, and which lives to a hundred years. To the middle degree is consecrated the pine, which is supposed to attain the age of eighty, while the bamboo represents the lowest stage with seventy years.

Such pious aspirations naturally lead one to the Great Lake, north of the city, where temples and religious houses abound. This is a huge shallow sheet of water two and a half miles long by two broad or thereabouts. The way thither takes one through the poorer parts of the town. One soon leaves the solid brick-and-tile houses behind, and gets into a region of wretched wattled bothies with roofs of palm leaf or rice-straw thatch. This was the favourite hunting ground of French linesmen who were up to mischief, and it was sad to see how many indulged in that pursuit. No wonder so many of them got skin diseases. If one takes the road which skirts the walls of the citadel, the first view of the lake is from the temple of the Grand Buddha. This is a huge sitting image, said, but probably erroneously, to be of Japanese make. It is fully twenty feet high, with helm and hauberk and scaly breast armour. Held perpendicularly, grasped between the two hands, is a sword, the point resting on a tortoise, and the blade entwined with a serpent. The gloom of the inner shrine where he stands is heightened by musty, olive brown curtains, and the eyes are turned fiercely on the speaker. Enough has been said to show that this is no Buddha, though it may please the debased Annamese to call it so. The great teacher should be represented with calm eyes wrapped in the pure contemplation of NIRVANA, and to put a sword in the hands of him who "ne'er took the life of meanest thing upon its upward path" is a palpable absurdity.

There is a rapacious monk in charge of the place, and the French have filled the anti-chapel with a military post, so that the arms-racks stand side by side with the figures of the Buddha's disciples. We leave the place, and turn to the right, across a sort of embank-

mont bridge, which cuts off a corner of the lake. The view is sufficiently picturesque. There is a high wooded bank on the eastern side, and the temples and monasteries on it and on the numerous wooded islets serve to relieve the otherwise intolerable monotony of the wide expanse of water and the flatness of the surrounding country.

To visit these religious houses one has to pass through the city wall at a place where the French have raised a large brick block house, with a couple of guns to defend the northern approaches to the town. It is not easy to find one's way into the finer buildings, which are all situated on the islands. It is necessary to meander about among the houses, for there are no roads, and this causes terrible alarm among the women and boys, great barking of dogs, and banging of doors and windows.

Nevertheless in the early days of 1884, when few Frenchmen ventured outside the city walls, and the monks were not yet scared away, the writer was fortunate enough to see a religious service in one of these joss-houses. There was a large brick-paved court in front with a wall all round, and a highly ornate gateway on the face opposite the temple. The temple itself was quite open towards this court, with simply a few wooden pillars to support the roof. In the background was the altar of the Buddha, who was represented as a highly Chinese-looking personage, very highly painted, and supported on either side by disciples. The lower edges of the altar were covered with wooden sacrificial vessels, incense braziers, cups of oil with wicks in them, spial joss-sticks, and the like.

In front of this was the altar for offerings, with more sacrificial utensils, paper boots, piles of bars of silver and gold in paper, flowers, rice, and fruit. On either

side were racks of processional weapons in pairs on long poles—a griffin's head, a closed hand with a pencil grasped in it, another with the forefinger extended, a tiger's head, the hammer of the gods, swords and spears. To the right and left, in what might be called the chancel, were two niches with ARAMATS in them; and beneath these, two rocky-like structures with flames in little cavities representing what had the appearance of scenes of the Last Day. On the left-hand side the righteous were admitted into a kind of Paradise, where was enthroned a majestic Buddha, with other divinities by his side. On the right were representations of the punishments of the damned. Huge devils, with tail and talons, were depicted pitchforking the wicked with barbed and corkscrew lances into different hells, where there were other victims hung, impaled, drowned, roasted, stripped of their flesh. Side by side were two cleverly modelled figures which showed considerable artistic humour. One was a fat, complacent individual, clasping with podgy hands a Falstaffian belly; the other was a mere skeleton, all skin and bone, the bones being very carefully studied. They were regarding one another as the rich man and Lazarus might have done.

On either side of the central table with its lighted candles were figures—one a commonplace good spirit, with the scanty chin-beard and moustache common to the Annamese, and with a very vacant face, intended, no doubt, to express good-will; the other was unmistakably an evil spirit, and the carver had evidently devoted much study to the subject with very remarkable success. Possibly he had a bad conscience. The creature stood on one foot, with the other drawn up as in a demoniac dance. He clasped a book to his breast, and in the other hand brandished a pencil, as though he

were a kind of recording devil. The faces wore a ghoulish grin, and had a remarkable resemblance to that of Satan in the celebrated picture of the temptation of Christ on the lofty mountain.

Round about, seated and kneeling, were some twenty or thirty devotees, some near the bell on the left, some near the gong on the right. In the chancel, if it may be so called, was an old monk presiding over a choir of a dozen others. He was wasted away to a mere skeleton, and was leading the lauds at the top of his voice, intoning them in regular Buddhist fashion, so that, if one had closed his eyes, it was possible to imagine a Romish priest chanting the mass. But it was impossible to keep one's eyes off the old man. Now and then he was measured and solemn, but far oftener he seemed as if in an inspired ecstasy, stretching out his hands and making uncanny gestures with his fingers at a prodigious pace. The worshippers seemed altogether unimpressed, and talked away to one another as if nothing were going on, but without affecting the celebrant. When he ceased for a time, apparently from exhaustion, the choir commenced a kind of liturgy, with the accompaniment of several flutes and a primitive kind of violin. After a time the old monk rang a little bell, and the chorus ceased, to let him begin his recitation again. He became more and more excited, interlaced his fingers nervously, cast his eyes over the congregation, threw himself on his face, and violently rung the bell. Thereupon all the crowd, who all this time had been indiscriminately talking, joking, laughing, praying, singing, and even sleeping, prostrated themselves on their faces for full a minute. Then apparently all was beginning over again, when some one noticed the foreigner outside. There was a stifled shriek. The religious scattered in

all directions, the assisting monks commenced putting up the boards which closed the front entrance, and the old celebrant came out and, humbly chin chinning, begged that information might not be laid against him as a malcontent. A present of a dollar reassured him somewhat, wretched SRAMANA that he was, to touch polluting lucie, but he could not be persuaded to go on with the service, and when next, two months later, the writer passed that way, the place was empty and half stripped, and bats dung defiled the wooden benches round the walls where late the pious had slept. Truly it was not creditable to the French.

There was nothing to be done but to retire, after making the best use of the waning light to examine a kind of pillar with a flame-pointed summit, on the lower faces of which were black marble plaques with some inscription in Annamese, and a white-washed wall on which was painted a kind of solar system, with numerous examples of the emblem of Tao, the supreme intelligence. Over the gateway was the representation of a heart cut in half, supported on the backs of three well modelled fogs. It was impossible to get any Annamese to explain what this somewhat singular group meant. In happier times some one may find a solution.



CHAPTER IV.

THE SONTAY ROAD

WHATEVER other experiences the French may have in Tongking, the SONTAY road will always have a melancholy interest. At its very beginning, scant five miles from Hanoi Citadel, they suffered successive disasters, which, more than anything else, forced on the events that must eventually end in the country becoming French territory. At the end of it, in SONTAY itself, they had a stubborn fight which practically sealed the fate of Tongking. All along the route, and to the right towards the river, are the scenes of the toughest struggles of the campaign of 1883.

The road itself, as a road, is particularly uninteresting throughout its entire length. The only alternation to the wide-spreading paddy-fields, of a tender green or yellowing for the sickle, according to the season when one passes, and the high fences of the villages, with their tufts of areca palm and fruit trees, is the smaller clump which marks a pagoda, easily recognizable, though the building itself may be concealed, by the hard-wood trees and the white flamboyant columns and

ornate gateway, which stand out effectively against the green background. Otherwise everything is flat, absolutely flat right away to the horizon, except for the occasional depression which holds water, and is dignified with the name of a lake. From the comparative elevation of the road, which is simply a two or three foot high clay embankment, driven as straight across the country as the occasional necessity of passing a bigger village than ordinary will allow, one can see for miles across paddy fields, nothing but paddy-fields, or lumpy red soil being ploughed by the lazy oxen and buffaloes to be turned into paddy fields. It is a relief to pass an occasional string of women carrying sugar-cane and shrimps in the baskets slung over their shoulders, or to see the white neck of a paddy bird craning out of the green rice. It is better to see it so, perhaps, than when one marches with the French troops. Then there is life and animation enough, but there are none of the lines of coolie women to be seen loping along at a kind of suppressed run, with blue wales on their shoulders, from constant service as beasts of burden, and the paddy-birds fly away affrighted.

Half an hour's canton takes one out, round the southern walls of the citadel—for the western gate from which the route starts has been closed since Rivière's capture of the place through the Royal Gate of the ramparts of old Hanoi commune, with its huge black marble flags, polished like glass with the thousands of bare feet, under the green walls of a score of villages, past a sheet of water which is much too big for a horse pond, and far too shallow and indefinite for a lake, over the four and three-quarter miles to the *Pont de Papier*. This is an inferior kind of bridge, spanning, with a single low arch, a sullen stream or creek.

Just short of this bridge a high embankment runs into the road from the south, and indeed for a couple of hundred yards forms the road. A mile or more down this embankment Garnier ended his adventurous life. To the right, on the Hanoi side, is the *Pagode Balny*, named after the unfortunate officer who fell there. The pagoda itself is insignificant enough, but there is a finely ornamented gateway opening on the avenue of magnificent trees which leads up to it. Immediately under this avenue is a sheet of water, and on the other side of this a dense mass of trees. Just on the far side of the bridge, in front of the little spirit shrine, which stands beyond the row of bamboo shanties that serve as the four day market place for the neighbourhood, is the place where Rivière fell. No better place could be imagined for an ambushade. Bamboo fenced villages run down to the water on the farther side of the stream; the embankment with its lime kilns on the southern slope could conceal a thousand men; the thicket across from the pagoda might be full of spearmen, and never a glint of the steel.

It was from behind the embankment that the volley came which turned BALNY D'AVRICOURT'S sally into a rout. Ten years later, when Rivière marched out on his reconnaissance with four hundred men, the preparations were more elaborate. The advance guard was allowed to pass the bridge, and the guns were on it when fire was opened from behind the village dyke and fence. Then a murderous flank fire was poured in from the jungle patch to the north of *Pagode Balny*. The surprise was complete, and the French troops were at once thrown into utter disorder. From the very first nothing but retreat was thought of, but the question was how to save the guns. They could not be turned on the bridge, and to cross it was to advance right in

the teeth of the Black Flags. This, however, eventually was done, and two of the guns were turned and retreated precipitately, the coolies with the ammunition having run off at the first discharge. But the other got entangled in the mud, the gunners were shot down, and the piece was on the point of falling into the hands of the HAKAI when Rivière with a few of his sailors rushed forward. The gun was saved and carried off by the men, but Rivière and several other officers remained on the ground, some killed on the spot, some perhaps captured and killed afterwards. The panic was such that no one was able to give a coherent account of what really happened. Out of four hundred men the French lost eighty-seven killed and wounded a very heavy proportion. The enemy's loss was comparatively slight. Rivière's body was buried at PHU HOAI, between those of two Black Flag chiefs who had been killed in the fight. The place was pointed out by the Annamese several months afterwards. His head and those of the thirty-one men left on the scene of action were buried together at the village of KIEN-MAI, which lies off to the left of the road, some four or five miles farther on. Rivière's head had been embalmed by some process or other, and was perfectly recognizable when it was disinterred in the end of August.

The village of PHU HOAI, which is usually spoken of as the place where both Garnier and Rivière were killed, in reality lies to the right of the road, half a mile or more beyond the *Pont de Papier*. The fort is about the same distance beyond, but the names might be interchanged. The village is a fort, and the fort is a village. A pagoda enclosure, which stands at a bend of the road in front, might dispute the name with either, and the bullet marks on its mason-work show that the Chinamen were

alive to the strength of the position. Between the two places are a number of half-battered down pagodas and the remains of some mud breastworks, partly destroyed by the floods which foiled the French on the 15th of August, and partly by the French themselves.

PHU-HOAI is of thoroughly native construction, with earthwork bastions in imitation of the larger works built on Vauban's system. It was built by NGUYEN TRI PHUONG, the great marshal, shortly before Garnier's arrival. On the occasion of the first capture of Hanoi, a cannon shot and the discharge of ten Chassopôt rifles was sufficient to scare off the garrison. Now the redoubt is occupied by a force of native auxiliaries, and there is a mandarin in the place who for months did a great trade in the heads of "pirates." He gives a fair reward for each head, and had brisk disbursements. The winter on one occasion passed a man coming in with some spoil of the kind. He had apparently not been so fortunate as he expected. At any rate, to balance the head, which was slung at one end of the bamboo on which the Tongkinese carry everything, a brick was suspended behind. At PHU-HOAI also the French keep the elephants which they captured at Hanoi, Sontay, and Bac Ninh. They were moved thither after the biggest of them went *must* in Hanoi Citadel and killed two *mahouts*. Fire was opened on him with a Hotchkiss gun, but the shells exploded on his hide without doing serious harm, and it was only through the good shooting of a Turco officer that the huge brute was eventually killed.

After PHU-HOAI, the road becomes very uninteresting for a long way. The villages are fewer and sit at a considerable distance from the road. There is nothing but a wide sea of paddy fields. In the middle of this one comes to a longish bridge over a thirty foot creek.

It is altogether built of stone, piles, cross girders, huge rectangular flagged roadway, and everything. It has no parapet, nothing but the carved griffin heads of the piles to mark the brink on a dark night. On the eastern side of this were established the Black Flag lines of the 15th August, 1883.

The French plan on that occasion was sufficiently ambitious. Three columns of five hundred men each marched out from Hanoi. The right wing, under the command of Colonel (now General) Bichôt, proceeded directly northwards between the Great Lake and the river, where it was supported by the river flotilla. The village of Vĩ, on the river bank north of the lake, was occupied without opposition. Beyond this, however, were lines of earth works. Three of these were taken in succession after tolerably severe fighting, but at the fourth the French failed in the assault. This line covered the "Four Column Pagoda," on the river face. Having been baffled at the first attempt, and as his men were worn out with their exertions in fighting and tramping through slush and water, in some places as high as the waist, Bichôt stopped the advance and commenced bombarding the lines from land and river, awaiting the next day and news from the left.

Colonel Coronat, the chief of the staff, took command of the centre column. They marched out by the SONIAI road, and were surprised to find PHU-HOAI (almost directly south of the "Four Column Pagoda") unoccupied. There he was relieved by the left column, under Colonel REVILLON of the artillery, which had come up the embankment on which Garnier was killed. Coronat then went on directly northwards by paths and paddy-field ridges. At the village of YEN, short of the creek above referred to, he touched the enemy. There was a good

deal of cannonading and firing at long rifle range. The Black Flags crossed the creek and took up position behind their fortified embankment. The colonel retired his troops inside a pagoda clump, Kí-nor, and, satisfied with its natural strength as a fortress, contented himself with crenelating the walls. There the two bodies remained facing one another all night long.

The left column, after replacing Colonel Coronat at Píu-Hoar, proceeded along the SONTAY road. The corps of Yellow Flags, under Captain Georges Vlavianos, did good service on this occasion. They skulked through the village of Vong and dislodged the enemy's outposts from there and other outlying hamlets. But a thousand yards short of the stone bridge referred to above the column was brought to a halt. For a length of over two thousand yards the Chinamen had batteries on the farther side of the creek. There was not a shadow of cover for the Frenchmen, and their guns failed to silence either the batteries or the breastworks behind which the Black Flag riflemen kept up a somewhat useless fire. Colonel Revillon considered this the key of the position, and called upon Colonel Coronat to come to his assistance and make a combined attack. From some unexplained cause Coronat did not move. Perhaps he thought he would expose his flank and rear to the enemy then facing him. Perhaps the intervening country was impracticable. He was somewhat recklessly attacked for it by irresponsible critics, but without doubt unjustly, for he afterwards proved himself one of the very ablest leaders in the campaign. However it may be, a retreat was ordered by the General. The moment the French turned, the Black Flags issued from their entrenchments and kept up a harassing fire all the three miles to Píu-Hoar. It had been pouring

torrents of rain from ten in the morning, and the French returned to Hanoi in the evening so exhausted that they could hardly drag one limb after another. Colonel Coronat returned next morning.

All night long it poured, and daylight found the whole country flooded. A large part of Hanoi itself was under water. The floods which had hampered the French in one way proved an advantage in another. At daylight Colonel Bichot found the "Four Column Pagoda" evacuated and promptly occupied it. He also in turn was almost driven out. At one time there was quite three feet of water inside the temple. Fortunately, however, just as he was putting his men on board the gunboats, the embankment gave way. The waters spread ruin over the flat lands, but the French were able to occupy the pagoda and put it in a state of defence against attacks from the north west. Since then the "Four Column Pagoda" has remained in French hands. When they took it, it was one of the most magnificent in the country. Military occupation and the water have, however, converted it into a dismal barrack.

This affair of the 15th of August was at the time generally put down as a repulse to the French. This, however, was hardly fair. Neither is it just to say that it was a French victory, though this river post remained as a gage in their hands. The Black Flags were to the full as much disconcerted and incommoded by the inundation. The final result was that, partly because the French held this post on their flank, the lines on the creek were abandoned, and they retired six miles farther back on the Da, the westernmost mouth of the Song co^o river delta. The French loss on the occasion was eighty-one European troops killed and wounded, besides heavy losses in the auxiliary troops.

From this stone bridge on to Phong the road does not vary in its monotony. There are, however, some very large villages at no great distance from the road, and at one of these, on the occasion of a somewhat lonely ride to the Dai, the waiter made halt for half an hour or so. It was market day, and the little sheds—simple structures of four sticks fixed into the ground, with a loosely woven split bamboo roof—were filled to their utmost. There were little baskets of rice, husked and unhusked, peanuts, sesamum seeds, yams, peanut oil (largely consumed in Europe now as “olive” oil), cotton, ginned and raw, pork, fresh and cooked, salted and sun-dried, a species of oil-cake made indifferently from peanuts and sesamum, castor oil seeds (of which there are many trees along the roadside), embroidered tobacco-pouches to be fastened at the girdle, pastry of a bilious looking nature, areca-nuts broken up ready for the chewer, dried and fresh fish, vegetables and fruits of a variety of kinds, pigments, NUOC-MAM, a peculiarly evil-smelling kind of fish oil, like the Burmese NGA-TIN, and whole heaps of stuff which looked like rubbish, but which turned out to be Chinese drugs and medicinal plants. Besides these there were a few stalls where domestic utensils and pottery of a rough kind were being sold. Inside some of the houses women could be seen working away with silk and beating out cotton. The whole scene was very lively, but the presence of the foreigner scared a good many peasants away, and cast a general gloom over the noisy market.

To propitiate him, and at the same time to allow the four-day market to go on, the headman asked the unwelcome visitor into his house. TRA-NUI, the country peasants’ tea, was brought forward. The whole leaf is boiled and left at the bottom of the cup, the liquor, like

the leaves, being very light in colour. There is no great flavour about it, and as a beverage it is not to be compared to China tea, from which, indeed, it greatly differs, but it is very good for quenching thirst. A bowl of it can be bought at the wayside stalls for ten cash, say a farthing, so that one did not feel that the old man was being robbed, even though he added some greasy-looking rice cakes and a few bananas.

Fortunately, also, there was a baby present to whom one could give a bit of silver without hurting the Tongkinese gentleman's dignity. A curious incident happened showing the universality of certain customs. The baby sneezed, whereupon the whole body of his relations called out *Com Ca*, "rice and fish." The same thing is done if a child should faint. The idea is to call back its spirit and its wits, which might only be scared further away if the body were touched. To sneeze once with the Annamese is a presage of wealth; twice means trouble. The Annamese have a curious notion of going as little near a newly born child as possible. The objection to this that it will not learn to know its own relations is dodged in a peculiar way. The uncles and aunts and all the nearer relations dip a corner of their coat into water and squeeze the moisture out of it into the baby's mouth. Considering the filthy nature of Annamese clothes this is very hard on the baby.

The visit was broken off in rather an abrupt and singular way. One of the goodman's cocks crowed rather lustily from the fence which encircled the house. Immediately two or three young men who were lolling about the door began laughing and pointing significantly at two girls sitting in the interior of the house. The maidens giggled in a rather faint and abashed fashion. A demand for an explanation from the interpreter called

forth the reply that, when cocks crowed at midday (which it then was), it was a sign that the girls of the house would turn out badly. This, uttered as it was with many nods and winks, was such a scandalous revelation of the ordinary native idea of the white man's doings, that an immediate retreat was made. One's opinion of neither Frenchman nor Tongkinese was heightened by the incident.

On the way back to the road it was necessary to pass some buffaloes, which are no more friendly to white men here than they are in other parts of the East. The pink brutes were as usual the fiercest. It is said that they often beat off tigers. Some small mites of boys, sprawling stark naked on the beasts' haunches, prevented open hostilities on this occasion. Though buffaloes are far from rare, it is very seldom that an Annamese has one of his own. The buffaloes of a district belong to the whole village in common, and are guarded and looked after at the common cost, each man having his stipulated time during which he may use them. They work by day or go out to feed herded by a little child, and at night they are tethered in a paddock.

Phong is about thirteen miles from Hanoi. On this side it is a very strong position, and with well-served guns would have been very hard to take. In front there is a lake, or sheet of shallow water. Behind there is a gigantic dyke protecting it from the overflowing of a lagoon connected with the river Dai. Towards the south-east, rising out of the swamp, are the usual number of outlying villages and pagodas, and there is a square, mud-walled, bamboo-girt place called a fort, but which might just as well be called a village. The town itself crouches in a long line under the shelter of the dyke, and a bamboo fence and palisading protect it

all the way along. Except that there are few or no gardens within its limits, PHONG is just like an ordinary Annamese village.

The French got it rather cheaply. General BOUT attacked PALAN on the first of September. This place is twelve miles up the SONG cor from Hanoi and a few miles north of PHONG. The Black Flags had entrenched themselves on the river embankment, and, notwithstanding that they were shelled both by the gunboats and the light field artillery without any possibility of returning an effective fire, they held their ground. The works had to be taken by assault, and men who had seen ordinary Chinese troops and the ordinary Chinese manner of fighting were amazed at the HAKKI bravery. They met the French bayonet charge, and for some minutes both sides were firing so close that their clothes caught fire with the discharge. But discipline prevailed, and the Chinamen were driven back and over the river DAI, where the fire of the gunboats made the passage particularly disastrous. But the French lost heavily in proportion to the force engaged. About sixty of the home troops fell, and the loss among the native auxiliaries and the Yellow Flags, who on this occasion greatly distinguished themselves, was very heavy.

On the same evening a party marched down the embankment to PHONG, but they were there received with so hot a fire from the embankment and from loop holed temples that they retired again, having had enough fighting for one day. Seven days later, on the 8th of September, a fresh expedition marching thither found the town evacuated, and contented themselves with receiving the submission of the headman.

The town lies about a mile from the DAI. A great part of this space is under water during the rains, but

in the dry weather it produces heavy crops of sugarcane, maize, peanuts, and tubers of various kinds. What in the rains is a raging flood dwindles down to an insignificant stream in the huge dry channel, with foids a yard deep almost everywhere one chooses to make the experiment. Beyond the Dai the road passes over a little higher level, and is consequently somewhat drier, but the scene is practically still the same—eternal stretches of paddy fields, castor oil plants, maize, and peanuts. Away to the south-west one sees the jagged line of hills which forms the walls of 'Fongking in that direction, and to the north west, straight ahead, the detached mass of hills beyond SONIAY, with the central huge peak towering over the Ht. Ho, but otherwise there is nothing to relieve the eternal flatness of the landscape. The villages are perhaps a little larger and more prosperous-looking, and the isolated spirit temples in the middle of the fields are more substantial than lower down. The creeks are, however, a little more defined, and there are some solidly built, rooted bridges, with rows of seats or stalls along both sides. Here, also, as in all the higher delta lands, there are numerous specimens of the banyan, some of them almost as fine as the magnificent tree in Hanoi Citadel, the sacred Boóc, whose branches send down perpetual new arms to form new trunks round the central stem, these again putting forth downward shoots to take root and stretch out continual fresh arcades over acres of ground. The Hanoi tree stands beside the once charming little temple of the L's, still guarded by the last scion of the Lu dynasty, a shrivelled old woman of nearly eighty years of age. From a particular arch of this sacred holt, the Annamese mandarins used to hang themselves in the old days, when they fell into disgrace at court.

Out on the march these temples with their banyans offer the best place for a halt. The rays of the sun scarcely penetrate through the dense mass of foliage, and round about there hang curtains of creepers, lianas, and rattans, some capriciously embracing the branches, or themselves interlaced and hanging in graceful festoons, others falling on the temple walls, or creeping over the ground with roots like the dignified writhings of a serpent. The tree itself, as often as not, is a shrine, with little ancestral altars built in convenient nooks and corners in the lower branches, diminutive sanctuaries, protected by a small tectum, with tapers and incense sticks, candles, gold and silver bars and other little cardboard trifles. Sometimes one sees the mandarin himself (in paper), with his elephant, his horses, and umbrellas. Hidden away in the outer precincts of this big hirst with one central stem one finds the humble efforts of the poor, pitiful, little things in rough hewn wood, or small tables with toy offerings, and here and there even amulets hung up for the benefit of the living. Within the leafy shade are always numbers of *Toukies*, geckos with their curious, startling cry. Like the other Indo Chinese races, the Annamese have a great regard for them. They count their cries of *Tick too*. If they are odd in number it is a lucky sign, if they are even it is bad.

In this upper delta country there are also other fine trees, the huge, white stommed *flamboyant*, a tree like the "forest flame" of Indian jungles, which covers itself with a cloud of large blood red blossoms before ever it puts forth a leaf. Mango trees and lychees there were also in abundance, the former with many old scars on their trunks. Every year on the fifth day of the fifth month, the Annamese gives his mangoes a few hacks in the stem with an axe to make them bear better.

If this is not effectual the owner formally gives the recalcitrant fruit bearer notice, sometimes in writing and attached to a branch, sometimes only verbal, that it will be cut down altogether if it does not mend its ways.

Beyond such sights as these, however, there is really not much that is new in this part of the country. There is the same marvellous pitch of cultivation, the same overcrowding of villages, the same elaborate system of dykes to protect the land from the floods of the rainy season. An occasional betel garden lends a little variety perhaps. From a distance one might almost mistake them for a steel ido, so strongly are they protected against raiding buffaloes with fosse, dyke, and palisade. The betel loves the shade, and so a shelter is raised over the whole enclosure, a loosely interlaced roof of plaited bamboo, which only admits the broken rays of the sun. Each betel has its own training stick and the tendrils make their way up to twine themselves in the meshwork of the roof and make more shade.

From a cursory view SONTAY seems a place which has no natural advantages of a defensive kind. Take any flat country with a slope upwards to a central point, so gentle that it is almost impossible to detect it, and you have the general appearance of SONTAY. For the town, take a random collection of the ordinary heavy Chinese brick houses, interspersed with the wretched wattled-bamboo, mud-plastered, thatch-roofed shanties of the Annamese. The citadel is a quarter-mile square erection, with half-moon batteries over the gates in the centre of each side. There is a fifty feet moat with fixed stone bridges. The whole is built of big slabs of conglomerate, for defensive purposes not nearly so good even as decent bricks. For surroundings there are the Sone cor, a mile off by a perfectly straight road to the north; too far off

to be of any use except as a means of bringing up enemies;—a little river running at a distance of five hundred yards or so round the western and northern faces; some low spurs from the main body of hills to the west, but too distant to afford anything like a secure place of retreat. Beyond this nothing but the usual river embankments and flat cultivated country with a few pagodas and scattered spirit shrines. But the Black Flags made the most of the year they had after Rivière's occupation of Hanoi. The embankment, some twenty feet high and more than that in thickness, was converted over a length of three or four miles into a formidable entrenchment, with wooden troughs run through the parapet at the top, so that the defenders could fire in safety. Quarter of a mile farther back was the outer *enceinte*, a regularly constructed earthwork, which ran in a rough oval all round the citadel, some eight hundred yards from it, towards the river side, whence the attack was made.

The French marched part of their troops up by land. The remainder came up the river in the gunboats and in junks. The transport service was on this occasion extremely good. The men were embarked and landed without a hitch of any kind, and the arrangement of the commissariat was quite perfect—a state of things which was in marked contrast to the arrangements for the march on Bacninh. Admiral Courbet's force amounted to about six thousand men, all told. The artillery was comparatively weak, but the gunboats amply made up for any deficiency in this respect.

The attack was begun at about nine in the morning of December 14, 1883. The ships shelled the town and citadel, and directed their Hotchkiss fire on the fortified embankment. At distances of about half a mile

or more apart on this were three redoubts, the central one of which was called *Pruc-sa*, from an adjacent village, and has lent its name to the whole works. On the river bank, about a thousand feet from the central redoubt, was a large piece of ordnance, with ' $\frac{9}{w}$ ' Co. stamped on the trunnions, which was the only cannon the Chinamen were able to duct on the flotilla. Some four or five round shot were fired from this, two of which were very nearly proving effective, when a well directed shell from the *Éclair*, which throughout made very good practice, dismounted the gun, and the fleet afterwards had it all its own way. There was nothing to do but to level the guns and watch the result from the mast-head. How the big gun got to where it was, and where it was made, is a mystery which has never been solved. It lay for months on its side with six feet of charge in it, no one daring to fire it off. Then it was carried off as a trophy, still loaded.

But if the sailors, two miles as they were down the river, were safe, the land forces found they had no easy task before them. Rice-fields and marshy land protected a good deal of the front; and, moreover, before they could develop their troops for an organized assault, the French had to pass up along the river bank, which runs roughly parallel to the earthworks, exposed to the Black Flag fire, which was well sustained throughout, notwithstanding the shells from the fleet. Then when, in the early afternoon, all was ready, the Frenchmen were suddenly called upon to defend themselves. A strong body of what were said to be Yunnanese troops marched out from the eastern gate, hiding their banners and skilfully availing themselves of what cover there was, to advance unperceived. The turning movement was brilliantly conceived. The Chinamen got between

the Frenchmen and the fleet which would thus have been afraid to fire. They took the French on the left flank, with the PHUC-SA works on their front, and the river close behind them. If they had broken the left wing, Courbet's troops must have been driven pell mell up on one another in a narrow funnel, exposed all the time to a withering fire from the earthworks. For a time there was actual panic on the French side. There were some officers who did not scruple to say afterwards that they thought all was lost. The Annamese coolies and the native servants certainly thought so, and ran off in a body. Some of them appearing in Hanoi next day reported a defeat, and the sentinels in various parts of the city were actually stoned. But though it was a bad fifteen minutes, Admiral Courbet was equal to the occasion. He hurried all the guns he could down to his left. He risked the chance of being cut in half by a sally from the earthworks. The Chinamen came on to within three hundred yards, and then, scared by the bursting shell and the shrieking of the volleys of bullets poured into them, they faltered and broke. When once they got clear of the French line the fire from the French fleet completed the disorder, and they dispersed and fled in all directions over the country.

But the nerve of the attackers was shaken for the moment, and it was four o'clock in the afternoon before the order for assault was given. Then it was unequally executed. A company of Turcos, heedless alike of the threats and prayers and orders of their officers, rushed madly on the works, brandishing their rifles over their heads. The Black Flags, from behind the dense covert of bamboos that masked the whole face of the embankment, poured in a deadly fire which laid more than half of them low, and sent the rest back in wild disorder.

Elsewhere the Marine Infantry, the Colonial troops, and the native auxiliaries advanced in more cautious fashion, availing themselves of whatever cover they could find, and firing volleys before every rush forward; and the Foreign Legion showed equal gallantry. But notwithstanding the murderous fire of cannon and small-arms, against which the Black Flags had nothing but rifle-fire to oppose, they stuck to their works. An officer, who was wounded before Metz in 1870, declared that neither at Gravelottes nor at Buzenval had he ever been exposed to a hotter fire. When finally the French reached the slope there was a desperate hand-to-hand struggle which lasted twenty minutes. Lieutenant Jehenne, an old Cheltenham boy, received five shots—one through his body—almost simultaneously, and was left for dead, but miraculously recovered to worthily receive the Cross of the Legion of Honour at the age of twenty. Liu Jung-Fu's second in command was shot through the throat and crushed his enemy's skull with the butt of his gun as he fell. But discipline prevailed, and the French took the works at a little after five. They had cost dearly. In a short hour two hundred men and twenty-two officers had fallen. The Black Flags retreated sullenly up the street, not one half the number of the Frenchmen, and firing back as they went.

Nine hours' fighting, and then some defensive works to construct, was hard work, but Liu Jung-Fu had not done with the Frenchmen yet. At one o'clock in the morning, when there were still some warriors recounting their doughty deeds by the light of a candle stuck on a claret case, the storm broke out again. The Hakkai chieftain had offered two hundred thousand dollars to the man who would retake the lines, and a Kwang-si colonel had sworn to do it. With scarcely a warning a

shower of fire-rockets fell on the embankments, setting alight many of the thatched huts which had served as barracks to the Chinamen, and in which at the moment the French troops were sleeping. For four hours' long the combat raged as desperately as in the morning. The rattle of the volleys from both sides was incessant, for the Chinamen had already learnt the French trick of firing only by word of command. Both sides fired at the flash of the enemy's guns. Some scores of Chinamen came up to the very foot of the works with nothing but cleavers in their hands to cut down the bamboos. The Turcos were seized with a panic, and took to their heels; and if their place had not rapidly been taken by a company of colonial troops, that part of the works, and therefore probably the whole, would have been captured. As it was, twenty Turcos and five men of the Marine Infantry were carried off prisoners and, of course, decapitated. The two senior officers of a field-battery were shot dead, and the young sub-lieutenant begged a lieutenant of the native troops to tell him what to do. "Serve the guns till you are shot yourself," was the grim reply. Incidents such as these show how nearly victorious the Chinamen were. But just when the Frenchmen were beginning to despair, worn out with the fatigue which French troops cannot stand, the Black Flags' trumpeter sounded the "cease fire"—identical with the French call—and the Chinamen drew off through the rice-fields to the second line, unmolested by the French, who were only too thankful to see them go. Seven months afterwards, when TUYEN-KWAN was occupied by the French, a Black Flag colonel came in and gave his submission with two hundred men. He claimed to have been the leader of this forlorn hope on the PHUC-SA works, and persistently maintained that he

had no more than three hundred rifles with him then. If this be true, the heroism of these men was nothing less than marvellous.

The next day, the 15th of December, was comparatively a day of rest. Both sides were engaged in burying their dead. But after midday the French commenced a flanking movement up the embankment, so as to command the west gate and have two points of attack, besides turning the village and pagoda of PHU-NY, which were strongly held. The Chinamen should have opposed this manoeuvre at all costs, for with its completion the carrying of the second line of works was a certainty. But they remained passive, partly, it is said, because Prince HOANG-KI-VIEN (or HUINH-KI'-VIRM) and the Annamese contingent were for immediate evacuation, and were backed up by the Chinese provincial troops, while LIU JUNG-LIU was for fighting to the bitter end.

However that may be, the attack on the outer *enceinte* began on the 16th with daylight. This outer *enceinte* was an exceedingly strong earthwork, defended in front by a moat fifteen to twenty feet wide. On the level ground between the slope of the embankment and the fosse was a triple or quadruple fence of well-grown bamboo, covering a space of six or eight feet. At the gates the moat was studded with spiked bamboos. A stockade of thick, high logs masked the front, and on the approach to the slender plank bridge was a formidable *chevaux de frise* of sharp-pointed stakes and bamboo calthrops. The lines themselves were very solidly constructed, and the shells which burst in them did very little damage so far as making a breach was concerned. The number of empty cartridges lying about along the north-west front showed the severity of the fire to which the French were exposed. The Chinese cannon were,

however, of the most worthless kind. Not only were they pieces of old world manufacture and deeply honey-combed with age and neglect, but they were few and badly placed.

The contraborts and traverses along the line of works were pointed out by the French officers as conclusive proof that there had been European guidance in SONFAY. But the way in which the guns were mounted was far more conclusive proof the other way. The dozen or twenty pieces that were on the front attacked by the French were placed in such cramped positions inside trumpety turrets that they scarcely covered more than the country directly in front of them. Not a few of them burst, and not even the best use that could have been made of the bad material at their disposal was obtained. The Black Flags seem to have handed over the artillery to the Yunnan, or Kwangsi militia, and these men neither had the courage nor the skill necessary to serve the guns. It seems undeniable that, if the cannon had been handled with anything like the energy that kept up the small-arm fire, the struggle would have been nearly as severe as that at PIUO-SA.

After the village and temple of PIU-NY had been carried by assault, not without a pretty sharp tussle, the attack on the outworks was commenced. The main effort was directed against what is called the west gate, but is really the north-west. The artillery was got into position on a little mound a quarter of a mile off, and a terrific fire was opened to cover the advance of the escalading party. The whole of the top of the gateway, built of large slabs of conglomerate, was literally blown away. There was hardly a square foot of the face that had not its bullet mark. Half a dozen shells exploded in and around it and crashed through the log-stockade.

It seemed impossible that any creature could be there and live; yet, when it came to the final assault, the Black Flag told off to stand between the bamboos and the wall was there, faithful to his post, with his cartridge belt round his waist, and his Winchester repeating rifle charged to the full. The entire strength of the Foreign Legion was outside, the drums beating and the trumpet, sounding the charge, but he stood his ground and fired as steadily as if he were at practice. He shot Mirin, the leader of the storming party of the *Libançais*, through the heart. With each bullet he brought down his man, and when the Legion broke through he was bayoneted with his finger on the trigger. In recognition of his gallantry the French buried him under the gate (now known as the Porte Mirin), when two days later it was blocked up—the only Black Flag who received a grave to himself, one of the very few Black Flags that received a grave at all from French hands.

A little farther west, round the angle of the works, the struggle was nearly as severe. There was a small wicket here, to which, however, the *Marine* Infantry were not able to penetrate. They therefore scrambled over the steep sides of the works themselves, one of the first to enter here being Admiral Combet.

Close to this gate is a long, fairly straight street running right up to the west gate of the citadel. This was the main Chinese quarter, and two-thirds of the way up was Liu Tung-Li's house. Up one side of this street went the Foreign Legion, and up the other the *Infanterie de Marine*. All through the afternoon the fighting centred here. The Black Flag leader was game to the last. He tried turning movements on both sides. He charged straight down on the main body though Hotchkiss guns enfiladed the street. The Chinamen defended

almost every house. They very early found that the system followed by the French from the beginning of the campaign was to be continued here. No quarter was asked for, and none was given. At length, late in the afternoon, Liu Jung-Fu's house was taken. With the capture of this the fighting ceased. The Black Flags drew off towards the citadel, only a few hundred yards off, and the French devoted themselves to the ransacking of the detested chief's house, and then set it on fire.

That was a terrible night in SONTAY. The Turcos had entered, with comparatively little opposition, by the eastern gate, and they admittedly killed men, women, and children—every living thing they came across. The French troops were not so bad, but the butchery of Chinamen and crop-headed Annamese (the Prince's men) was sickening.

The Black Flags drew off under cloud of night to the western hills. They were soon marching out, but whether because the officers could not get their men together (the town had been given up to pillage), or because they feared an ambuscade, there was no attempt at pursuit.

The French entered the citadel early next morning. The entry was in true modern Gallic fashion, utterly unauthorized and irresponsible. A handful of Turcos and Foreign Legion men approached the north gate, pushed it open and entered, and found no one inside, except a few score wretched Annamese women and children and a handful of still more luckless youths. A flag was improvised of a length of the red waist-cloth of a Turco, the handkerchief of an officer, and a strip of the blue *cummerbund* of a Foreign Legion man, and the hoisting of this characteristic tricolour on the tower was



the first notice Admiral Combet had of the occupation of the citadel.

Rice sufficient to maintain the garrison for a couple of years, over a hundred ponies, an elephant, and a small quantity of bar silver, were found inside, as well as a number of antiquated guns. But the arsenal was nearly empty. The Black Flags had carried all the rifles they could away with them. Thus for a loss officially estimated at 411 rank and file. At the time the Chinese loss was stated in the official reports to be 3000, but officers who were present on the occasion did not fix the number at more than the third of this.

The French have made SONTAY a very strong position now. Where once stood the mud fort and bamboo fence of the PHUC-SAY redoubt there now rises a formidable brick block house, with subterranean chambers containing ammunition and provisions for six months, Hotchkiss guns mounted on the roof, and space inside for five hundred men. At every one of the gates of the outer *enceinte*—that is to say, the limits of the town proper—there rises a tall keep, built like a two-decker, for a double row of guns. The town itself is not to be recognized by one who was there even last January. Where then there were nothing but dirty, narrow lanes between half-burnt houses there are now spacious streets running out in rays from the citadel gates, and young trees are planted to make boulevards of them. Even so late as May, 1884, it is true most of the houses remained gutted and empty, but no doubt the place will fill up again. LIU JUNG-LU carried off all the inhabitants, so say the French, but the Chinese say the French killed them all. Women are very scarce in SONTAY still, and that can be said of no other post where the French are in Tongking. The sacking of the place was a terrible affliction, which the Tongkinese will not forget readily.



CHAPTER V.

NAM-DINH.

NEXT to Hanoi, NAM-DINH is without doubt the most important city in Tongking. It is situated about a thousand yards up a creek which runs out of the BALAT mouth of the Song coi, and joins this with the Dai at NINH-BINH. It is the capital of the southern delta, as Hanoi is of the north. The population used to be reckoned at 50,000, and it is probably not much less at the present time. Notwithstanding, however, that it is only half the size of Hanoi, it does very nearly as much trade, the centre, as it is, of a magnificent rice growing country, and close to the chief silk district of NINH BINH. There are several very fine black marble-paved streets in it, one at least running the length of the town, and superior to any in Hanoi. It was formerly a great resort of the Chinese merchants, and the substantial and spacious houses now remaining show that they must have been men of wealth. Many of them fled, others had their houses and goods confiscated, and there unfortunately remain but few of the men who formerly made the prosperity of the town.

Garnier knew the importance of the place, and after

he had arranged the government of Hanoi, while his lieutenants were engaged in the subduing of the other strong places of the delta, proceeded himself to the capture of NAM DINH. He had the gunboat *Scorpion* with him, and came up from the NINH-BINH side on the 10th December, 1873. The canals leading up to the city were guarded by the exterior mud-cots, and the taking of these proved a tolerably tough undertaking. The batteries were masked and hardly raised above the surface of the ground. Fire had only just been opened on them when a well-sustained small-arm fire was begun from the river bank, which wounded several of his men and did some damage to the sails and cordage. It was quite an hour before these sharp shooters were silenced and driven off. Then, however, a small storming party made short work of the batteries and spiked the guns.

Next day the citadel was attacked. It was a huge square of 700 yards to the side, with the lance-head bastions at the corners, bastions in each face, and gates covered by redans to the side of each one of these. In addition the usual moat and fixed bridges.

As in the case of the attack on Hanoi, Garnier advanced in three columns. Fifteen men landed to make a feint on the south gate, and, finding the country absolutely without cover there, were unable to do more than keep a portion of the garrison occupied. Another party marched through the town to attack the eastern bastion, and finally Garnier himself led the main column up a broad street which debouches immediately on the south-east gate, like all the others protected by a redan. The citadel had opened fire with its guns, and had hit the *Scorpion's* main-mast, but a number of men posted in the top-masts had soon silenced this, while the *Scorpion's* shells created great disorder in the garrison. Neverthe-

less the struggle was for a time as dubious as on the preceding day, and the capture of NAM-DINH was certainly the most serious military event of this last campaign of the French in Tongking.

The second and third columns joined opposite the redan and soon carried it. But they were checked before the citadel gate. It was blocked up with an earthen rampart. A six pounder gun was levelled on it under a raking fire from the walls, but before it had fired three rounds it was dismounted. For a time it looked as if the assault had failed. Then some one suggested the employment of the spiked hurdles which blocked the bridge as scaling ladders. They were piled up endways against the wall. Garnier and a sailor were the first on the battlements. At the very sight of them the entire garrison ran. The citadel of NAM DINH, with its vast stores of rice and salt, and silk and cotton, its piles of elephant tusks, its extensive arsenal, and its huge mountains of *sapèques* and silver bars, had fallen in the end almost as helplessly as Hanoi. The mandarins were to be retained in their positions if they rendered their submission to the brilliant young victor. Most of them, however, made their escape.

The French were on the whole well received by the townspeople, among whom there was a strong body of Christians, whose church had been bombarded along with the *Scorpion* from the citadel walls, and had come off rather badly. These Christians immediately offered themselves and were accepted as auxiliaries. Accordingly, when Garnier was called off on the 16th of December to Hanoi, there to meet his death, Dr. Humand, who was left behind as Governor of NAM-DINH with twenty-five Europeans, had quite a small army of volunteers at his disposal.

But Dr. Hamand was far from comfortable at first. The province numbers two million inhabitants. It is a regular meshwork of creeks and canals. Many of the mandarins had escaped, and had raised irregular bands all round, which were rendered formidable by a leavening of pirates from the coast. At first he clamoured piteously for cartridges, and even for permission to withdraw. When, however, his native auxiliaries had, alone and unmasked, attacked and destroyed the village of TAM-DANG, the noted pirate chief, he plucked up courage and went out on another expedition with them, when they occupied and burnt eight other villages. The country people gave up many of the national loaders, and those were now, on a system first instituted by Dr. Hamand, and ever since followed by the French in Tongking, promptly executed. The country was just cowed into quietness when M. Philastre's orders, consequent on the death of Garnier, came round. Dr. Hamand marched out of NAM-DINH on the 10th of January, 1874, and a few weeks later the miserable Christian auxiliaries were being mercilessly slaughtered by the reinstated mandarins.

Nam-Dinh remained quiet for nearly ten years, and then in March, 1883, Commandant Rivière, having received reinforcements from France, came south with a flotilla consisting of the gunboats *Panfare*, *Surprise*, *Pluvier*, *Hache*, *Yatagan*, and *Carabine*, and five companies on the river launches KIANG-NAM, TONKIN, WHANG-ROA, and HANGTONG. He demanded the reason of the barriers being constructed in the river, the increase of the garrison, and the hostile attitude of the governor, and called for the surrender of the citadel. This was refused.

On the 27th of March the bombardment began. Three

gunboats stationed themselves to the south, three to the east. Notwithstanding the heaviness of the fire, the Annamese stood to their guns for a time, and hit both the *Surprise* and the *Tanfare*. The affair was, however, principally confined to street fighting. Colonel CAMILLU, in command of the attacking party, received a grenade in the leg, which necessitated its amputation, and eventually caused his death; but that was the only loss suffered on the French side. The gate which had given so much trouble in 1873 was blown up with a charge of dynamite. The whole thing, from the firing of the first shot to the billeting of the troops, occupied five hours. "Quite classical," said Rivière.

Colonel BADENS was left in command of the place with a garrison of about one hundred men. He soon reduced the surrounding country to apparent tranquillity, but the defeat of the French and the depopulation of Rivière outside Hanoi altogether changed the aspect of affairs. The scattered Annamese soldiery reassembled again. They constructed batteries all round the citadel, and from the middle of June maintained a regular siege for some weeks. They had nothing but old smooth-bore cannon, however, and the nightly bombardment did no more harm than was implied in depriving the French garrison of a peaceable night's rest. But in the end they got so confident that, on the 11th of July, after having on previous occasions penetrated into the town and set fire to various parts of it, they actually attempted an assault on the citadel with their pitiful spears and flint-locks. Terrible carnage was the natural result, with no harm done on the French side. A few days later reinforcements arrived from France, and a company was hurried up to Nam-Dinh. A sally was made on the 19th against the Annamese works along the Cau-Gia creek to the

west of Nam Dinh. An attack in front diverted the attention of the Annamese, while another party executed a flank march and took the works in the rear. The slaughter was altogether sickening. Thousands of the wretched rural levies were shot down, huddled together terror stricken like a flock of sheep, and five hundred of the hill Muong, come down with nothing but cross-bows and then curious stockless muskets, were massacred almost to a man. The French lost three men.

Nam Dinh has remained quiet enough ever since. Unfortunately, however, from the swampy nature of the country for miles all round, it is very unhealthy. Many of the garrison died in the summer of 1883, and in the hot months of 1884 sickness carried off more men than in all the fighting after SONAY. The interior of the huge citadel has been cleared till little remains but the barracks and the necessary magazines and storehouses. For further security in the seemingly improbable contingency of an attack a redoubt has been constructed in one corner into which the troops can retreat, and inside which they are indeed quartered. Notwithstanding the long siege, the town has really suffered less than any of the other positions the French have taken, and under the able administration of a military commissary, Colonel Buionval, one of the few officers who was in the country in 1874, now in Tongking, it seems more likely to spring into commercial activity than any other place in the delta. But the embargo on Chinamen will first have to be removed.

Inland mother-of-pearl work is one of the specialties of Nam-Dinh. The industry is not of very ancient appearance in Tongking. It was apparently introduced by a man from one of the Hue suburbs about sixty years ago. This individual settled in a small village, Ke-

CHUON, south of Hanoi. Workmen from this place have since established themselves in the *Rue des Incrusteurs* in Hanoi and in Nam-Dinh, but work of the kind is produced in no other place in Tongking. It has been ordinarily supposed that the industry was brought in by the Japanese, who came to the country in the seventeenth century, but the missionaries and the Comte de Kergaradec, who has carefully studied the matter, do not support this theory.

However that may be, it is certain that the Nam-Dinh workmen have made very remarkable progress, both in delicacy of workmanship and in the artistic beauty of the patterns. The mode of procedure is not very elaborate. The workman breaks up his mother-of-pearl shells, keeping only the little iridescent flakes. These he puts away in separate heaps according to their various shades and tints and sizes, and afterwards polishes and smooths down to the required thickness. Then he sketches his designs on paper and makes two copies of it—one for reference, the other to be cut into pieces and gummed on to the little flakes of shell. It is evident that a natural eye for colour must here be of great value. Purple and blue are the favourite tints with the Annamese. When this is finished each fragment of mother-of-pearl is filed down to the exact edge of the pattern, and all are then gummed to the pieces of wood selected. With a fine needle point the outlines of the pattern are marked out on the wood, and the fragments of mother-of-pearl are washed off again. Now comes the most delicate operation. The pattern traced out on the plank must be incised into the wood, a smooth edge being carefully guarded and the requisite depth preserved. The utmost sensitiveness of touch is imperative, for a slight trembling would make the bed too

wide or too deep. The gap would then have to be filled up with lacquer, which would not only spoil the look of the work, but would make it much more liable to come to pieces with heat or damp. The successive pieces are then let into the wood and cemented in with a kind of resinous wood oil, which is sometimes allowed days and even weeks to harden. The surface is then filed down with pumice-stone of various degrees of fineness of texture, and finally a polishing medium composed of paddy-husk mixed with water is employed. The patterns are next completed. Plain pieces of mother-of-pearl are scratched with a needle so as to represent flowers, butterflies, fantastic animals, figures of demons, kings, and warriors. The whole thing is then varnished with a red oil extracted from a particular kind of seed called *CAI-SO*.

The entire work is done in the wretched native huts, open to the street, and with the most primitive of tools; but nevertheless the beauty of some of the designs has already attracted some attention in Europe, even out of France. The wood most commonly employed is *TRAO*, a species of rosewood ebony, and two local varieties called *GO-CHAM-XI* and *GO-S A*. *TRAO* is always most esteemed for smaller work, but large planks are not to be had without faults in the grain, and for cabinets and such-like articles one or other of the *GO* is almost invariably used. The curious thing is that none of these woods are found near either Hanoi or Nam Dinh. They have all to be brought in junks, and it is the same with the shells, the best of which come all the way from the Gulf of Siam, or from Singapore.

The workmen have to begin training very young to gain the requisite fineness of touch, and there are not perhaps more than two or three-hundred of them in all

the country, but perhaps only a quarter of them are more than apprentices. The sudden pouring of Europeans into the country in 1881 has done a very great deal of harm. The demand far exceeded the supply, and the artificers worked for money, not for art. Scamped work, incisions too wide for the strips of shell, insufficient drying, which makes the pattern scale off, unseasoned wood, which bends and cracks, were the result. All these defects require a skilled eye to detect them, and the ordinary purchaser would do well to have a Tongkinese to assist him in his selection. The establishment of regular workshops full of these men, furnished with proper steel tools instead of their own wretched soft iron things, and the maintenance of a regular standard of excellence which would keep up the reputation of the work, is a speculation extremely obvious and almost sure to be lucrative.

Immediately alongside of the inlaid quarter in Nam-Dinh is that of the coffin-makers. This is not so interesting to strangers, but the Annamese think very differently. So highly are well-made coffins esteemed that there are villages that have gained some reputation in the trade, and consequently devote themselves to nothing else. They are not dependent on the mere deaths of the neighbourhood for their sale. As in China, it is very common for people who can afford it to keep their own coffins ready in the house, and they can therefore wander all over the country in search of one that strikes their fancy.

The best coffins are made of Trai or Jao, woods with a very close grain, and lasting a very long time even in damp ground, though, as a rule, where people are buried in marshy soil, the coffin is made of a special timber called Bor-Lor. The general appearance is very much

like that of the Chinese coffin, the planks being from one and a half to four inches in thickness, and the rounded lid slipping into a groove and being secured by stout pins. A well-made coffin of one of these timbers, finely joined together, and without flaws or knots of any kind, will cost from £10 to £50, and will not be really dear at that. When a 'Trau wood coffin is carved, as they very often are, on the ends and sides, it is usually a sign that the undertaker wants to hide some defects in his planks.

All the chinks and seams of the coffin are carefully caulked with *Chau*, a kind of pitch used in paying the planks of junks' bottoms. The rich cover the inside with a layer of pine tree resin, the poor are contented with paddy husk ash, often mixed with sawdust. The four sides are painted red on the inside, the outside is never painted till the body is in the coffin. When the corpse is that of the father or mother of the household, it is placed in the middle of the central room; if of other members of the family, then at one or other of the sides.

With a race devoted to ancestral worship, as the Annamese are, funerals are necessarily a very solemn matter, conducted with a minute regard for traditional rites, imperative for the future welfare of the deceased. The first thing to be done is to assure one's self that the person is really dead. A film of cotton is suspended before the nostrils by a silken thread, so that the faintest breath would make it move. Death being verified, the face is covered with three sheets of paper, and over these is placed a red cloth, of silk or cotton, according to the family's wealth. One of the commonest forms of abuse in the country is to pray that your enemy may have no one at his death to perform this service for him. The object is of course to prevent evil spirits from entering

and carrying off the dead man's spirit. For the same reason a constant guard is kept by the body, to prevent a cat from passing over it. Cats are particularly hateful to disembodied spirits.

Three grains of rice are then put into the corpse's mouth, and if any teeth have been lost they are replaced. The old are particularly careful to preserve whatever teeth may drop out, for this purpose, and lock them up with their most valued treasures. There is a special reason for this care. Teeth are often employed for making medicines, and the sorcerers who wander about the country always have a number in their wallets, and are not at all scrupulous about how they increase the store. Instead of the three grains of rice, wealthy families sometimes put one or more precious stones in the mouth. The resemblance to the Greek *obolos* to pay the Stygian ferry need not be urged.

The body is then laid out, washed with water in which flowers or fragrant leaves have been boiled, the hair combed and done up in a chignon, and a black turban wound round the head. The deceased's finest clothes, very often specially prepared years before for this purpose, are put on, and he is decorated with the tokens of whatever rank he may have held. The finger nails are cut and placed in a little packet by the side of the head. If they grow into the flesh it would bring disaster to the family. The corpse is then tightly bound up in cotton covercloths, the every-day clothes being put between the limbs. Then it is ready to be put into the coffin, and care must be taken to turn the head towards the door. The shell is then closed and varnished all over to prevent the attacks of insects, particularly white ants. The varnish is black, and the best comes from Cambodian marsh lands.

In the meantime the women have been making up the mourning garments. They must be white and of linen or cotton. The nearer the relation, the coarser the material must be, and in no case are they hemmed. The Annamese Code devotes thirty pages (in Philastre's French edition) to a description of the different classes of mourning garments. It is evident, therefore, that quite enough has been said here about the matter. As soon as the mourning suits are ready the family assembles and solemnly puts them on. Then sacrifices are made to the ancestors and to the deceased, and each of the celebrants prostrates himself four times before the coffin.

According to common Oriental custom it is usual to keep the coffin in the house for days and even weeks before burial. By its side is erected a small altar, on which are placed three cups of tea, different condiments, an incense brazier and two candles. The delay is of course to permit the assemblage of all the friends of the house, and the arrangement of one of those gorgeous funeral ceremonies which so often ruin families in the East. There is much mummerly on such occasions in England, but the garish parade at a "first-class funeral" in Annam far exceeds any foolery we indulge in. Most of the properties are supplied by professional undertakers and for details about them the curious may refer to the Annamese Code. Suffice it to say that there are huge lanterns of different shapes, pendant gongs to drive away evil spirits, incense tables, the red and gold painted and highly-carved bier, offering tables and a variety of banners in silk and cloth, some of them peculiar to the family, others common to ordinary, vulgar humanity, such as the fillet borne on two poles, which is inscribed *TRUNG-HU* (faithful) for a man, and *TRINH-THUAN* (pure and obedient) for a woman.

The time for the interment is of course fixed by the wise men, who select a lucky day and hour; at the head march men with wands to scare off prowling devils. Then in the midst of some of the objects mentioned above comes the "dead man's house," a sort of bamboo cage. The children and the nearest relations follow the bier. In passing the threshold of the door the coffin has been carried over their prostrate bodies. In the middle march a body of monks chanting a noisy but rhythmical requiem. Sham gold and silver leaf is scattered all along the road to soothe the Co-hon, the abandoned spirits. These are the souls of people who have died violent deaths, and have had no rites of sepulture. Their relations have not known of their fate, and have been unable or unwilling to perform the ceremonies which custom prescribes for the delivery of their souls. Therefore the Co-hon remain wanderers on the face of the earth, irritated with the living, and tormenting and oppressing them in every way. They trouble the sacrifices, upset the prognostics, and annihilate the efforts of domestic piety. The superstitious, therefore, are driven to all sorts of devices to appease and deceive these evil-minded demons. The Co-hon are attracted by the glitter of the false gold and silver leaf, halt to lay hands on it, and, before they discover the deception, have lost the opportunity of spoiling the funeral ceremony. There are others, however, who are more considerate, or more fearful of the wrath of these homeless spirits. They burn regular *NHUI NHUI DONG-DONG*—"numerous pieces of money." These are strips of paper with coins printed on them, regular postal orders on the lower world for the support of indigent devils. Naturally the funerals so protected are the safer for the deceased.

There are no public cemeteries in Annam. The grave is usually dug anywhere out in the middle of the fields belonging to the family. The rich usually have a special place for their own relations, and sometimes assign a patch for their poorer neighbours. Otherwise these must be buried by the roadside or in some part of the village common lands. At the grave the coffin is lowered in, a banneret of silk or paper giving in white and yellow characters deceased's name, age, dignities, position in family, and virtues, is thrown upon it, and then a small pile of the above mentioned money paper. Each friend throws in a handful of earth. The sextons fill it up and make a circular mound above. Offerings and prostrations are made before the completed grave, and then there is a general consumption of rice, wine, and betel-nut.

The period of mourning is very protracted. Nominally it lasts for three years for father or mother, but immemorial custom decrees that this means twenty-four months. For a grandparent or brother or sister it lasts one year, and so on in decreasing ratio. Men of rank cannot undertake public duties during this season, and ought not to be present at marriages or feasts of any kind. The son should eat no meat and drink no wine. The people are very proud of these regulations, but they do not keep them. At the end of the first year there are great sacrifices before the grave, at the end of the second the "dead man's house," the bamboo cage, is burnt, and with it the mourning garments. Desecration of the grave is punished with extreme severity.

The richer people erect stone monuments over their ancestors. The plain between Saigon and Chuolon, the *Plaine des Tombeaux*, is full of these, of all sizes and in all states of decay, sometimes standing quite alone,

sometimes with shrubs and then trees planted by them. There are inscriptions on most of them, usually cut into the stone and painted various colours. They bear the family and individual name and those of the deceased's titles and place of birth, the date of death, and the name of the person who set up the stone. Some of them are almost miniature temples. These are usually raised to the whole mass of the ancestry. They are kept up by the head of the house, and there are regularly fixed days for worship before them.

This is in fact the only worship the Annamese have, but some of them carry it on with tolerable regularity. The first and the fifteenth of every month are the regular days set apart for worship at the ancestral shrine. At the same time there is always more or less sacrificing to the Co-Hon already spoken of. Nothing is deemed too great to soften their rancour. Besides the silver and gold paper and the "cash notes" above alluded to there is a much more valuable paper currency. These are sheets of paper covered all over with designs and written characters; at the top there is a bell with a tongue to it to attract the Co-Hon. On either side are invocations to the Buddhas, the good geni, and the priests, preceded occasionally by the well known formula NAM-MO A-DI-DA PHAT.

Below are representations of fine clothes, different domestic utensils, embroidered robes with Pn on inscribed on them, mandarins boots, strings of different kinds of money with THAI-BINH (eternal peace) on them, and a variety of other combinations—everything, in fact, that an indigent devil could require. The invocations at the top vary. In some of them they run, "Oh, all ye PHAT (Buddhas) who live for aye in the ten places.

List, ye spirits, all-powerful ' Or again, ' Hearken, all ye saints, all-blessed, all powerful, ye who are like unto the pure and undefiled, grant, in your mercy, to the forsaken spirits who have suffered from the three evils, entrance into the divine abode. '

On the first and fifteenth of the month such papers of supplies, pecuniary and personal, are burnt not only at the ancestral altars and on the threshold of the houses, but upon special altars erected in lonely places to the Co-mon. While the papers are burning, the head of the family prostrates himself, and afterwards scatters broadcast on the roof of his cottage somewhat more substantial, but still scanty offerings of rice and bananas. These are of course to prevent the Co-mon from coming inside, an occurrence which the most hospitable goodman would view with horror.

On the fifteenth day of the first, seventh, and tenth months, more particularly of the seventh, there are almost universal offerings to these troublesome Co-mon. They are called *Lin Piat-Li-on*, distributions of food.

It is curious to watch the people come out of their houses just after dark. The father of the house calls out, " Spirit who hast a name, but no title; spirits who have titles but no human name; spirits of universal nature, crowd hither and eat my offering."

Then he turns to the four points of the compass, one after the other, commencing with the west, throws towards each of them a handful of salt and rice mixed, and burns a little of the spirit-money, saying, " I call the laggard spirits, he who comes fastest will eat most. May ten become a hundred; may a hundred become a thousand; a thousand, ten thousand; ten thousand, a hundred thousand; a hundred thousand, a million; a million, a countless multitude " This is, it need hardly

be explained, a desire to obtain the multiplication of his offering. The notion is of course borrowed from the Chinese with their regular sacrifices of *DINN*. A development of this, found in all parts of the world among uncivilized nations, is the exorcism of evil spirits which are supposed to enter into people and cause illnesses. The method of driving these out in Annam differs little from the process described by dozens of writers on nations in other parts of the earth. The sorcerer is called *TREV-PHAP*, and he must on no account eat the flesh of buffaloes or dogs.

An analogous superstition is the ceremony of making offerings once every year to the former holders of the soil. No country farmer would think of letting the first three months of the year pass without making offerings of a general kind to the old aboriginal cultivators. Sometimes, however, this is not enough. If he loses his dogs and pigs and chickens, his rice gets drowned with too much water or dies of drought, he falls sick himself and sees visions of capering, bloodthirsty savages.

Then he knows what is the matter, and goes straight off to a paper-goods manufacturer and orders a facsimile of his house to be built in paper. This is a most elaborate affair, reproducing not only a general model of the house, but of everything in it—furniture, people, dogs, cats, and pigs, and even the lizards in the thatch. All the human beings, however, are represented twice over, so that the ghost to whom this model is to be given up may not have an exact model of the owner, or of his wife or children. These houses are very dear, costing sometimes as much as £6, which is a large sum for a peasant farmer. If it is the commune that is making the offering, a model is made of the village shrine, the *DINN*.

On the determined day, offerings of the usual kind are

made, and the wizard, the 'THAI-PIAI, falls into a trance, and is possessed by the deceased owner of the land. He blackens his face on the bottom of a pot, eats ducks and chickens raw, and drinks wine by the bucketful. This is proof positive that the old savage owner is inside of him and is having a real good time. Then he is requested to make a formal cession of the land in question. If the farmer is a rich man the spirit does not yield for several days if he is poor it is settled as soon as possible. A sum is fixed upon, a few hundred *luc-tues* say, and this is promptly paid, in funeral money of course, which can be bought for a shilling or two. The possessed 'THAI-PIAI signs for the departed savage, planting a thumb dipped in ink at the bottom of the written conveyance. Then the medium is restored from his mesmerised state, the paper house is burnt, and with it the sum of money formally agreed upon. It is usually also stipulated that a pig shall be sacrificed every three years or oftener for the better comfort of the old landowner. After this it is held if the farmer does not enjoy peace o nights.

The household ancestry, as we have said, are worshipped more or less all the year round, but the especial great season for every one, rich and poor, is the new year, the 'THAI, the Annamese new year, of course which corresponds with the Chinese, and falls about the beginning of February. Then every one, down to the poorest, who at other times may not have the means or the leisure to pay proper attention to their forefathers, betakes himself to the last resting-place of his progenitors, and there is much burning of incense and funeral money, much scattering of rice and heaping up of fruit and flowers, during four days. The grass and other vegetable growths round about the tombs are carefully

wooded away, and at the head of each a leaf of gold or silver is placed, and on this a stone to prevent it from being carried off by the wind. The belief is that, at a season such as the TÂN, the evil spirits are particularly active and spiteful on account of the general rejoicing and feasting which they see going on upon earth. They are therefore exceptionally likely to do harm to ordinary, easy-going souls, such as those of the rude forefathers of the hamlet. But then cupidity thwarts them. They clutch at the glittering leaf placed at the grave head, and, while they are doing so, the respectable spirit down below has time to scurry off to a place of safety. The *Plaine des Tombeaux* at Saigon presents an extraordinary appearance at this season of the year. Ordinarily it is as desolate, if not as big, as the similar place at Cairo; but during the four days of the TÂN both sides of the TAY-NINH road are crowded with pious descendants from all parts of the country come to secure the tranquillity of their ancestry.

The living do not forget their own amusement at the same season of the year. There is junketting in all the houses, theatrical performances are held everywhere, in which the actors put on marvellous beards of immense size and of every colour of the rainbow, from indigo blue to bright scarlet like a Mogul's. The head-dresses are immense and the garments are superb, if somewhat mouldy and fanciful. There they rave away all day long, and expect contributions from passing strangers to defray the expenses. Annamese plays, like Chinese, last for days on end and exceed all human endurance.

The whole Annamese community has its birthday on the first day of the year, and it is therefore necessary to be very cautious, for the actions of that day are likely to have an influence on all the ensuing year. The

house door is kept shut against everybody until midday, lest any one with a name of bad augury for the master of the house should enter. After midday it is thrown wide, and visits of courtesy are generally made and received. The notion is something like that of the "first foot," but it does not appear that the Annamese have really the same belief as is embodied in the Scotch superstition. They are too cowed to believe that any one is lucky, and all they try is to exclude those whose names, according to the goodman's horoscope, are of bad omen. It is also necessary to begin the year by a lucky transaction. Shopkeepers usually sell their goods a little cheaper in order to sell a large quantity. This is a convenient arrangement which makes everybody happy. The customer is comfortable in the assurance that he has made a bargain, and is likely to continue doing so all the year round. The dealer consoles himself with the reflection that he has turned over a lot of money, and is likely to keep up a brisk business till *Tet* arrives again.



CHAPTER VI.

KÈ SO AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

CHRISTIANITY has been preached to the Annamese for nearly three centuries. Father Alexandre de Rhodes was almost the first missionary who penetrated into the country, and he certainly was the first European to give a description (in 1627) of Annam and Tongking.

Episcopal sees were established towards the end of the seventeenth century; and, notwithstanding intermittent persecutions which have lasted down to the year 1884, Christianity has made steady progress. There are now about 500,000 Christians in Tongking, say a twentieth of the population. The missions are Spanish and French, and divide the country equally between them, the Spanish to the left of the Song-ai, the French to the right. Kì-moi, a little above Hai Dzuong, is the head quarters of the Spaniards.

The French missionaries have their chief establishment at Kè-so (the Annamese “s” has always an “sh” sound, and the name is pronounced Kè-sho), on the left bank of the lower Dai. Besides the fertile lands round about belonging to the villagers, there are a training

collego and seminary, a fine cathedral, and a well-organized printing press. Like all Annamese towns following the Chinese custom, it has an every-day name and an official name. On some maps, therefore, it is to be found styled NINH-PUU, the title which the mandarins give it.

KI-so is charmingly situated on the skirts of a flat lowland country, and immediately opposite, on the other side of the Dai river, rises the abrupt wall of fantastic limestone peaks which forms the western boundary of Tongking, and furnishes the good fathers with abundance of fine building stone, which they have only to hew out of the bare face of the cliffs and ferry over the river, here narrow and very deep. They have taken advantage of this to build a gigantic cathedral on the model of the sacred edifice at Saigon, and like it, with far-away suggestions of Notre Dame. It is as yet unfinished, and in so far resembles the huge minster in Canton, which the Chinamen detest so much on account of its L'UNG-SHUI.

But the Tongkinese lane is more fortunate, for it is likely to be finished in six months, whereas Canton cathedral is more likely to be finished by dynamite. It must be admitted that both of them look not a little out of place, the KI-so building rising out of the paddy-fields and palm-trees and visible long before there is a glimpse even of the thatched houses of the villagers and the plain, low, stone buildings of the seminary, while Canton minster towers over the close built streets, with no rival but the pawn shops. The outside of the cathedral is gaily painted in blue and white and red, which the contrast with peaceful nature round about forces one to declare gaudy and vulgar. Inside, the decorations, though unfinished, are equally florid, and there

are already a couple of stained windows. No doubt the fathers know what pleases their flock best, but it seems a pity that they have appealed so much to the eye. The consecration will take place in the early days of 1885, and the occasion will be a well-earned triumph for the bishop, Monsignor PUGNIER, with his thirty years of mission labour in Tongking.

The mission buildings are very extensive, and it requires a full hour to walk round the premises, to say nothing of the village which lies outside. The seminary and the college for the instruction of the children and the rearing of native pastors are neat, quiet buildings, and are excellently conducted. They give full employment to a staff of ten French fathers, twenty-five native *curés*, and a hundred catechists. The native preachers and deacons are not only instructed in Latin, but are perfected in the study of their own language, so that many of the rural clergy are infinitely better scholars than the regular *literati*; while those pupils who remain laymen are the most useful clerks and interpreters the French have. It is impossible not to admire the zeal of the fathers, many of them simple French peasants who have been attracted into the priesthood, at first with no higher desire than the dignity of *père* and the credit it would bring to their family, and then sent out to heathen lands to live on the scantiest of salaries, with but the faintest possible hope of ever returning to the pleasant land of France, wearing the dress of the country, even to the extent of sometimes walking barefooted, and exposed too often to persecution and martyrdom. The very first experience is a terribly severe trial to the patience. When the writer visited K^o so, a new arrival, who had been only four months in the country, had been occupied during all that time, for

eight hours a day, in studying nothing more than the mere tones. Annamese is a very hard language, and such a terrible drill at the commencement is only too likely to help on home-sickness. It requires a full year to be able to keep up even the most trivial conversation, and the unhappy state of the young priest who is sent at that stage all alone out into a remote village may be imagined. Verily they shall have their reward.

But at KŨ-so, at any rate, they are not without their comforts, the fathers have there created a magnificent garden which would do credit to an Acclimatization Society; they have succeeded in rearing over a hundred trees, shrubs, and plants, foreign to Tongking, and the results of these efforts must be most valuable to the country when the military have managed to reduce it to tranquillity. The fathers have fair grapes for their table, coffee of their own growing, cigars of the KŨ-so brand, and even a light kind of wine pressed by themselves. Their labours have gone far to demonstrate the magnificent possibilities there are in Tongking, and the superiority of the agriculture of the NINH-BINH district is largely due to the neighbourhood of the priests.

Many of the inhabitants of KŨ-so are of a curious, foreign-looking type. This is said to be due to the fact that two hundred and fifty years ago there was a considerable settlement of Japanese here. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that the village has a peculiar physiognomy of its own. It is protected like all other Tongking villages against the attacks, whether of men or wild beasts, by an impenetrable girdle of bamboos, and a ditch filled with water. This is rendered the more troublesome by the removal of the bridges at night, and many of the convents are much more formidably armed than anybody who is likely to attack them. The fathers

were therefore not at all sorry to see the withdrawal of the French soldiers who were stationed here for a few months in 1881. Their habits and example were undoing the labour of years. The peaceful little village has an air of great prosperity. The flat lands, as far as the low, grassy swelling grounds to the east, grow all the villagers want in the shape of rice, maize, sugar-cane, and succulent tubers. The hillocks, one of them crowned by a gigantic cross, marking the last resting-place of a former priest, afford admirable pasturage ground for their buffaloes, of which they have an extraordinary number, and the neighbouring hills on the western side supply them with abundance of good timber.

There are not a few of these Christian villages scattered over the Tongking delta, but more particularly in the western part. They are usually wealthy and prosperous for the most part, no doubt because the priests check to the utmost of their power the extortions of the mandarins. One of the largest and most prosperous of these is the village of THAI BIEU, about half-way between Kù-so and Hanoi, in a straight line to the north. It has a large wooden church and a missionary compound. The pastor is a native, and this may possibly account for the singularly national character of the church fittings. The sacred edifice covers a good deal of ground, and, except that it has not the quasi-Chinese exterior of Annamese holy buildings, it might very easily be taken for a civilized Tongkinese joss-house. In the aisle there are the same stands of processional weapons, sabres and fantastic spears and clubs, and clenched hands on the end of red painted staves, and so on. In the chancel the saints and apostles were veritable Annamese martyrs, with the thin moustache and the slender growth of casual bristles on the chin. The

candles were the ordinary articles sold in every bazaar, and the figure on the crucifix itself might have come from the joss workshop of some neighbouring town.

This assimilation of the outward characteristics of the two faiths is a somewhat delicate question. On the one hand, it may be said that it makes it less of a wrench to the man doubting whether he shall give up the religion of his forefathers; or the other, it may be urged that the convert who is finally decided by such mere superficial, skin-deep resemblances is worth very little. As a matter of fact most of the converts are worth very little from a purely spiritual point of view. But at one time the Jesuits went very much farther than this. They permitted proselytes to render honours to the memory of Confucius, and by some *hocum pocus* converted the system of ancestor-worship into a supposed approach to the Romish dogma of the communion of saints. This slackness of doctrine was, however, very far from satisfying Pope Clement XIV; and in 1774, a year after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, a bull of that pontiff's declared ancestor-worship and the honours rendered to Confucius to be contrary to and subversive of the true faith. Nevertheless one sees spirit-temples in the Christian fields, and the honouring of ancestral graves seems to be very little interfered with. It is a hard matter to decide, and probably the fathers are the best judges. The native Christians have had much to suffer from the successive occupation and abandonment of Tongking by the P'ei ch.

The military post of P'iu-ry lies at no great distance from K'Ë-so, across the point of land formed by the Dai river and the so-called P'iu-ry canal, which enters the main river nearly opposite the T'iar-Binh canal. The small mud-walled citadel lies on a low flat, close to the

river Dai, and is probably the most unhealthy in Tongking. Inside the two hundred and fifty yard square redoubt there is very much more water than land even in the dry season, and in the rains it is very little better than a lagoon, though possibly it is healthier than when the green slime of the swamps is covered up. Five hundred men occupied the place in the beginning of May, 1884, and by the end of the year there had been several deaths, many had been sent away sick, and there were sixty men in hospital, some with fever, but the majority with dysentery. The position is an important one from the necessity of controlling the pirate bands of the Dai, but it would be better if the French were to raze the citadel, or even leave it as it is and camp out the troops on the low hills to the east of Ki-so, a little way farther south, or in one of the picturesque little hill-villages to the north east. The Colonial troops were to have been replaced by the native levies, but there is some diffidence in trusting the Tongkinese Light Infantry after the wholesale desertions there have been in that body.

THU LY has not much of a military history. In December, 1873, Lieutenant Balny d'Avricourt arrived opposite the town in the *Espingole*, destroyed the barricade that was being commenced, and of which traces are still to be seen, and landed a party of men. They marched up the dirty little street to the citadel gate, summoned it to surrender, but got no answer even to a second summons. Then they scrambled over the ramparts, and the Annamese rushed out at the other side, and were punished by several murderous volleys for not having opened the gate. Hours afterwards some of them were pulled out of the marshes half dead from the hundreds of leeches that had fastened on to them. In 1884 the gates were found open and the place empty.

On some rocks near the Dai here are the names of two of the old explorers who had their factory some twenty miles off, at HUNG-YEN, on the main river. The names—BARON, 1680, and VACHER, 1678, are carved deeply into the stone. Three hours steaming down the Dai, parallel to the eccentric, jagged line of hills, sometimes close to the river, at one place crossing to make a ragged gate, and further down drawing away to the west, but leaving abnormal, isolated rocks scattered over the plain—three hours of such scenery brings one to the fortress of NINH-BINH. It is a formidable and picturesque looking place. Two rocks, with fortifications perched on their summit, rise up at the extremity of a spit of land formed by the Dai and a creek, and these rocks are surrounded by a brick-walled bastioned citadel two thousand yards round the ramparts. It looks an awkward place to attack, yet in 1873 M. Hautefeuille, a midshipman barely twenty years of age, captured it with five sailors and an Annamese fireman. After destroying a barricade in the river some miles below KHO, M. Hautefeuille had come down to see if there were any more, and to reconnoitre NINH-BINH, which, as commanding the Hue road—“the neck of Tongking, as Hanoi is the head,” according to the proverb—Garnier particularly wanted to secure. He arrived before the place at four in the morning of the 5th December, and waited for daylight. With this he soon saw the formidable character of the place; but nothing daunted, he fired a couple of shells—one at the cliff fort, the other at the nearest battery. Then his boat ran aground. The gallant midshipman promptly landed with his five sailors and the fireman, passed round the western face of the works, and at the southern gate came upon a white-boarded mandarin under four umbrellas. Him he seized, and clapped a revolver to

his head, while the five sailors kept off the garrison, and the fireman turned interpreter. The mandarin proved to be the governor of the citadel. M. Hautefeuille gave him quarter of an hour to summon the other mandarins and give up the citadel.

They came, and, sixty seconds before time, the midshipman marched in. He extorted a written capitulation from the governor, locked him and all the other officials up, and made the tour of the walls, where there were seven hundred Annamese troops on their knees, with their arms lying on the ground before them. A very little extra frightening made them all run away. That night the young conqueror slept with his men in the higher of the two interior rock forts, though he had already received reinforcement of fifty armed Christians from the village of PHAT-DIEM to the north. The number increased daily, and a strong detachment of MUONGS from the hills came and enrolled themselves in his service. Before Francis Garnier arrived, four days later, the province of NINH-BINH was in hand, and M. Hautefeuille had actually despatched a body of MUONGS to hold the TAM-DIEM pass into the province of THANH HOA, and so prevent the arrival of reinforcements from HUÉ. The MUONGS not only seized the pass, but held it against several attacks.

The province was soon quieted down. M. Hautefeuille appointed prefects of his own in all the chief towns, and himself travelled all over the different districts. All remained quiet till the death of Francis Garnier. Then the scattered troops and the malcontent mandarins gathered together, killed one of the new prefects, and burnt several Christian villages. M. Hautefeuille was up on the instant. His native levies drove back the enemy on NGO QUANG, a town up the DAO-GRANG river, a small stream not far above NINH-BINH, which flows down

from the western hills. Fortunately the *MANC-HAO*, one of M. Dupuis's steamers, happened to be at hand, and M. Hautesouille promptly requisitioned it to tow his junks up the *DAO-GRANG*.

With this assistance he reached, on the 5th of January, a place called *Dai Hun*, at the foot of the hills. It was a strong position, consisting really of three villages, defended by palisading, and with the front covered by marshes; but the enemy ran at the first shells, and next day the real fight came off at *AN-HOA*, a biggish town situated among the hills, and protected by a fort. Breastworks covered the foreground, and a forest filled with the enemy guarded one flank. It was their last hope, and they fought well for some time. But an attack above and below, and the shells from the *MANC-HAO*, which fired the town, drove them back. They set fire to their own barracks and fled to the hills, pursued by the *Muongs*, who killed so many that the river ran red with blood. Twenty-four rebel officials were shot. M. Hautesouille had thus once more restored his province to tranquillity. He returned on the evening of the 7th to *NINH-BINH*, found an order telling him to evacuate the place immediately, and did so with a heavy heart next day.

The place remained in Annamese hands till 1889, when in the month of September, with if possible less resistance than in 1878, it surrendered to thirty men. Till May, 1881, fifteen men in the rocky fort served to hold it, but since then *NINH-BINH* has had a garrison of three hundred, whom, however, fever and dysentery is constantly reducing. Were it not that the villages hidden away among the gorges and in awkward nooks and corners of the neighbouring hills bear an ill-name, it would perhaps be well to return to the fifteen again.

The winter of 1884-5 will have to see done over again the work which M. Hautefeuille accomplished in a few weeks. The pirates who come up from the sea, and the marauders from the hills, combine to make wandering in the beautiful western hill country anything but safe.



CHAPTER VII.

HEI OPI. BACNINH.

ALL through the summer of 1883 and during the early months of 1884 the name of Bacninh was in every one's mouth. It was not on account of the importance of the town itself, for were it not for the citadel there are many villages in the province which are considerably larger and, socially speaking, more noteworthy. It is a characteristic of Tongking that the populous and commercial centres keep away from the citadels. People who want to prosper and to let alone keep aloof as much as they can from the officials, and certainly from the soldiery. It is only the Chiamen who dare to grow fat and gather together pieces of silver in the neighbourhood of the mandarins. Thus it happens that the pottery village of Cho-u, a few miles north of Bacninh, on the Song-cau river, is very much more thriving and substantial than the provincial town, and the huge village of Dang-xa, a little farther off to the south, on the other side of the Song-ki canal, is equally beyond question more populous and well-to-do. The same thing is found everywhere else. The village

of the bamboos is lively and brisk in its trade. The adjacent citadel of Hung-yen is a wretched, dead-and-alive place. My Luong was a far better built place than Sonray. My Duc is a mere hamlet compared with Ngua.

In itself Bacninh was nothing. It was the position that was everything. Without Bacninh the French could have no peace in the central delta. From this starting point hostile troops could march east, south, and west, and raise perpetual trouble in the country, and in the most fertile part of Tongking too. Without possession of Bacninh the wet weather route to Hanoi by the Song ki or Bacninh canal could never be safe. Moreover, the citadel was astride the direct road to China, the Royal Road which led from Saigon to Hué, from Hué to Hanoi, from Hanoi to the suzerain middle kingdom. The situation was farther accentuated by the virtual occupation of the place by the Chinese. Since 1868 there had practically been a constant Chinese garrison in Bacninh. It had varied from a regular army to a few score men, but there had always been an Imperial officer there, and the provincial Tong-Doc was very obedient to the orders of his "elder brother." Since Rivière's capture of Hanoi Citadel the Chinese garrison had steadily increased. Chinese troops from Bacninh crossed the canal and came over to bombard the Tongkinese capital. It was evident that to pacify Tongking the French must take Bacninh. But then came the Marquess Tsing's statement, that if the French attacked Bacninh they would run tilt against the Chinese troops, they would break a lance with the middle kingdom.

Sonray had taxed the most strenuous efforts of six thousand of the flower of the French army. If the Black Flags, more outlawed than namon, with a little casual assistance in arms and money, had been able to

do so much, what would not the "regular" Chinese army, with the Imperial Treasury at its back, effect?

Accordingly the attack on Bacninh hung fire most terribly, as indeed French colonial enterprises for the last three years have shown a most unfortunate and costly tendency to do. Bacninh lay midway, or nearly so, between the Song-ki canal and the Song-ou river; but the former was too far off, and a low range of hills barred view of the citadel from the river. The French were therefore unable to support the attack of their troops by the fire of their gunboats, and the gunboats had hitherto been the main element in scaring the enemy. It was known, it is true, from the reports of the few Frenchmen who had visited Bacninh in the old days that the citadel was commanded by small eminences at no great distance, and that it was impossible to defile this fire. But, on the other hand, it was announced by spies that all these heights were occupied, and to some extent fortified, by the Chinamen. That the direct Hanoi-Bacninh road was strongly held the French could easily see for themselves from the top of Hanoi tower.

Then it appeared that the Chinamen were really determined to fight hard. On the various occasions when the French had made reconnaissances towards Bacninh they had always experienced more or less stubborn resistance at the different earthworks. They had never succeeded in driving the enemy farther off than the Song-ki canal, which is not a third of the whole distance to Bacninh, and the French themselves had never ventured nearer even than a mile to this barrier. The Chinamen had immediately returned after every such expedition, and had re-occupied the earthworks in the direction of Hanoi, from which they had been driven.

While SONTAY was being attacked a strong force from Bacninh made a strenuous attempt to cross the river and take the French forces in the rear, firing into Hanoi at the same time. It was only the shells and Hotchkiss guns of the French war-boats that prevented one or other of these attempts, repeated as they were on three successive nights, from being successful.

Moreover, on the eastern side there had been a plucky and very nearly successful attempt to retake HAI-DZUONG. This town, on the THAI BINH, was the third most important in Tongking, both in population and in wealth, the commercial entrepôt as it is of the fertile central delta. Moreover, the route to Hanoi can never be safe with HAI DZUONG in an enemy's hands. The town is very picturesque, rising up as it does, with its substantial brick houses and a large Spanish cathedral, from land which seems only a few inches above the level of high water. Across the green rice-fields one can trace the limits of the place from miles off, and can hardly believe it a Tongkinese town, so massive and opulent does it appear.

This town was therefore one of the first which Garnier took possession of in 1873. There were barriers under construction in the THAI BINH, and Lieutenant Balny was sent round with the *Espingole* to destroy them and receive the submission of the governor of HAI-DZUONG. The barriers were only half finished, and were easily got past or destroyed. But at two miles from the town the gunboat ran aground, the tide being at its lowest. With the promptitude and daring which characterized the French officers of those days the young lieutenant jumped into his boat, and with an escort of four men proceeded to the citadel. He was asked to wait in the "Strangers' Bungalow," attached to all Tongking fort-

losses, but, becoming impatient after ten minutes, forced his way into the citadel and into the presence of the Tonc-Doo himself. That official was somewhat disconcerted, but was coldly polite. He wished for peace, and might even agree to the commercial edict of Camner which was read over to him, but he refused to give up the citadel, and declined to return Bahy d'Avicourt's visit. It would require a special edict from Hue before he could do that, he said. The lieutenant insisted, and announced what he would do if the "courtesy call" were not returned. The governor could not believe that the gunboat could do anything from a distance of two miles, and imagined himself strong enough to repel any land attack.

M. Bahy went off on board, and was followed immediately by an interior official with temporary presents. These were refused, and an ultimatum sent that, if the governor did not come within three hours, hostilities would be commenced.

The citadel was a strong one, though on the bad hexagonal system. The angles were furnished with bastions, and the total circuit of the ramparts might be three thousand yards. Three of the gates were blocked with gabions, and all were protected by exterior works. The ramparts bristled with cannon, many of them useless, but among them some fairly serviceable bronze guns. There were fifteen hundred men in the place, most of them armed with muskets. The governor therefore seemed fairly justified in refusing to surrender, at any rate he did not come, and after the three hours ten shells were dropped into the citadel, one of them hitting the tower.

Then negotiations were reopened. The governor was given till the next day to consider, but he only sent the

CHANH-LANH BINH, the provincial general, and another mandarin. Meanwhile the *Espingole* floated and came close up to the town, which lies between the citadel and the river. Thirty two men were landed under the command of M Balny and M. de Tientinian, and marched up the central street on the eastern gate. The *Espingole* engaged the forts in the meantime, at a distance of little over quarter of a mile; but a brisk return fire was kept up, though it did little damage. The storming party nevertheless met with a pretty sturdy resistance, though the Annamese firing, happily for them, was as wild as that directed on the gunboat. The redan with its iron-spiked walls was scaled, and then a rush was made for the gate. Here they were checked. There was nothing but an axe to destroy the gate, and it was too solid. The walls were too high to scale, and three cannon from one of the bastions at the angle to the right were firing persistently at them, notwithstanding the searching Chassepôt fire. It was a nasty situation, for a shower of stone and bricks was coming down upon the Frenchmen from the archway over the gate. Suddenly it was noticed that the gate was solid only at the foot; the top portion was a mere grating. The wooden bars of this were soon torn away, and Balny, Dr. Harmand, and four men scrambled over. The moment they appeared inside the citadel the whole garrison took to flight.

But the conquest was rather an embarrassing one. The Spanish missionaries of the adjacent mission of KÉ-MOR, Bishop COLONER at their head, protested violently against the occupation, and if it had not been for the Chinamen, who believed in Garnier's proclamation ordaining freedom of trade on the Song-cou, the French could hardly have kept the citadel. M. de

Trentinian was left behind with a garrison of seventeen men. He spiked all the cannon, burnt most of the muskets, and constructed a sort of keep inside, where he with his handful of men might have had some reasonable hope of holding out. But it was the Chinamen who really made the place secure. They raised a volunteer force of two hundred men, held some of the outposts, and scared off malecontents; while M. de Trentinian was actually guided in all his precautions by the chief of the Chinese community. But the occupation of Hai-Dzi ong lasted even a shorter time than that of the other Delta fortresses. On the 6th of January, in accordance with M. Philastre's peremptory orders, the French troops were drawn off. It was possibly the only citadel where there were not wholesale massacres afterwards, for the Annamese mandarins dared not touch the Chinamen.

In 1883 Hai-Dzi ong fell in the most pitiful way. Two small river gunboats, the *Carabine* and the *Natagan*, came up with some launches carrying three hundred men under the command of Colonel Brionval. The Annamese took to their heels at the first gun, and abandoned the citadel containing one hundred and fifty cannon and a considerable amount of treasure in "cash." This was on the 19th of August. The easy capture induced too much confidence; besides that, the French had not enough men at the time to leave a strong garrison. In the beginning of November, when the Chinamen came over from Hacninh, there were only sixty Frenchmen and a company of Annamese *Tuul-leurs*. All the latter and the majority of the French troops were at the time in a small blockhouse on the *THAT-BINH*, with the town lying between them and the citadel.

The Chinese arrangements were very good. They massed in the neighbourhood, and made their attack from the north and west about eight at night. The citadel was occupied at once, and the whole town overrun in an extraordinarily short space of time. A barricade was run up in the street leading through this to the eastern gate, thus cutting off all communication between the citadel and the blockhouse. To add to the difficulties, the lieutenant in command of the section in the citadel had gone to dine with his captain at the blockhouse, and, the way being barred, the score or so of men were left under the orders of a sergeant. The sergeant was promoted to be lieutenant, but apparently the lieutenant never got anything—not even a reprimand. The section had only bare time to take refuge in the eastern gateway, over which a massive turret was built, when it was surrounded on every side. The Chinamen from inside the citadel fired on them, and those from the barrier without fired also, both equally regardless of the chance of killing their fellow-countrymen. The men at the barricade also kept up a raking fire down the street, and prevented the men from the blockhouse, who themselves were attacked, from making a sally to rescue their brethren in arms.

The little gunboat, the *Carabine*, was in the creek which runs to the south of the town, but it was low water, and she could not turn. The solid Chinese houses all along the bank were loop-holed, and an overwhelming fire was kept up which raked her decks and prevented any use being made of her guns. Another half-hour and Hai-Dzuong and possibly the *Carabine* would have been taken.

But, luckily for the Frenchmen, the large river gunboat the *Lynx*, stationed at Ki-mor, a few miles up the

river, heard the firing and came down in hot haste. She got into a branch of the river to the north, and her shell and the terrible destruction of her Hotchkiss guns turned the balance the other way. With victory just in their grasp the Chinamen had to draw off. If they had but had a couple of cannon with them the *Luna* would have been too late. As it is, the gateway tower remains, pitted all over with bullets on every side, and the solid planks of the door which had resisted Balny's axes are perforated in a score of places.

An event such as this increased the respect of the French for the Baeninh Chinamen. Admiral Courbet decided to wait for the reinforcements just then about to leave France, and immediately sent strong reinforcements to Haï Dzong. The commandant there did more. He was determined not to risk such another attack, and he simply made a clean sweep of the whole Chinese quarter. The once wealthy town is simply a heap of melancholy ruins. The substantially built houses are mere piles of bricks, with here and there a wall threatening to fall and overwhelm the paltry little huts some returned Annamese have built under its shelter. The citadel is a perfect waste, with nothing but a few lines of filthy barracks, whose condition adds to the naturally unhealthy state of the neighbourhood. Beyond the Annamese quarter to the west and the Lockhouse, nothing remains intact but the cathedral. This is a tolerably large building in the plain Dominican style, with round windows and a lofty roof. The inside is utterly ruined by some horrid daubs by native artists, intended to represent scenes in sacred history.

Altogether, when in the middle of February 1884, General Négrier arrived in Haï Dzong, the scene was dismal enough, and quite sufficient to suggest a hard struggle before BACININI was taken. Rumours were

flying about that there were 20,000, 30,000, 40,000 Chinamen there; that the Black Flags were coming, that all the advance posts were armed with Krupps; that there were 15,000 Annamese troops, and that a veritable descendant of the old Li dynasty had issued forth from the forests to lead them, mounted on the aged elephant with the gold rings in his ears, who for near a hundred years had waited for his coming at Bacninh gates. Bacninh was to be *le tombeau de tout le monde*.

General Négrier did not trouble himself much about all this, but at once set to work with his usual energy. He occupied a round, bare hill, "The Seven Pagodas," at the mouth of the Song cau river, almost without an effort, and, after beating off an attack on this position by the Chinamen, waited the completion of General Millot's preparations at Hanoi and the arrival of the full moon of March.



CHAPTER V II.

THE FALL OF HANOI

THE march on Bacninh commenced from both sides on the 8th of March, 1884. General Négrier started from his advanced post of the "Seven Pagodas" on the Hai-Dzuong side, and Generals Milloet and Brière de l'Isle left the Song-con on the same morning. Each column numbered about 6,000 men. The troops had crossed the river from Hanoi on the afternoon and night of the 7th, so that a start was made at daylight. Till the last moment the route to be followed by the Hanoi column was kept a secret from all but the staff and the French newspaper correspondents. It had been announced that General Brière de l'Isle was to march north of the *Canal des Rapides*, while General Milloet was to start towards the north-east from BA LANG, a small post, five or six miles to the south of Hanoi, on the left bank. This proved, however, to be a mere blind to deceive the Chinese, who had abundance of agents in Hanoi.

The actual line of march proved to be very different. The troops proceeded several miles southwards, and then

struck nearly due east at a distance of some ten or twelve miles south of and parallel to the canal. This completely baffled the Chinamen. They had imagined that it was impossible for the artillery to move otherwise than along the regular roads. The route from Hanoi to Bacninh would be regarded as a very inferior cart road to a country farmhouse in England, but it is the Royal Road, the best in Tongking, and the enemy was certainly justified in supposing that the French would rather fight than turn it.

They had made every preparation for a good resistance. Crossing the road to the west of the canal, the flood-dyke had been converted into a series of earth-works, with a few guns and abundance of shelter trenches. Beyond this, for a distance of a mile up to the canal banks, the country was perfectly open, with scarcely shelter for a dog. The canal ran swift and deep, with a current of five knots at least, and the steep embankment immediately on the farther side had been transformed into an exceedingly formidable line of works. The Chinese had with infinite toil fashioned the whole ridge into a veritable fort. The windings of the canal furnished natural bastions, every 20 yards or so an embrasure was dug for a gun, and the top was parapotted for riflemen. It is impossible to believe that the taking of this first line of defence would not have cost dearly.

A couple of miles farther on came the huge agglomeration of redoubts, breastworks, outlying pagodas and fortified villages which the French called the position of Phu-Tu-Son. This was also an obstacle that seemed likely to have given warm work to the whole column of six thousand men. Beyond, every village and every pagoda and there was one or other every few hundred yards—offered a chance of making a stand.

General Millet was evidently of opinion that the seventeen miles of defences which made up the Hanoi-Bac-nh road was too much for his strength, so he gave up the direct route and marched across country. No one could have imagined that European troops, or at any rate artillery, could have passed where they did. There was absolutely no road. It had to be made by the sappers as the column advanced. The greater part of the way lay across the paddy fields by the zig-zag ridges dividing the different patches of rice. This would have been bad enough in dry weather, but for the greater part of the time, at any rate in the mornings, there was a penetrating small rain, or Scotch mist of the most flabidom kind, making the path difficult for single pedestrians, and simply atrocious for masses of men. Now and then passages were made straight across the riceland where it was passably firm—so firm that one did not sink up to the ankle, though at every step the tenacious clay quaked for yards all round. Barely three miles from the river one of the artillery horses sunk up to the girths, and had to be laboriously dug out.

Still, somehow or other, every one got across, artillery and all, though at nightfall the advanced posts were not more than eight or nine miles from Hanoi, and the rear-guard not more than three. It was an unpleasant night the first. Almost every one slept in the open. Those who got a tree for a counterpane were lucky. The general himself had to put up with a spirit-shrine, open to all the winds of heaven except on one side, which happened to be the wrong one on that occasion. The great body of troops had to be contented with the paddy-field ridges, and were fortunate if they did not tumble into the water during the night.

During the early hours of the morning the Chinamen

crossed over from the other side of the canal, and opened fire on a battalion of Turcos from a distance of 1,500 yards or thereabouts; but the column was so long that very few except the Algerians were disturbed, and they contented themselves with cursing the Celestials for making such a noise.

Next day was very much a repetition of the first, except that here and there there were patches of castor oil and peanut and mulberry cultivation that rendered Indian file not absolutely imperative. By the afternoon the Christian village of NGA TU DAU was reached, and there halt was made to enable the whole column to come up. It would have been well to have pushed on so far the first night. This delay was simply the run of the project to cut off the Chinese retreat, and inflict a serious blow which should end matters. But all might still have been well if this had been the only delay.

The good Christians of NGA TU DAU had a very unpleasant time that night. A great part of the village had been requisitioned, but in the confusion, and with the intricacies of Tongkinese villages, it was almost impossible to ascertain which houses were to be taken and which left. In the end the entire body of the inhabitants was driven out, anything eatable was seized, and almost everything worth taking was stolen.

The baggage coolies were perhaps the worst offenders in this respect, for they did not hesitate to employ violence towards any of their fellow countrymen that had the hardihood to remain to look after their goods and chattels. The writer found himself installed for the night in a house which he managed to save from the ravages of these scoundrels. It was a very good specimen of the house of a well-to-do Annamese landowner. About an acre of ground was surrounded by a solid wall

and a thick set bamboo fence. The Tongkinese have the very smallest amount of confidence in one another. Every village is fortified against all others, many of them so strongly that it would require artillery to bring them to terms. Even artillery would not find it an easy matter to make a breach in the solid earth dyke and the close fence of live bamboo, growing both on the inner and outer slopes. But the Tongkinese are not satisfied with protecting themselves against outsiders. Every one who has anything worth guarding shuts himself off just as carefully from his neighbours, usually by means of a bamboo fence, often with a brick wall and an iron-clamped door, not uncommonly with both fence and wall. Of this last kind was the house at NGA-TU DAU. Inside was a good sized court, flagged with large bricks. Round this, on three sides, were the dwelling house and offices, and on the fourth was a square water tank of some size and depth, with little islets of a species of water-cress anchored inside rough floating frames of bamboo. On the side opposite this bank was the main house, easily distinguished by the domestic altar at the back to the ancestors of the family. To the left of the main room was the bedroom, and to the right a kind of lumber room, filled with agricultural tools, seed grain, and unhusked rice. On the right-hand side of the court was another suite of rooms, the contents of a box in which seemed to indicate that the Goodman dabbled in medicine, and was not unacquainted with mineralogy. At any rate there were heaps of dry leaves, some phials of wrinkled seeds and powders, a fair selection of teeth (a valuable medicine), one or two exceedingly rich specimens of copper ore and cinnabar, as well as one or two small pinches of gold dust, and a fair quantity of tin.

Facing this was a byre containing a particularly malevolent buffalo, whom there was no means of getting rid of; for if he had been let out there was no ensuring that he would leave the court, and he sniffed and snorted and turned about in his stall with most demonstrative dislike for the white man. Alongside of him were large stores of grain and straw, ploughs and coolie baskets, and some huge jars of Nuoc Mam, a most evil-smelling liquor strained from decomposed fish. In a corner was a most extensive pig sty, with but one disconsolate inmate, all his companions having been killed by the coolies. By the side of the pond was a large rectangular water cistern, covered with a remarkably tenacious sort of cement, which the Annamese make out of pounded shells. This was filled with rain-water, and close by it were a dove-cote and a stout sort of cage, raised about a foot off the ground and containing a dog. The dog had had a most miraculous escape from the baggage coolies. He was of the most esteemed kind, black himself, with a black tongue and a palate—quite a delicacy. The worthy proprietor was evidently feeding him up for some special feast day. The dog was even more hostile and intractable than the buffalo, and all attempts to let him out were foiled by his vicious snaps. Next day, when the householder returned, he was no doubt eaten.

The floor of the house was composed of a kind of concrete made of tempered lime and clay, and offered a very fair smooth and unyielding surface. The furniture was scanty enough. There were one or two long, slim-legged tables, the limited nature of whose surface was less a matter of concern than their extreme ricketyness. Two broad, hard, uncomfortable seats, half bench, half sofa, in plain carved ebony, faced one another, with a

table in between. There were one or two stools and some boxes, and a few planks laid loose over a couple of low settles made a bed at night and a dais of reception during the day. On the walls were a few scrolls with pious inscriptions, and some crude pictures of rural scenery, and bald headed old gentlemen in awkward attitudes and without any necks to speak of.

It may seem somewhat curious to give a long description of an Annamese village house in the middle of the account of a strategic march which was to result in the cutting off of the retreat of an army of Chinamen. To cage in Celestials requires activity and energy above everything, and this was just what was wanting in General Millet's column. The halt was made at NGATU DAU at two in the afternoon, just when General Negrier was arriving at the positions where a junction with him was to be effected. Three posts were on the north of the SONG-KI canal, and not more than fourteen to fifteen miles off. There was no one to oppose the passage of the canal, yet it was not till three days afterwards that the Hanoi column reached the market-town of CHU, where on this very afternoon the Algerian general had established his advanced post, and was fuming up and down in his ultra energetic fashion. On the 9th scant six miles were marched, but the next day not even so much was got over, and the halt was made at DANG XA, barely two miles from the canal, but at a place considerably west of CHU, where Négrier expected the passage.

No doubt there were no roads. It was frightful work, even for a man on foot with nothing to encumber him. It was astonishing that the artillery got through at all, but they did get through, and that at two in the afternoon. It would therefore have been worth pushing on

to effect the desired touch with the Hai Dzuong brigade. Without doubt Négrier got on faster than was expected. From the very first the Chinese resistance was not even half-hearted. They had made the terrible mistake of scattering their forces too much, and were outnumbered everywhere, to say nothing of the fact that they had no artillery. The Hanoi column had a simple march of it till it advanced from Cui. Négrier on the 8th had practically the same thing. He started from the "Seven Pagodas," landed at Phu-Long, and occupied position after position by force of simply walking into them. Next day he went on to Yen-Ding, on the Song-cau river, and shelled several forts on the hills, covering breastworks, stockades, and fortified villages at their base. After the gunboats had done their work, the troops advanced, an officer of the 111th regiment and two Annamese *Tuailleurs* were killed, and five men wounded. The whole line from Yen-Ding, across westward to the Bacninh canal, was occupied, and the 143rd regiment of the line went even beyond the pre-arranged plan, and entered the village of Toi, three miles beyond Cui. On this line "the coming general" remained inactive two days and a half, and, as an Irish officer of the Legion remarked, it was a mercy he did not go mad.

Meanwhile the commander in chief's column struggled sedately through the paddy-fields, and saw never a Chinaman, though scores of straggling villages and pagoda clumps were passed, any one of which, in its ordinary state, and defended by nothing but resolute men with rifles, might have been expected to cost a matter of a hundred lives to the attackers, and hours of precious time. But nothing more formidable was seen than buffaloes; and the few wretched inhabitants who had ventured to stay near their houses came out and

offered water to the soldiers, and grovelled in the mud before the officers, and generally made a revolting exhibition of cowardice.

At last, at eight o'clock on a wretched morning, the banks of the canal were reached. A Tongkinese mist puts the Scotch article altogether out of count: without being rain it is equally wetting and infinitely more disagreeable, and the stiff clay of the delta under its influence becomes almost impassable. General Négrier came up post haste to meet his chief. Possibly it might have been the depressing influence of the weather, possibly there may have been other reasons; certain it is that all that was done that day was to cross the canal. A pontoon bridge, composed of boats and bamboos lashed together, with planks over them, was finished by nine o'clock, and between eleven and twelve the last baggage coolie was over. However, the column remained fast, and listened to Parisian valse from the general's band all the afternoon.

Next morning advance was made to CHU, a little way down the canal. The column stopped to breakfast at eight, and soon found that Négrier had breakfasted earlier, or was not going to breakfast at all. His guns could easily be heard, and with glasses it was possible to see that he silenced a little redoubt, eight miles off to the north, in five minutes, and a few minutes later set the barracks on fire. Then he drew off behind some little hills and went on up the right bank of the SONG CAU, his guns pegging away all the time, and always getting farther west of the first brigade.

The positions in front of the commander in chief's column were formidable enough physically. There was a big, bare hill, fifteen hundred feet high, with a small earth fort on the very crest. This hill was only about

three miles from Bacninh. In front of it and running into its sides were a series of little elevations, connected with one another, and each crowned by its breastwork. The sides of all were as bare as the back of one's hand, except for a few scattered rocks. Up to the very base ran the paddy-fields, and at the foot of the slope the water stood a foot deep, to take no account of the mud underneath. Running out to right and left were long, straggling villages, protected as usual by dykes and bamboos, and, if occupied, completely commanding the huge wide plain of paddy that stretched away without a shadow of cover for miles to the east.

The Chinamen did not delay to show that they were there. In front of each redoubt, if redoubts they could be called when they had no guns, were placed two light-blue flags side by side. Beyond these two red ones, and then a large assortment of all colours and patterns along the works and at intervals on the ridge. Three of the positions were really nothing more than breastworks for riflemen, denticulated and built of heavy sods of turf. The other, on an isolated hill to the right, was cased in with bamboos and covered over. About a thousand men came out of the village to the left, and, displaying a large number of white flags, took up position at the base of the hill on the farther side of the swamp; but the majority shortly afterwards retired.

The attack was commenced at twelve. The artillery opened fire at three thousand yards, but soon moved up much closer. Meanwhile the Chinamen were calmly seated on the top of their works, or on the hill-side, looking on as if they were disinterested spectators; and the sight must have been a fine one as the three thousand French troops deployed for the attack, with the balloon towering high overhead. Presently a shell burst over

the troops with the white flags, and on the instant at least three-quarters of them took to their heels. Twenty-five remained with four flags and commenced rifle fire at an impossible distance, but shortly afterwards retreated up the hill side, leaving one man behind. He stayed for some time firing vigorously at a distance of fifteen hundred yards with his sights probably at a hundred. Four shells were devoted to him, the last bursting on the hill about thirty yards behind him. Then his nerve failed, he seized his two flags and rushed off with even greater zeal than his comrades had previously displayed. This was probably the most serious resistance the French experienced at TRUNG SON, as the position was called.

The artillery shelled the villages for twenty minutes, and then devoted their attention to the works on the hills. The Annamese *Tuailleurs* advanced on the left, the Marine Infantry in the centre, and the Lucos on the right, firing volley after volley into the villages and on the abattis along the base of the hill. But they were firing merely at bamboos. There was nothing more serious to be done than to scramble through the slush and walk up the hill. But the Chinamen had the pace, and were already half way up to the main work on the big hill beyond, two of them for a time diligently firing jingals in a harmless way. That was all the enemy's artillery at TRUNG SON. If it had been provided with only a dozen fairly served guns it would have been an extremely awkward position, and, defended merely with Remingtons and courage, it must have cost dearly, on account of the admirably contrived cross-fire.

As it was it cost the French nothing. Seven "forts" were captured, a score of villages in which the Chinamen had eaten breakfast that morning were occupied.

There was a good deal of "sniping" at stragglers on the way, some of them Chinamen, a good many simple villagers, victims of the indiscriminating Tuco. Rain came on, and the troops were billeted for the night, and listened for hours to the boom of Négrier's guns.

All day long the Algerian general fought, taking height after height, fort after fort, villages and pagodas without number, and still he pressed on, meeting with but very little more resistance than the other column did, and that only because he pressed on so hard that he trod on the heels of the Chinamen. The last day of the advance on Bacninh cost the French five killed, one of them a corporal, cut in half by a round shot, and twenty-five wounded. The Chinamen abandoned all thought of resistance, and only sought to get over the SONG-CAU. By five o'clock the artillery was shelling Bacninh from the northern hills. But the place was already evacuated, and at six the troops marched in in column, and the following morning General MilLOT entered under a salute of nine guns.

The scheme of cutting off the Chinese retreat was an utter failure. Not only did the Chinamen get away, but most of what was valuable was got away from Bacninh too. All really serious intention to hold the place was given up days before in view of the overwhelming French force. The Imperial militia that remained to hold the outposts were few in number, and the rest were the ordinary residents of the province coolies and store-keepers and their clerks.

The question of the failure to coop in the Chinamen, or at any rate to inflict a severe blow upon them, was a sore point with the French. There were even whispers that Négrier was greatly blamed for his activity. Had he passed round to the north and west along the SONG-

CAU river, instead of rushing straight on to the citadel, there were those who said that the plan might have succeeded, and the Chinamen massacred.

There can, however, be no doubt that any hope of success in the movement was utterly ruined by the action of the naval force. This was under the command of M. Morel-Beaulieu, *capitaine de frégate*. For three clear days he lay before the upper barricade on the SONG CAU, just above the village of LANG HOUT, and never stirred a hand. He said he had no orders, the familiar excuse of the Indian "boy." The position was certainly a very strong one. The barrier itself was a formidable obstacle. On the left bank spurs of the mountain range came close down to the river, and were surmounted by admirably placed works. Stockades at the bottom and on the slopes of the other bank completed the strength of the position. But there was no sign of movement in the works, and the gunboats remained tranquilly anchored below till late on the morning of the 12th, the day on which Négrier entered Bacninh. Had M. Morel-Beaulieu burst the barrier even the previous day and started with the land forces, he must have succeeded in cutting the bridge at DAR-CAU over the river and greatly hampering the Chinese retreat, if he had not actually cut off the rear guard. As it was, he arrived too late to do anything at all except kill villagers. In any case, however, not very much could have been done, for the stoppage of Orientals in a country like that round Bacninh by Europeans is impossible. The cartographers may say that there are roads only in such and such places, but the natives will find means of passing everywhere.

Bacninh lies on the northern edge of a wide stretch of green paddy-land, diversified occasionally with patches

of the maize, peanuts, and castor oil, which grow so well here. From the level plain there is nothing outwardly to distinguish it from the ordinary Tongkinese village, except the not very imposing hexagonal tower which rises in the centre. Three-quarters of a mile off to the north are the heights so frequently spoken of as dominating the town. They are gentle undulations—one can hardly call them hillocks—perhaps a hundred and fifty feet high, and all of them furnished with admirably constructed redoubts. Between these and the town were other earthworks, but till the French destroyed them they were as little damaged as when they were first put up. The builders were either directed by a man of experience, or they had extraordinary natural gifts for fortification. The unfortunate thing was that there was no garrison to put inside them except the coolie builders. All the way to the Song-cay one found these earthworks. It was the same to the east, except that there were not so many heights. The Hanoi road trusted to the lines along the canal and to the fortified villages.

The town itself was hardly fortified in any except the ordinary Tongkinese sense. There was the familiar mud wall with the live bamboos on the top of it, a mangy-looking moat, and a freshly constructed earthen half-moon battery in front of each gate. The houses inside are close together, and there are regularly defined streets, which the ordinary village never dreams of having. In shape *Buwinh* is a crude circle with a considerable bulge to the eastward, and it is mainly in this bulge that the town lies, the citadel being in the south-west. In a wide circle, a hundred yards outside the citadel walls, and extending all round it, are the barracks of the Chinamen, solidly constructed brick

buildings capable of holding from twenty to thirty men apiece. They were crammed full of spears and gun barrels, and clumsy gun stocks to which these were to be fitted, jars of powder and bullets by the ton, uniforms and clumsy bamboo bullet pouches, cartridges—mostly Remington and Snider—were to be found everywhere, but never a gun to fire them out of. The poor misguided townspeople seem to have thought that when you had the cartridge you had everything. It could be discharged out of the first gun that came handy according to their notion.

The citadel itself is on the pernicious hexagonal system, about five hundred yards to the side. There are four gates with fixed bridges, and covering each of these was a freshly constructed earthen redan, the citadel itself being of brick. There was a large number of guns round the ramparts, but they were for the most part honeycombed with age, and, if they had not burst at the first discharge could not have sent the balls lying beside them more than a couple of hundred yards. Inside was found a battery of two-and-a-half-inch Krupps, manufactured at one of the Imperial arsenals, as also a Mitrailleuse, differing from the French weapon only in having thirty six barrels instead of twenty-five. These, however, seemed to have been fired at most once or twice, perhaps for practice. The Bacninh storekeepers did not understand the working of them. Of public buildings there were none worth mentioning. There were the usual huge rice granaries, but scantily filled. The treasury was all but empty. The house of the Chinese commander was a mere wood and bamboo shed, and the Royal Pagoda itself, with a clump of pine trees behind it, was a solid but unpretentious building, surpassed by many a village *dinh*. Beyond this there was

scarcely anything of any importance. A few knives, and forks, and plates, and tumblers were found, and from these the inevitable European was conjured up. It is scarcely necessary to say that there was no such creature.

The French soon set about putting the place in order after their fashion. The citadel was cleared of more than half the buildings. The Chinese barracks were gutted, and a great many houses burnt down, some of the soldiers said to drive away the mosquitoes. Certainly Bacninh mosquitoes are terrible. Those of Burma run the pests of the Norwegian fjords and the West Indies hard, but they are almost a luxury compared with the merciless hordes to be found in Bacninh. Old stagers could not get a wink of sleep, and the new line troops out from France went about with their eyes bunged up and huge red bumps on their faces as if they were fresh from a Kilkenny row.

As the hot, damp weather came on the place became more and more unhealthy. Typhoid fever broke out, and it is a question whether the French would not do well to abandon the citadel and establish themselves in a redoubt on the hills to the north, where they would equally command the Chinese road and dominate the town with their guns. Unfortunately this requires money, which is what France cannot easily get at present, not even out of China.



CHAPTER IX.

THE LANG-SON ROAD.

THREE days after his entry into Bacninh General Négrier started off in pursuit of the flying Chinese columns along the LANG SON road (it would be more properly written LANG-SHON, just as, according to the Annamese pronunciation, SONTAY would be pronounced SHONTAI). It was not intended to proceed all along the way to the frontier town. French ideas had not then expanded so much as they have since. There were diplomatic difficulties in the way, and General MilLOT had either received instructions before leaving France, or had been ordered since, to leave LANG SON alone for the time. Attacking LANG SON was practically attacking China. The provincial capital is beyond the natural divide, and though it is nominally in Tongking, the amount of real power the Annamese, whether under the northern LI dynasty, or under the present NGUYENS of Annam Proper, have possessed in the province, has always been of the most shadowy character. In any case the French had not the means at the time of carrying out the march. They would have had to take all their supply of drinking

water with them, and that was impossible in the then state of the commissariat, which body completely broke down, and was unable to furnish the troops for many days with their rations of wine and bread, the things which, above all, the French soldiers regard as necessities of existence.

However, Négrier crossed the Song-cau by the cleverly constructed floating bridge which the Chinamen had left behind them, and hurried off to harass the Chinese retreat. Immediately beyond Dap-cau the country begins to rise, and one sees no more of the embankments which are such familiar features of the landscape to the south. Still there is abundance of rice. There are many villages, all of them very populous and thriving.

Then the Thuong-Giang river is reached. There Négrier came up with the Chinese rear guard, and there was a smart little action for an hour or so, but the Chinese fire was very wild, and there were only half a dozen or so killed on the French side. Nevertheless they held their ground, and all the junks and boats were on the other side, so that there was no means of crossing. Eventually all the fire was concentrated on the bank above and on each side of these junks. Some of the Tongkinese troops pluckily swam the river under the Chinese fire, seized the boats, and brought them across. Then the few Chinamen who had remained made off, not so fast, however, but that many of them were shot down and four more Krupp guns were taken.

It was here that the French advance post on the east was established. Phu-Lang Thuong is a pretty, tidy little earth redoubt of about one hundred and fifty yards to the side, in a good position. The town is a trumpery little place. A score or so of Chinese houses and some scattered Annamese huts make it up, though it used to be a

place of some importance as the emporium where the salt was stored which came up in junks from the sea, and then was transhipped into canoes to go up to Kwang-si, or passed by caravans over to Lang-son. The river THUONG GIANG itself is very picturesque. It passes between low hills and high, prettily wooded banks, which in many places remind one of reaches on the Tamar. So far the country is rich and wealthy, and thickly populated.

Immediately beyond the aspect of the landscape entirely changes. Captain Tortoul, Négrier's chief of the staff, and an exceptionally able officer, went on with a small guard a considerable way beyond the main body, almost up to Bac-Li, in fact, half way to Lang-son, and at the time he was of opinion that the farthest point France should hold in this direction ought to be LANG-KEP. Since then, however, France is committed to farther advances and greater responsibilities, and the dangers to which she is exposed are certainly not worth what she gains. Négrier on this occasion went no farther than LANG-KEP, and then returned to Bacninh with his Krupps and other trophies.

In June, however, another expedition started along the LANG SON road, with consequences far more momentous than the occupation of Tongking, and bringing about complications of which it is impossible to see the end at the time of writing this book. The Chinese and the French both of them, are to a certain extent in the wrong, but whose errors and misapprehensions are the greater or the less pardonable is by no means clear. The French rest their claim to an indemnity on the written memorandum of the 17th of May; in which, according to the French text, the northern provinces of Tongking were to be evacuated "*immédiatement*." The

Chinese, on the other hand, declare that this word was the subject of special explanations by Captain Fournier, the French signatory. The memorandum was drawn up specially with a view to the interpretation of certain articles of the Preliminary Convention of the 11th of May. It was first of all stipulated that LANG SON and CAO-BANH were to be evacuated by the 5th of June, and LAOKAI by the 1st of July. This the viceroy declared to be quite impossible, and Captain Fournier, agreeing to this, crossed out the clauses with a lead pencil and initialled them. Then comes the explanation of "immediately." According to Captain Fournier, the word meant from *twenty to forty days*; according to the Chinese Government it meant *three months*. If the absolute meaning of the word can be wrenched so much that it may express from *twenty to forty days*, there is certainly no philological reason why it should not also cover *three months*, and within this time LI HUNG CHANG offered to guarantee that the troops should be withdrawn, and positively asserts that this was accepted by Captain Fournier. That gentleman has remained silent, and those Frenchmen who have spoken for him do not mend matters by the wild assertion that the viceroy of CHINA himself made the erasures and forged the initials.

However that may be, General Millet down in Tong-king either did not inform himself of the details of the memorandum, or imagined that a forward march of his troops might accelerate the evacuation. At any rate, in the early days of June a strong French column started from Hanoi. There were about seven hundred in all, the second battalion of the African Light Infantry, the convict corps of *Zephyrs* or *Joyeux*, as they are euphemistically called, two hundred and fifty of the Tong-kinese auxiliaries, and the half-squadron of the *Chasseurs*

d'Afrique. They took eighty days' provisions with them, and therefore had a huge baggage train. The difficulties of the march did not of course begin till after the departure from PHU LANG THUONG. There the ground begins to roll. There is a perpetual succession of low scrub and bracken covered hills. The path practically disappears. There is very little water, and what there is is undrinkable on account of mercury and lead deposits. This unpromising line of march had to be passed over under a broiling sun. Colonel Dugenne, the commander of the convicts, is a very stern soldier, and he did not spare his men. A very large number, some say as many as two hundred, were bowled over by the sun, blood-fever, and dysentery. They passed through LANG-KUP, with its little oasis of rice fields in the lowlands, and the distant view of the wooded mountains from the market-town and fort perched on a hill some two hundred feet high. From thence onwards the road becomes more and more of a mere track. The hills rise almost to the dignity of mountains, and continue to get wilder and wilder all the way to Lang son. There are no villages to be seen, for there is nothing to support them in the savage tangle of hills. An occasional ragged line of flimsy market-sheds is the only sign of life; otherwise nothing but wild gorges and half-filled torrent beds. An occasional watch tower, from which the wild mountaineers observe one another's movements and pass on news of the whereabouts of raiding bands, does not tend to increase one's opinion of the desirability of the neighbourhood.

Here the column got into greater and greater difficulties with its unwieldy baggage train and the pig-headed obstinacy of the men, who would not be persuaded that the mountain torrents were little short of poisonous. When the Chinese passed along here in March the side

of the track was strewn with lengths of sugar cane which they had chewed to allay their thirst. However, the first swell of hills was passed, and they got into the somewhat more open country which surrounds Bac L^í. The country about here was formerly cultivated, but the pseudo L^í, the Chinese general Li Yung-Choi, with his rebel bands, and still more the troops who were sent to drive him out, have left little behind but the outlines of old rice-fields and the foundations of brick houses. Bac-L^í is little more now than a cluster of bamboo and mud huts, built on a little bit of flat land, and perpetually on the alert against robber bands. There has been an Annamese official here for years, but, like all the rest of the mandarins in the district, he never thought of doing anything without consulting the commander of the Chinese troops, and, in fact, received his orders from that functionary. There are almost no Annamese in all the province, and they certainly would not be able to stay there were it not for the Chinese posts.

Beyond Bac L^í there is a second zone of hills. Here it was, on June 21st, at PHU MOI not half-way over the fifty miles that separate PHU-LANG-THUONG from LANG-SON, that the so called LANG-SON fight occurred. The troops had been ten days out. They were in a kind of valley between low hills covered with stunted shrubs, bamboos, and rattans. Suddenly they came upon the Chinese camp, pitched right across the road. Colonel Dugenne immediately called upon them to surrender, or fall back on the Chinese frontier. Three mandarins came in to say that they were posted there by superior orders to await the evacuation of the province, and that no movement could be made without instructions from the Chinese general at LANG-SON. A messenger was

sent to that town, and the three Chinese officials were detained as hostages. Parties of the French troops were sent out to occupy the surrounding hills and came upon the Chinese outposts. The *Zephyrs* without more ado or parley fired straight into them, and the fire was returned. The convicts were driven back on the main body down below. Two of the three hostage mandarins, hearing the firing, tried to rejoin their troops, either in terror, or to stop the combat it does not seem to be quite clear which. They were immediately shot down. The third, who had made no move whatever, was pistolled whether by regular order or not, does not appear.

No connected account of the fight, in fact, is to be obtained. The Chinese were in superior numbers, and had the advantage of the position. They poured in a heavy fire from the front and from both flanks. The Tongkinese troops almost immediately turned and ran, and the *Zephyrs* commenced a retreat which soon became a regular rout. It was only the desperate gallantry of the forty or fifty *Chasseurs d'Afrique* that saved the whole column from annihilation. The cavalry had hitherto had no opportunity of showing what they could do in the campaign, but they amply justified their existence on this occasion. Time after time they broke the pursuing ranks of the Chinamen just when they seemed about to overwhelm the column. The captain, a tall, powerful man and a magnificent rider, had both his chargers shot under him, and was eventually carried off delirious with sunstroke. Nevertheless almost all the baggage and the reserve ammunition fell into the hands of the Chinamen. Of the seventy days' provisions that remained only eight were saved, and the mules that carried them were scarred all over, showing how nar-

rowly they had escaped, and were starved to the bone with the hurry of the flight. The march from PHU-LANG THUONG which had taken six days was covered, on the way back, in thirty six hours. At the French post they were safe, and a strong force under General Négrier drove back the Chinamen to their former encampment, the Chinese advance guard being surrounded and exterminated. But want of provisions and water prevented anything farther being done. Every shower of rain made the mountain streams that cross the road impassable torrents, and farther operations had to be given up until the end of the year, when cool weather would make the road less toilsome, and when there might be no Chinamen to dispute the path.

The hostilities between France and China make it impossible to say what will be done, but it is quite certain that the evacuation of Lang son is not the mere marching out of the troops which the French assume it to be. The great bulk of the people of the province are Chinamen. The Annamese are in an altogether insignificant minority, and are the mere coolies or bandits of the country. The Chinamen of other parts of Tongking have found that French protection, as extended to them, is very capricious, to say nothing more. After the Langson road affair the immigration of all Chinamen into any part of Tongking was interdicted. It was therefore imperative that the Chinese military officials should arrange for the departure from the northern provinces generally of whatever of their countrymen wished to transfer themselves and their goods to safer quarters.

Not very much is really known about the rest of the LANG SON road. It was passed over in 1881 by M. AU-MOITTE, the *chancelier* of the French consulate at Hanoi; and it is from his account of the journey, and from the

vague statements of the Annamese, that the only particulars of the country are to be obtained. Information about the north generally, and particularly as to the frontier, is very scanty. The Annamese do not care, and really do not know, much about the matter. The only reply one gets to one's queries is, *Con byet, Nya-Ku é*

"Don't know, I'm a country lout." This is nothing new, and it is most assuredly not to be contradicted. Quantities of star anis, a valuable essential oil used in perfumery, and a variety of other precious essences and gums, are certainly found in the province, besides the cassia cinnamon and other valuable products. But this only makes the Chinaman the more reticent. He is an astute trader who gives away no information without an equivalent, and he therefore professes himself as ignorant as the Annamese bumpkin.

Beyond BAC LI, however, it appears that the country spreads here and there into fairly level plains, and a small river, the SONG THUONG is twice forded. It seems to be barely navigable even in the rains, and it is fed by mountain streams which throw themselves from the hills in picturesque cascades. So one reaches TRUONG KHANH, another Chinese military post, with a humble Annamese QUAN PHU, nominally in charge. There is a small earth redoubt here, with bastions covered with a dense bamboo fence through which peep a few culverins and jingals. The town stands on the banks of the SONG THUONG, and is quite large for this part of the country, numbering some forty or fifty houses. A considerable timber trade seems to be done, the logs being floated down the river.

Beyond this undoubtedly there seems to be a change in the run of the streams. The watershed is passed, and everything flows into the Kwang-si basin. The

ordinary laborious system of terrace cultivation also announces that one is practically in China. The rice-fields climb up the hills in a kind of amphitheatre, cunningly irrigated by the zig zag diversion of the mountain rivulets. Some of these are fairly deep, and all flow into a river, the SONG KI CUNG, which passes LANG-SON and goes on into China through the prefecture of LUNG CHAU.

The hills run right up to the citadel of Lang-son itself. This is a square of five hundred yards to the side, but with neither fosse nor bastions. The walls are between nine and ten feet high, with a loop holed parapet and a bamboo palisade. Three of the faces are protected by bamboo stockade outworks; the fourth, that the east, looks upon a street mainly composed of barracks, with a few shops. A little pagoda on the top of a hill to the south-east commands the citadel, but the pagoda in itself forms no mean defence. The town itself, called KI-LUA, consists of three streets of brick houses, roofed with tiles, and built one alongside the other, forming a veritable street—a Chinese street. The bazaar is well filled, and is equally Chinese, though there is a large quantity of coarse but strong cotton-stuffs manufactured by the Tho, an aboriginal race which occupies the hills to the west, and shows affinities to the MIAO-TSU and other South China aboriginal races. LI KUA is walled in, and has double gates exclusively guarded by the Chinamen. The Annamese TUAN PHU of Lang son exists simply. The Chinese tolerate him only because he never ventures to do anything.

From Lang son to the Chinese frontier there is a good road over hilly country, through the centre of the star-anis culture. The oil, called DAU-HOI, scented oil, by the Annamese, is extracted from the seeds of a small

evergreen, which apparently only grows in hilly districts, and is a very local tree. The Chinamen boil the seeds in a huge caldron, with water. Inside this caldron there is a small internal vessel filled with cold water, which is constantly renewed. The steam and the oil are condensed on the sides of this vessel, and are drawn off by a small bamboo runlet into a tin receiver; another runlet allows the water from this pan to drain back into the boiler. One boiling lasts over a day and a half, and produces about fifteen pounds weight of the perfumed oil. A picul, 117 pounds weight, of the oil, costs between £30 and £40. The great part of the oil of course passes through China, the frontier of which is only about three hours' march distant.

All along the frontier there is a brick wall, loop-holed throughout its extent, and with occasional double wooden gateways. The wall climbs up and down the hills, but at the top of each of these there is generally a break allowing uninterrupted entry. The guards of this barrier are exclusively Chinese. The French have an unpleasant prospect before them here. China is the classic soil of rebellions, and it is worth remarking that none of the rebel bands have been exterminated or even, one might say, ever conquered. They rise in some quarter or other of the country, and, having pillaged and ravaged the centre of China to the extent of their tether, make off to the frontier and get beyond Chinese control. Of all the China provinces, Kwang-si is that which has been most troubled in this way. It is only necessary to mention one rebellion, that of the TAI-PINGS, which commenced at no great distance from Lang-son. The rich Tongkinese provinces always offered a comparatively safe place of refuge when the

rebels found themselves outmastered by the Imperial forces. Under Annamese rule they found no trouble in discovering fresh homes for themselves. Under French protection, or annexation, it is a different matter. France will want no ROUSTAN on the Kwang-si frontier. If she wants a quarrel with China she will never be without an excuse, and if she has other matters on hand, and wishes to be at peace, she will bitterly regret ever having established herself at Lang son.

It will practically be the same thing at CAO BANH, though that town is farther from the frontier. There is a route of from five to six days journey across a hilly country, from Lang son to CAO BANH. The character of the track is much the same as that of the Lang-son road, wooded on rocky hills, troublesome gorges, no drinkable water, scattered villages, and no places of the very slightest importance without their Chinese garrison. CAO BANH is the place of exile of disgraced Annamese officials; but, nevertheless, from the reports of Father Fuentès, the only European who has penetrated thither, it seems to lie in a very fertile plain, but in a plain which by physical laws ought to be Chinese territory.



CHAPTER X

THAI NGUYEN.

THE junior brigadier having set off along the LANG-SON road, General Brière de l'Isle received orders to follow up the scattered Bacninh Chinamen who had made off in the direction of THAI-NGUYEN. He started on March 15th with a flying column of two thousand men and a battery of light, brass muzzle-loading guns. The route followed was that north-west from Bacninh, striking the SONG CAU river at the Christian village of CUO-HA, the head quarters of the pottery manufacture in Tongking, and the depôt of most of the timber floated down the river from above THAI-NGUYEN. The Spanish priests of the mission here were looked upon very much askance by the French soldier. They had remained at their posts all through the troubles, and the Turcos were of opinion that any European, not anti French, should have had his head cut off under the circumstances.

From CUO-HA a very good road runs nearly due west along the crest of the river embankment. The difference between the country to the south and that north of the SONG CAU was here very remarkably apparent. South-

wards, to the very horizon, stretched a vast field of light, olive green paddy, unbroken, except by the little ridges which serve as well for means of communication as for the division of the different sections of the common land, and for the admitting or letting out of water as it is wanted for irrigation purposes. Here and there were the bamboo-tufted villages, but they were already fewer than in the teeming lower delta land. On the northern bank the change was striking. From the very banks of the river the country rose up into gently rounded grassy hills—splendid places for pasturage, and already so used. There were fairly large herds of buffaloes and some cattle, but not many, though the oxen that come from Bacninh have a great name. They are a small breed, not unlike Alderneys; but the cows are not good milkers. There was an occasional homestead on the hill slopes, or a hamlet of half a dozen houses or so, but the majority of the people seemed to prefer the south bank.

The hills ran parallel to the river for some six miles, and then drew back to the north. After a sweltering march two miles farther the SONG-CAU was crossed by the troops in junks at a village called PHU-CAN, the width here being perhaps two hundred yards. Already here signs of the retreating Chinamen were come upon, though the villagers declared they had passed three days before. By the water's edge a dead body lay sewn up in a mat. It was evidently that of a man of rank; but why, after the corpse had been carried so far, it had been left there, where no pious descendant could burn a stove of DIEN for the support of the departed soul, did not appear. However, he might have been carried off after all, and a Co-non spared to the district. For a couple of miles farther inland a band

of Chinese soldiery, with half a score of red flags, was caught sight of. There might have been five hundred of them, and they were drawn up in square. They did not move; it was already getting late, and the French troops were fagged with a long, hot march, so that nothing was done on either side. The Frenchmen cantoned a mile or two farther on, at the wretched village of Tong, where at least half the troops had to bivouac outside in the rain—a circumstance which, however, probably prevented a night attack.

Stiff and sore with the small rain of the previous night, the column started at daybreak next morning. The villagers came down to the side of the path which ran for several miles straight across a low rice-plain. They brought offerings of rice and eggs and young bullocks for the general, water for the soldiers and salaams for everybody. One poor wretch presented himself, who had, so he said, refused to serve as a coolie for the Chinamen. The result, appeared in the stump of his right foot, cut short over at the instep; and he swore by the fire that he would haunt them all through his next existence. Meanwhile, he said he would be a coolie to the Frenchmen—a generous offer which, however, none of his able bodied fellow-countrymen seemed prepared to follow.

Shortly afterwards we came upon the first symptoms of terraco cultivation. In the low grounds were fields of paddy, a step up, up came various tubers and peanuts; then maize sugar cane, castor-oil, and even the China cassia—a species of cinnamon. After a time the road began to rise, passing over a succession of low sandy hills covered with a superior kind of bent grass and a tropical heath. The neighbourhood of the temperate zone was marked by a few pine-trees, scattered

about in straggling clumps. In a little while the sun broke through the clouds, the morning drizzle ceased, and the sky was filled with the carolling of veritable English larks.

A few miles of this undulating country, where the villages were few and far between, brought us to the edge of what Scotchmen would call a strath, wide, wet, and rice growing. This was close to the village of UONG VAN, a very large, straggling place, the first met where iron was worked. There was a crude kind of furnace in the centre of the village, and a small quantity of very rich ore, the source of which was not discovered. The Chinamen had passed through here two days before. They had ransacked the place and carried off all the women. The villagers were bent on vengeance, now there was somebody to execute it for them. Two nights ago they had made the best of their way into the paddy fields. Nevertheless they had one trophy. They had succeeded in entrapping one Chinaman, and his head, hacked off with a jungle knife, hung by the *queue* from the branch of a tree close by the village well—a grim and ghastly welcome.

The majority of the Chinamen had here struck off to the north east, towards a little citadel, no doubt with the intention of gaining the LANG-SON road. This citadel was said to be held in force, and the column immediately left the direct THAI-NGUYEN road to hunt these fugitives up, guided by an aggrieved husband from UONG VAN. The way lay across a wide tract which reminded one of nothing so much as a Scotch moss that has been half reclaimed. There was the same basis of black, peat like slush, with tussocks of tough, wiry grass rising up in a kind of mosaic. There were patches of heath and bracken, and there were even the thick,

glutinous pink leaves, and the tall, slender flower-stem of the fly catching plant common on Scotch mosses. One could even imagine that the dull, brown birds, with the monotonous chirrup, were moss pippits.

But the heat refused to admit of brown studies of the kind. Every one looked forward with parched lips to the dark line of foliage which promised shade on the other side of the heath, only to be disappointed. The road, as everywhere else in Tongking, skirted the village at a cautious distance. It is very seldom that the village will even allow the track to pass under their fence. They have much too low an opinion of wayfarers honesty for that. This was the more tantalizing because the route now lay through a different kind of country. The ground was higher and firmer, and the clay of the delta was replaced by a rich loam. The villages were well wooded with huge hard-wood trees, and the pagodas and scattered Tu-vans shaded by grand banyans. But still the path lay out in the pitiless sun, through fields of maize and castor oil, passing by stout wooden bridges over an occasional stream running down from the hills to the east, most of them quite bare except for a round cap of pines on the summit. So the column wound on for five hours with no refreshment but the regulation "ten minutes every hour." Close on twenty miles had been done, and a score of glasses in the advanced guard failed to distinguish the faintest outline of a citadel anywhere.

At last, however, at five o'clock, just when general wrath was beginning to kindle against the bereaved husband, a gentle slope was topped, and there, on the far edge of the plain in front, appeared the low mud walls of the citadel of YEN-TI, or TINH-DAO, as the natives call it. It was good two and a half miles off,

but the path was fair, and the advanced guard moved on at the *pas gymnastique*. For a time it seemed as if the place were deserted, and indeed strings of men could be seen drawing off to the north east. When the head of the column came to within 1,500 yards of the walls, however, there was a sudden blowing of horns and a prolonged shout of defiance, and the next minute the gateway towers and the ramparts were filled with men. The advanced guard consisted exclusively of the native auxiliaries, and it had advanced so rapidly that the artillery and the Turcos had been left quite a mile behind, and in Indian file too. But the Annamese *Tuailleurs* were under the command of Commandant Bergier, an officer who had greatly distinguished himself at Gravelottes in 1870. He had confidence in his men, and was not at all disposed to sleep out in the plain if the place could be captured in the half-hour that remained before sundown.

Skirmishers were thrown out, and a steady advance made to within a thousand yards of the walls, when fire was commenced, each section firing its volley by word of command. The Chinamen replied immediately, and the first discharge showed that they had the range, and had good weapons too. They were not satisfied with mere defence. A sallying party of about a hundred men came round an angle of the works, led by a man on a white pony, and with two red flags bordered with blue. They came on at a lope, and took up position in some broken ground three hundred yards in advance of the outworks, where they kept up a brisk fusillade. Presently the rampart guns, a kind of compromise between a culverin and a duck-gun, and strapped on to settles, opened fire, and were followed by a half dozen or so of tidy little bronze guns mounted

on the gateway towers. Fortunately the ground was soft and heavy, and held the balls; still more fortunately the Chinamen had no shell. But for a quarter of an hour there was a pretty little fight, and a good many of the assailants were splashed with mud, though no one was actually hit but a *Tuaillon*, who had a bullet clean through his flat bamboo cap and the chignon underneath it. The west gate now chimed in, and began firing some small rockets, which frizzled about after the usual eccentric fashion of these iniquitous things, and set fire to a sergeant's trousers.

The end, however, was close at hand. A few minutes later there was a bang and a shriek over the skirmishers' heads, and then another. The French artillery had begun, and immediately afterwards the blue coats of the *Tuicos* appeared away on the right. The sallying party forthwith took to its heels. The brass guns and rockets ceased fire. The French advanced steadily. The citadel was very cleverly planned. Thrown out in front were zig-zag fences of stout bamboo bristling with spikes, and the foreground was covered with pointed bamboos like a huge harrow. There is nothing harder to hack through than bamboo, but the troops managed to burst a way somehow under a straggling fire. The bugles sounded the charge, and the *Tuico* drums responded on the right. There was a splash through the moat, a scramble up the steep earthen ramparts, a struggle through some particularly obnoxious bamboos which projected from the summit, and the citadel was taken. The Chinamen were in full flight out by the northern gate.

YEN-TRÉ was a strong little fort, and if the defenders had stuck to their guns the French would have lost heavily before they got through the bamboo outworks,

over the moat, and up the walls. The three foot-long bamboo spikes which extended outwards and downwards from the ramparts were alone sufficiently troublesome. The place had been built eight years before by the Tong-Doo of Bacninh to "protect" the neighbourhood—that is, to render the collection of taxes the easier. There was an insignificant village outside the walls, and the citadel itself contained no building of any particular note; but there were nineteen serviceable little bronze guns, besides others of no use at all. The rice-sheds were fairly well filled, and the treasury contained a goodly pile of Annamese cash, ten of which go to the Chinese coin of the same name; but all that was most valuable had been carried off. The French were very lucky to take the place without any casualties beyond some ugly gashes from the vicious bamboo spikes. The loss of the enemy probably did not amount to more than twenty or thirty. From the commencement of the firing till the hoisting of the French flag on the citadel watch-tower the whole affair did not last more than three quarters of an hour.

Next day a halt was made. General Bière de l'Isle had not enough men to leave a post in charge of the place, and the troops were fagged with the long march of the day before ending in the assault. It was therefore determined to commence the dismantling of the works, and to leave a company to complete the destruction.

During the ransacking of the houses great quantities of Remington and Snider cartridges were found, but, as usual, no rifles. There was also a small case labelled "Explosive Ammunition Kochler, Birmingham," which was supposed to contain dynamite, and was sunk in a pool outside the walls. From what was afterwards found at THAI-NGUYEN, it was more probably filled with explo-

sive bullets. There was an altogether extraordinary number of spears and ancient fire locks of inordinate weight, which might have been useful for braining people at close quarters, but were otherwise quite valueless.

During the morning there was an alarm of an attack. Large numbers of men appeared on low hills to the east, but closer examination showed that they were Annamese, and in a short time they hoisted some tricolours. But they would not come any nearer, so a detachment of *Tuailleurs* was sent out to them. They proved to be Christians from the neighbouring village of PHU LAM, and had come to make their peace with the general, and present him some Chinamen's heads. Most of them were armed with spears of ridiculous length, short, heavy swords, and bucklers made of plaited bamboo. A few had knives with a hole in the middle, so that a blade projected on each side of the hand, and others had firelocks similar to those found in YEN-TRÉ. These, they said, were made by the MUONG people, in the hills to the west. After consultation they admitted that no one had ever succeeded in getting one of them to go off. To pass the time until the PHU should come up—the goodman had waited two miles behind to see how his henchmen would be received—the friendly Tongkinese indulged in some spear and sword and buckler dances of the usual fantastic Oriental kind, managing their long spears in most dexterous fashion. The main object of the length is, naturally, to keep off enemies from behind the bamboo fences of their villages. The PHU, when he came in, had very little to say, except that he personally was a most estimable character, and that there were bands of Chinamen in retreat all over the countryside. One of these Chinamen he had brought in, marvellous to relate, with his head on. This personage, who seemed from his

physiognomy to be a half bred Tongkinese, declared that a large quantity of treasure in gold and silver bars had been carried off the previous night. A few silver bars had been found in the citadel, and this lent a little semblance of probability to his story, which otherwise seemed somewhat shaky and somewhat of the character of a "neckword at Haiibee."

However, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon a couple of companies set off again, this time direct east, with the Chinaman as guide, his arms tied behind his back and a couple of men with loaded rifles beside him. The footpath led through the same highly cultivated country, past several villages very strongly barricaded and built almost entirely of brick a material hardly ever used by the natives of the delta, except for joss houses. Finally, a very extensive and formidably entrenched town, called Trong, was reached. There was a sudden blowing of cow-horns and a shout of CHU NA-MA, "cursed pigs," and the column came to an abrupt halt. It was a very unpleasant spot, quite an ideal place for an ambushade. The troops numbered a company of Turcos, a hundred and twenty five Annamese auxiliaries, and three *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, and Trong, with its nine feet-high dyke and double fence of live bamboos, would have been a tough subject for the whole brigade with its artillery. Skirmishers were sent out, who had to push their way through some tall grass which cut the hands like a razor, and then through some brush. From this they suddenly emerged into a piece of open ground, where there were a matter of five hundred Annamese, with the eternal spears and bucklers and useless flint locks, all of them grouped round three French flags. The moment they set eyes on us they gave a unanimous yell and bolted into the village, where

they commenced *tum tuming* and blowing horns. This excited the Turcos who had been sent out to the right, and they promptly began firing into space, and it was necessary to lie down on one's stomach till matters had quieted a little. A couple of scared villagers were then captured, who announced that two thousand Chinamen had left only a couple of hours before, but did not seem to have any particular treasure about them except what they had looted in Trong itself.

The column then advanced and ransacked the place. It was a most extraordinary position, and might have been held for a day after the outer works had been breached. The passages from house to house were the narrowest lanes with thick bamboo and cactus fences on either side, and huge timber logs in between. Every house presented a solid blank wall all round the square, and the gate was that of a prison, heavy black side-posts and two-inch-thick iron studded planking. One or two of the houses were even crenelated, and any one of them would have taken an hour to capture. This over a matter of many hundred acres and on a slope where the upper houses could have poured down an indiscriminate fire all the time. If the Chinamen had elected to stay, the French with their three hundred and fifty men would have had an awkward time of it.

There were abundant traces of the Chinese, and signs that they had left very suddenly. Remington cartridges were scattered about, a mandarin's cloak or two, and a pair of very natty Chinese top-boots were found. They could not have been far off, but it was decided to let them alone. The mud floors were prodded in search of the supposed treasure, ash heaps were stirred up in hopes of finding silver bars, but nothing came of it, and the party returned, baffled, to YEN LÉ at sundown.

The Chinamen, however, had not been stured up for nothing. The same night they descended in considerable force on a company of Turcos who had been sent out along the THAI-NGUYEN road to protect the sappers who were repairing the troublesome little breaks in the road caused by the runlets of the rice-fields. These passages, often bridged over by large but narrow slabs of black marble, supported on blocks of the same, gave the artillery endless trouble all over Tongking. The Chinamen were led by one or two mounted officers, and attacked about midnight with considerable determination, but they were beaten off. In the morning one or two prisoners were taken, wearing KWANG-TUNG militia uniforms. They would give no information, and were shot defiant.

A piping hot march brought the column from YEN-LE to the ford of the SONG CAU river at midday. The heat was terrific, and nearly seventy men fell out, some with sunstroke, some with mere exhaustion. Curiously enough the majority of these were Turcos, men who could have walked the rest of the column dead over Algerian sands, but who fagged rapidly on the greasy paths of Tongking. The river was about a hundred and fifty feet wide, as clear as crystal, and flowed merrily over a pebbly bottom. There was no more than three and a half feet of water, and the troops simply marched through. If there had been just a little more water the thing would have been rather dangerous with the swift current; but as it was, the whole column, coolie train and all, got safely over in three hours.

A path parallel to the river, running due north, was then taken. The Chinese had passed only the day before, and there were signs of their haste in castaway hats, baskets, bits of paper, and ribs of beef. A low

miles on the right front was the smoke of a village which they had set on fire. Nothing, however, was seen but the scared faces of the villagers, and in an hour and a half the little mud redoubt of PHU BINH was reached. In itself it was strong enough, with a double moat, a high, steep bank, the usual bamboo fence, and a tiny inner citadel with a few tumpey guns, but it was commanded all round by heights, and the Chinamen had wisely evacuated it. They had not burnt the houses, but otherwise it was utterly stripped, except for the show cannon. The fort lay about a couple of hundred yards from the river, here a hundred feet wide, and flowing between high banks in picturesque wooded reaches.

Next morning a start was made northwards with daylight. It was a cheerless drizzle, and the road, which was, for Tongking, exceptionally good, went straight up and down bleak hill-sides, covered with blacken and heath and scattered pine trees. None of the heights were elevated, but the road rose steadily, and to the right, left, and straight in front the forest-clad mountains beyond could be seen through breaks in the mist. At length, after a march of eight or nine miles, a halt was made for breakfast, and shortly afterwards the sun came out.

This was about three miles from THAI-NGUYEN, and, as the mists cleared away, Black Flag sentries were discovered pacing up and down the next wave of hills in front. An hour and a half saw the start, and then the sentries promptly disappeared. The THAI NGUYEN chiefs were very ill-advised. They let the column pass through all the troublesome hill country, where the beds of the hill torrents, clumps of stunted trees, and the tall elephant grass afforded magnificent ground for defence, and allowed the artillery to draw up unopposed

on the last hill-slope, a mile and a half from the town.

THAI NGUYEN lies on the northern skirt of a three-mile wide plain, extending from the grass-covered outspurs to the lower ranges of the wooded mountains. The town is in the lowest part of this plain, with the SONG-CAU passing under its western front. The French column was directly to the south; and behind the clumps of trees, which was nearly all that could be seen of THAI-NGUYEN, rose abruptly a curious limestone hill, with trees clinging where they could to its rocky sides.

The advanced guard halted for a time to let the artillery and the rest of the column come up. While yet they were waiting there appeared through the southern gate of the town a huge dark blue flag with a single white letter on it, and then another. Surely they were Black Flags. They were the very image of those seen at SONTAY. A minute later and there was no doubt. The wind blew out the flags and showed the Chinese character, NI—"Justice." It was LIU JUNG-FU's emblem, and the bray of the trumpets, which the French at SONTAY knew so well, came across the plain. It was barbaric enough, but it was martial. Behind the two solitary Black Flags came a stream of others, red and white, red and blue, white with red Chinese letters, flags striped and crossed, two, curiously enough, the exact model of the Imperial flag of Germany.

It was a fine sight, and almost theatrical, to watch the deploying of the Chinamen from the hill side as from a box on the grand tier. There were fifty-four flags, three more of them "Black Flags" in the rear of all presumably to keep the main body from running away. This would represent at most six hundred men. The Annamese *Tuallous* advanced in

the centre, the Turcos on the right, the Colonial Infantry on the left. The Turcos, with their "facile pull," were the first to commence. They fired at about 1300 yards range and did no harm whatever. On the contrary, the Black Flag claiions sounded defiance, and they came on at a run. They got over the ground very fast, for the artillery was not five minutes in getting into position, and, before the first shell was fired, the Black Flags were bare six hundred yards off, and there were bullets whistling about the ears of the staff. The bursting of the first *obus* which plumped down in the centre of the advancing crowd was too much for the Chinese and Annamese. They promptly turned about and ran. But the twenty Black Flags with their two standards held their own for a time and fired away, standing erect and scorning cover. But presently the volleys of the *Tralleurs* began to tell, and one of the standard bearers staggered and fell. Then the retreat began. The wounded man, as well as others who had fallen, was picked up. The flag was torn to shreds, and Liu Jung-Fu's men made off almost as fast as they had come, firing only an occasional Partisan shot; for they were a clean half-mile away from their main body.

The affair was practically over. At the gate the Black Flags attempted a rally, for we heard the raucous notes of the trumpet again, and there was an actual advance for a few minutes. But a well-planted shell settled the matter. There was an advance all along the French line, and the artillery commenced shelling the town. Within an hour the French flag was on the citadel watch-tower, a tall wooden erection of the common village type. There was a little skirmishing inside the citadel. A few Chinamen had remained behind too long in their desire to carry off their own or somebody

else's property. An Annamese sharp-shooter had a bullet between his arm and his side; a Tuco had his helmet shot off; a Chinaman, with less luck, got a ball in the shoulder, fired so close that his clothes took fire, and his flesh after that, and he smouldered away for two or three hours at the side of the main road of the citadel till late in the afternoon, when a staff officer had him extinguished and dragged away a little farther.

Close to the place where this man fell three Annamese notables were seized. One of them had a fire lock in his hand; another had a bamboo plated bullet pouch slung over his shoulder; the third was in their company, and proved to be a doctor. They were shot under peculiarly painful circumstances. One, a little, slight built man, with a very villainous-looking face, was an emissary from the court of Hué. He had come to organize the THAI-NGUYEN levies, and pleaded ignorance of the French Protectorate in vain. The second, the man who had held the useless old musket, was tall and powerfully built even for an up-country Tongkinese. He was the TUAN PHU, the chief mandarin of the province. The gun he said he had held because he was afraid of the score or so of Chinamen who lingered behind to loot. There was little but the usual big pile of cash in the treasury. The TUAN PHU was promised his life if he would reveal where the "treasure" was concealed. He said he did not know of any. The Hué man was silent and contemptuous. The doctor, a round-faced, good-humoured looking man, said it was not his business to know about treasure, but that, if there were any, the Black Flags had it, and had carried it off with them. They were sentenced to be shot for bearing arms against the French Protectorate. The three had their arms tied all together with a silk sash, and were marched out

of the citadel, the TUAN PHU shrieking piteously and trying to grovel before his guard in a way that would have been heart-breaking if it had not been hopeless and therefore dastardly. A box of explosive pistol bullets had been found somewhere in the citadel. Explosive pistol bullets are somewhat uncommon, and one of the officers gave his revolver to a French sergeant and asked him to try their effect on the prisoners. Just when the party had got into the suburbs the sergeant, while the men were still walking, put the revolver behind the doctor's ear and fired. Three-quarters of his head was blown away. The other two, in a last, desperate struggle, burst the silk scarf which bound them to the corpse and ran. The TUAN-PHU was brought down with a bullet between the shoulders, and fell, gurgling up blood from the mouth and nose. But the court emissary, who had been calmly scornful all this time, ducked to the first shots and bolted round a corner down to the river. There were a dozen men after him, firing shot after shot; but he was too active, and zig-zaged like a snipe. Unfortunately the river was before him, and the bank was some feet high where he struck it. He paused for a second before he leaped, and a French soldier who had counted on this brought him down. Another shot in the water finished him. Then they went back to where the TUAN PHU, still alive, was struggling convulsively in the road. It required five more shots to kill him. Five minutes later an orderly came from the general's quarters saying that he wanted to see the prisoners again to question them.

THAI NGUYEN had evidently never expected a visit from the French. The streets were full of women when the troops first arrived, but they very soon found that the sooner they left the better it would be. Two hours

later not one was to be seen, nor any men or boys either. The guns on the citadel were still unmasked, trees and bamboos growing right up to their muzzles. But the majority of them were as usual not worth unmasking. There was one very good piece, a brass thirty pounder, and one or two smaller carionades. Some attempt had been made to get these to bear on the south road, but the whole affair had been too rapid even to admit of this being loaded. There was no lack of ammunition. The streets were as usual strewn with cartridges, and bullets lay about by the hundred. Powder flasks were found in almost every house, some labelled "John Hall and Sons," and some "Cramer and Buchholtz, Ronsall & Ruteland."

It was evidently a very wealthy town. There were some very substantial houses, not only in the citadel, but in the Chinese part of the town to the eastwards up the river. The Royal Pagoda was the handsomest out of Hanoi; and there were a number of richly adorned temples in the suburbs, with fine bronze bells and gongs. All the larger houses were full of costly silk clothing. Opium by nightfall was lying in great dark-brown blobs in every gutter. There was a large amount of rice stored up in the sheds. Some of the soldiery came upon quite a quantity of United States trade dollars, and there were not a few Dutch clocks, and a mysterious electrical machine, which was supposed to be intended for use in the mines of the adjacent hill country. The citadel itself was very old and useless. It was square, built of earth, and with a curious attempt at a demi lune on two of the faces. But the front was so covered by houses and vegetation that nothing whatever of an advancing foe could be seen.

The barracks of the Black Flags were found. They

were kept with military cleanliness and order. There was a stable for ten ponies very neatly arranged, and the rapidity of the final attack may be judged of from the fact that several of the tats remained. It was said that in ordinary times there was a permanent garrison of two hundred Black Flags here to collect the revenue and squeeze the people. At the time of the French attack there were not, however, more than seventy. Liu Jung-Fu himself was said to be not far off at the time in a little hill fort to the north-west, but this was not known till after the French had retired.

THAI NGUYEN ought to have a great future before it. It lies in a very rich plain, and close at hand are the mountains with splendid timber, which can be floated down the Song cau in rafts, besides abundance of mineral wealth. The river is exceedingly picturesque, and is stocked with fine fish. Unfortunately there are some very awkward rapids in it, both above and below the town. Game abounds. While the attack was being made the skirmishers started several deer and large covies of a kind of grouse or partridge. On the soft river bank the writer saw fresh traces of a tiger—sufficient proof of the existence of large game and indeed the natives said the hills swarmed with them.

It was a mistake not to leave a garrison at THAI NGUYEN, and General Bière de l'Isle wished to do so, but he had explicit orders to evacuate the place. Accordingly, after a day's rest, all the gates of the citadel except one were blown up with dynamite, and the rice-sheds and treasury were burnt, everything else being left intact, not as at YEN-TE, which was razed to the ground, the company left behind to complete the destruction being twice attacked by the Chinese. The column

then made a rapid march back to Bacninh and Hanoi, arriving in four days.

The Chinamen re-occupied THAI-NGUYEN immediately after the evacuation. Eight hundred men were sent to drive them out in the latter part of April, which was done with no resistance. Commissariat difficulties caused the withdrawal of this force. When, a short time later, another column advanced to drive the Chinese out once more, the town was fired by the Celestials, and reduced to ashes.



CHAPTER XI.

HUNG HOA

THE advance from Hanoi on HUNG-HOA commenced on April 5, 1884. General Buière de l'Isle left on that day by land for SONTAY with about four thousand bayonets. From SONTAY he marched to BAT-BAC on the HÉ HO, the *Rivière Noire*, occupying the whole right bank down to the junction with the Song-cor. This he effected by the night of the 9th. BAT-BAC is actually on the HÉ HO, though in comparatively recent maps it is represented as several miles inland. That is the case with most places in Tongking not yet visited by Europeans. The names of the places are all right, for they are taken from the native maps, which are drawn up with a view to the revenue. Apart, however, from the mere names, it is not well to believe anything. The circle, or square, or rectangle, that signifies a village, a town, a fortress, on a native map occupies, according to scale, a matter of twenty square miles, and the name takes up about thirty more. This gives some initial latitude, and, when the engraver cannot finish off his mountains well, he shunts the towns in deference to artistic principles

Almost all North Tongking is taken from these native maps and hearsay evidence. It is therefore well to regard existing European maps of this part of the country as mere freehand drawings.

General Négrier followed his brother brigadier on the succeeding day also overland. He is a man of extraordinary energy, and marches his troops hard. The Annamese call him General MAO LEN "be quick," or "look sharp"—a kind of Gallie Marshal *Vorwärts*. He was true to his reputation on this occasion, and did in two days what the first column had got over in three; but when he reached SONTAY, at midday on the second march, there was no room for him, and he had to billet his troops on the unfortunate inhabitants of a village a mile from the walls. The Algerian has just a little too much eagerness. In a long campaign he would march his men off their legs in a very short time. The troops that remained would be very fine, but it would be by the process of the survival of the fittest. The general does not spare himself. All day long he is hurrying from one end of the column on this occasion three and a half miles long—to the other, encouraging here and chiding there. When the troops have been billeted for the night, he goes out with a small mounted guard to explore the country round about, and altogether displays an activity and weariless energy which is nothing less than amazing, and necessitates his having men of equal vigour on his staff. But his eagerness perhaps leads him to expose himself in a way which a general in command of troops ought not to do.

The country north-west of SONTAY is a steadily rising one, and there is a good deal of terrace cultivation; while on some of the lower hills is grown the tea known as SONTAY tea, and drunk over great part of Tongking.

The Annamese prefer it to China tea; but one is inclined to think that it is patriotism, or sour grapes, that makes them say so. Many of the villages are built of the conglomerate so common in the SONTAY district. In fact the whole district has a substantial air, and is, if possible, even more populous than down the river. Occasionally one passes a succession of villages running one into another on both sides of the road, but always protected by the mud wall and bamboo fence against the possibly malicious passer by or the nefarious neighbour; while every here and there were watch-houses perched up in high trees to give notice of the approach of marauders. Up in the north here the temples are not only much more elaborate, but also more numerous than down below. This, however, seems rather to indicate greater wealth than superior piety. For all their fine moulded work, and great collection of metal and marble and wooden Buddhas, the joss-houses were just as empty here as round Haiphong.

At *Vu Chu* (the English alphabet is inadequate to represent the first syllable of this townlet. It is neither Vu, nor Bu, nor Wu, nor plain U, but a mixture of them all) Négrier's column came to a sudden standstill three miles from the Black River, and two-thirds of the distance between it and the *Rivière Claire*. The junks and launches carrying the heavy guns had got aground, and there was no moving them without discharging. All through a day there was a halt while this was being effected. In the meantime General Bière de l'Isle had occupied the right bank of the *Hé Ho*, and was passing the time by pounding away at HUNG-HOA with his field artillery. If Négrier was at fault at Bacninh, his fellow-brigadier was no less injudicious here. It was not to be expected that the Chinamen would stay to be tranquilly

shelled at a distance of 6,000 yards with no possibility of returning the fire. No doubt they were extremely foolish not to have established a battery on the Black River. Perhaps they had no guns. At any rate their nearest redoubts were over a mile and a half distant, and they did not fire.

The previous day they had been firing vigorously enough, but at what was never ascertained. Some thought it was in the hope of scaring off the Frenchmen by the noise, others that they were finding the range of their guns. An Annamese spy declared that the Chinese General, CHAM-FU, had divided his forces into two, and was going through manœuvres on a grand scale. One party attacked the works, and the other defended. If this was so, it would appear that the umpires gave their decision in favour of the attackers. In any case the garrison must have made immediate preparations for a retreat; and they did well, for the French force was, at the lowest computation, at least double theirs, taking no account of the artillery.

Négrier got his guns on shore, and the sappers prepared the road for their passage. Early on Good Friday morning he too reached TRUON-BA, on the right bank opposite HA NUNG, an old Black Flag customs station, on the angle formed by the confluence of the Black and Red rivers. There were a matter of a dozen Chinamen on the left bank of the H'f Ho, and perhaps a hundred on the left bank of the Song co. The former fired in a desultory way, at a distance of about 800 yards, at the arriving French columns; the latter commenced operations, at a range of perhaps 1500, with rifles and a jingal against the junks which were coming up the river. Naturally they did no harm, and were left to amuse themselves till the *Éclair* arrived and opened fire on them with

her Hotchkiss guns. They promptly disappeared. Not so their brethren on the Black River. They continued firing through the mist and rain for a matter of twenty minutes, until one of their balls smashed the shoulder of an unhappy Turco. Then a few volleys were fired on them, and they made off without delay or loss. That was the extent of the fighting at HUNG-HOA.

Meanwhile the big guns were getting into position on a little pine-clad hill behind the village of TRUONG-BA. About nine o'clock they commenced their fire. There was a battery of *pièces de quatre vingt*, ordinary horse artillery, and another of *pièces de quatre-vingt quinze*, the regular field guns of the French army, in Tongking honoured with the title of "siege ordnance." Bièro had a battery on a slope a little farther up the river, and devoted his attention to the nearest of the long line of exterior redoubts. One of Négrier's batteries pitched shells at the floating bamboo bridge over the Song-cor, the other at the tower of HUNG-HOA, which could be picked out with some difficulty from its background of dark foliaged trees. The range was, for the bridge, 5,000 yards; for the tower, 5,500.

The Chinamen remained perfectly passive. They were good enough to hoist the usual inordinate number of flags of all sorts and colours, from blood-red to white and terra-cotta to blue. This might have been a kind of chivalric indication to the French gunners where they were to direct their fire. Perhaps it was a shrewd Machiavellian device to have the shells fired at a place where there was nobody to kill. Anyhow, the flags remained fluttering the greater part of the day all along the line of earthworks, and the shells were not successful in displacing any of them. On the whole the practice was bad. Percussion shells were employed for the most

part, except for an occasional time shell at the bridge. Many failed to explode, still more fell wide of the mark, and a goodly number plunged harmlessly into the river. The gunners claimed to have dropped one right on the bridge, but no one saw it but themselves, and it could not have done much harm, for there was a fitful movement over it all day long.

All day long the fire went on. Upwards of eight hundred shells were fired into the town, at the bridge, and at the different redoubts. Every one was asking when the passage of the Black River was to be begun. It was evident that the garrison was getting its treasure, if not other matters, into safer quarters. But still nothing was done. Bière de l'Isle had commenced the passage at Bai Bac early in the morning. In accordance with "the plan" General Millet was great on strategy it was necessary to let him get a start. But he lost three men crossing over in small boats, and had barely finished the passage by sundown. Even Chinese patience could not be expected to endure so long.

Suddenly, at half-past four, fire broke out in a dozen places in the town at once. A few minutes later a flash and a huge column of white smoke announced that one of the outer forts had been blown up. Another and another followed, and in ten minutes all view of the town, except so far as the flames indicated it, was blotted out. The stream of men over the bridge thickened, and the occasional parties of twenty or thirty became one long line. It was evident that seven hours' unresisting experience of shell-fire was more than Chinese stoicism could stand. The batteries livened up. They fired all six guns at once in volleys at the bridge, but without any visible result. The Chinamen declined to break into a run, and the bridge remained intact. Presently huge eruptions of

smoke marked the explosion of the magazines, by five the regular stream on the bridge became broken, and by half past it had ceased. The gunners sponged out their pieces, and went down below into the village to listen to General Millet's band. All night long the horizon to the west was red with the glare of burning Hung Hoa and the villages round about. The general opinion was that the commander-in-chief had taken a hint from "Sir Wolseley" at Tel-el Kebir, and had paid the Chinamen to go away without giving any trouble.

Next morning the troops crossed over, and after prudently waiting till every one, including the baggage coolies, had got over, marched on Hung Hoa. The country was practically deserted. There were a few Annamese who stood in the fields at a distance and gaped in foolish fashion, too near to be safe from a rifle bullet, and too far off to be able to announce the friendliness of their intentions. It was a matter of three miles to the town by the road. To the left was a shallow lake, and on the farther side a line of redoubts and earthworks, with a few villages in between. At about a mile from the town the first line of works was reached. There was a strong abattis formed of solid logs and bamboos covered with earth. Beyond, the whole works were casemated, with loopholes formed with bricks, through which the garrison could fire safe alike, from shells and small arm fire. There was a line of trenches and parallels, on the most approved principles, connecting one position with another, the whole forming a position infinitely more formidable than anything the French had encountered in Tongking, and far more difficult to attack than Phuoc Sa, where the lines of bamboos in front of the works really hampered the Black Flags. Quarter of a mile farther on came the second

line of defence, connected with the first by the parallels which ran along the river front. Here there was an ancient piece of ordnance, broken over about two feet from the muzzle, and marked B. P. & Co., 11. 5. 12, on the breach. The fracture was old. This was the only cannon found in all the works. It appeared that the Chinese had either carried off all their pieces, or had had none. In effect there were but very few embrasures for cannon. Liu Jung-Tu—for it was probably the sturdy old Black Flag who superintended the works, though he himself was far away on the occasion of the attack—had profited well from the lessons learnt at SONLAY. The casemates protected his men from shell fire, the parallels obviated the dangers of a flank attack; the ground for a mile in front was nearly as bare as the back of one's hand, the loopholes from which his men were to fire were nearly flush with the ground, so that the most untrained shot could hardly fail to do execution. It was perhaps well for the French that the distant bombardment had been so successful.

Quarter of an hour's walk off was the gate of the town standing wide open; five minutes more to the citadel, also wide to receive us. But the whole place was a desert of smouldering ashes. In the citadel, which is a rectangle parallel to the river, with demi-lunes at the four gates, there were but the tower and four houses standing. The Royal Pagoda, the rice stores, the treasury, the arsenals were heaps of still almost red-hot bricks. Even as the troops entered there ascended a flight of the diabolical Chinese rockets, with their lumps of sulphur and other concoctions which are the terror of the escaladers; for the iniquitous little nodules cling like leeches and burn like white-hot metal.

The town was practically the same. Every house,

except the most petty little bamboo cottage, and absolutely everything on the road to the bridge, which the French would have had to follow if they had pressed in pursuit, was burnt. The only part of the town which remained comparatively intact was the western side, that opposite to the side of attack. A temple here and there remained, no doubt because there was little that was inflammatory about them. On the ramparts there remained but the aged honeycombed trash, terrible only to the Annamese. The Chinese had showed their judgment by leaving them behind and carrying off all the little bronze guns, which are effective enough at a short range. Beyond these there was nothing to show in the way of trophies. There were a few bullets lying about, and some Snider cartridges, as usual; also a few empty shells of an oval shape, and there was an aged China-woman, and a wretched individual who had been wounded at SONTAY in December, and had wasted away to a skeleton.

The heads had been broken off the lances and pitched into the river or into the water tanks. The powder that had not been exploded or carried away was scattered about the streets. So was the paddy and the salt, which is an exceedingly valuable commodity in North Tongking. The bridge had been cut and utterly destroyed by the current. As a matter of fact there were not a few who said that General CHAM-FU had gained more credit by his retreat than General MILLOT by his bombardment. Nevertheless the 23rd of the line, and after it the 11th, marched in gallantly, with the band at the head, playing the *Marseillaise* while General NÉGUIER looked on grimly, and sent pretty nearly the whole of them out on *covée* duty, in search of rice, during the afternoon. Nevertheless a "gratification" in the shape of an extra

ration of wine was served out to the troops next day in celebration of the victory, and (possibly) because it was Easter Sunday.

A battalion crossed the river the same day, in a couple of junks that had been left behind, to the village of BAN-NGUYEN, on the left bank. There also the Chinese had constructed works as elaborate as on the other side, only they were incomplete, and the village had fared nearly as badly as HUNG HOA itself. Everything except the huts and two pagodas was burnt. As on the other side, some attempt also had been made to blow up the fortification. It was not very successful, for the Chinamen had managed the transport of their munitions of war so well that very little remained for purposes of destruction. The charge placed in the casemates had been only sufficient to slightly raise the huge logs which formed the roof, and to disarrange the earth piled above.

Most of the inhabitants had been requisitioned, like those of HUNG-HOA, as coolies to carry the Chinese stores. The few who remained announced that part of the enemy had gone straight north, up the left bank of the river, and the rest in the direction of PHU-LAM-TAO, a small round fort some six miles off, and till recently occupied by the Black Flags. The further news they gave was scarcely palatable. They were all as desirous as possible to say smooth things, but villagers after villager asserted that there were not more than five hundred Chinese who passed the bridge, and that the number of killed was four. No doubt many had left on preceding days. There could hardly have been more than two thousand altogether, however, and the French numbered eight thousand. LIE JUNG-FU had not been near the place. He had trusted too much to

the valour of his Black Flags and to the strength of his position at SONTAY, and lost his all with the fall of that place, in addition to half his band. His house was magnificent; but the number of medicine phials in it seemed to show that the white-haired warrior feels the maladies of old age coming upon him. As a matter of fact, it would appear that the Chinese either did not expect the French to ascend the river till the waters rose in May, or they had been deceived in their hopes of getting cannon.

The plan had failed even more completely than at Bacninh. A heavy blow was to have been inflicted on the garrison. They were to be driven back along the LAOKAI road, the only one intended to be left open, and they were to be crushed, so that during the hot and rainy months they would be unable to disturb the border garrisons. But nothing of the kind was done. The Chinese carried off all their material of war. They lost practically nothing. They were able to take what route they pleased, and they were left at liberty to commence a guerilla warfare whenever it might seem good to them. The French fired eight hundred shells, killed four men, got actual possession of a burnt town and nominal hold of a province, and lost six men, drowned in the river.

General Brière de l'Isle arrived thirty-six hours late for the encircling movement, if that event had come off. Of two roads he was led along the wrong one— took the arc instead of the chord, and a vile road instead of a simple bad one. It was not a road at all, in fact; it was a simple goat track going straight up and down the hills. A fresh proof that the Chinamen had made up their minds to retire was found in the evacuation of the hill-forts. Some of these commanded gorges where a handful

of determined men could have checked an army. At one place in particular, where the torrent bed for the path was really nothing else—took a sudden bend, nothing but want of food or the sacrifice of thousands of men could have dislodged the defenders. But the column marched through unmolested, and had no greater trouble than is implied in getting artillery up and down slopes of 45° , with alternate stretches of loose rubble and slippery grass for a roadway.

General Bière, having learnt that his assistance was not wanted, despatched a battalion with a battery of mountain guns to take Dong Vong, a little fort up in the hills west of Hung-Hoa and close to the Song-Boa river. An arduous march over more mountains, with green lakelets of paddy in the hollows, and under an impenetrable green dome of virgin forest, festooned with garlands of creepers and parasites, with bright blue and red blossoms, and passion flowers peeping out of the underwood, brought them to the position. It was hardly a fort in the ordinary sense of the word; it was a mere blockhouse in bamboo of three hundred yards to the side, with a little village of a dozen mat-houses beside it. Except to keep out wild beasts and moss-troopers, in fact it was useless, for one might have almost pitched stones on the heads of the garrison from the heights round about. It really served as a kind of mountain chalet to the septuagenarian Prince HUYNH-KÉ VIEM, who was reported killed at SONIAV, but still lives with a band of shaven-headed Annamese rebels.

There were some neat little houses inside the stockade, and one in particular attracted considerable attention. There were preserved meat and condensed milk tins inside it. Unhappily they were empty, but there were further two birar-root pipes of French manufacture, of

the model known as the *pipe Jacob*. There were two half used packets of *tabac National* in the red, white, and blue wrappers; and there were other signs of the presence of a white man notably an old Vermont case. The owner of these properties was presumed to have been an American on what grounds did not sufficiently appear. And it was concluded that to him was due the credit of the construction of the defences of Hung-Hoa. The only actual inhabitant of the place was a pleasant-looking young lady, the wife of the prince's secretary. Every house was burnt but hers, for the battalion was under the command of the chivalrous Colonel CORONAT.

Négrier was busy as usual galloping all over the country. He sent out reconnaissances on the left bank, and ascertained that the Chinese had burnt PHU LAM-TAO in their retreat, besides scores of other villages to hamper pursuit, and moreover had marched twelve hours continuously after leaving Hung Hoa. All hope of coming up with them had therefore to be abandoned.

South of HUNG HOA, THAI-NGUYEN, and the SONG-CU river, the country wherever it is flat, or even gently sloping, is everywhere under the same high pitch of cultivation, which makes Tongking, beyond the paddy-fields, look like a gigantic kitchen garden, and assuredly the most highly tilled land in the world. Northwards it is very different. Immediately above Hung Hoa the river begins to narrow rapidly, and the banks are much higher; while the forests creep down closer and closer to the river, till at last, above TUAN KWAN, the KOUEN CH of M Dupuis, they actually line the banks. Nevertheless, as far north as GIA-DU, where there used to be a customs station, there are abundant villages and highly cultivated lands. Here the river makes a huge curve to the south, and along this reach there is also well-tilled country

till the final north curve is reached at the point where the SONG-BOA river runs into the SONG cor. Here the scenery is very picturesque, but the villages become few and far between. Many of them stand on piles half over the water, half on the land, showing that the inhabitants trust at least as much to fishing as to agriculture for their livelihood. Finally, after TUAN KWAN, one plunges into the forests, and thenceforward nothing is to be seen but a few wood-cutters' huts. Port Dupuis, where the gallant explorer left a band of KWANG-SI men to guard his junks, is now a barren desert. An hour and a half's steaming above it brings one to the first rapid, where the river is only two hundred yards wide, and made more dangerous by the rocks in the centre. After this the rapids come thick and fast, each succeeding one more difficult than its predecessor, till finally the grand rapid is reached where the native junks unload. The French hope to pass this next cold season.

In June the French occupied TUYEN-KWAN, the great centre of the *Rivière Claire* mining district. The river banks towards the north are fairly well cultivated, but, at no great distance up, the barren hilly and forest country begins. The river rushes through a narrow bed with such force that steam-launches can barely stem it, and in the rains will probably altogether fail to do so. The little mud fort is situated on a little hill, and was surrendered without opposition. Outside the town, which is a miserable place, whose inhabitants are mainly occupied in cutting rattans and palm-leaves for thatch, was a small camp of about two hundred Black Flags, who gave in their submission to the French, and were enrolled as a company of auxiliaries under Lieutenant BOHIN, an officer distinguished for his gallantry. Some

of them were men of magnificent physique, but they had evidently gone through great hardships, and almost every one showed scars of old wounds. Though they had forsworn their old leader, they always spoke of the LAOKAI chief in terms of the greatest respect and awe, and informed the commandant of TUYEN-KWAN, when he received a defiance from LIU JUNG-FU, that if the chief said he would come and attack the place he would assuredly keep his word.

Not much is really known about the famous leader of the Black Flags. The SHUN PA, the prosperous Chinese newspaper of Shanghai, says that he is actually over sixty years of age, and is a fine military-looking man with snow white hair and beard. He is said to keep very strict order among his troops. Beheading or flogging are the only punishments; there are no minor deterrents such as banishment or imprisonment. In every one of the towns under his control the central authority is vested in a civil mandarin, subject to the orders of a military officer. His chief town is TIEN-TU CHANG. So far the native paper.

But M^r. Mesny, late Major-General in the Imperial Chinese army, gives a very different account of the HAKKI chief. He was born, so it is said, at SHANG-SU-CHAO, in the south-west of KWANG-SI, in the year 1836, and has a smooth, beardless face, which makes him look younger than he really is. LIU JUNG-FU is his official title, his birth name being LIU ERH. By his one wife, who is still living, he has a son eleven years of age and two daughters. Besides these he has an adopted son, who is in military charge of PAO-SHENG, the Chinese name for the citadel, which the French, following the Annamese, call LAOKAI.

His band is usually supposed to be made up of the

remains of the old TAIPING rebels who managed to escape from KWANG-SI at the end of the great revolt. There may be, and probably are, many of these desperate fighters in the HAKKI ranks; and it is to be noted that the majority of the men who defended the PHUC SA lines so well were seasoned warriors of over forty years of age; but there can be little doubt that by far the greater number are outlaws and river pirates from the upper waters of the CHU KIANG. Some of them have fled from the hands of justice, but far more have been attracted by the prospects of an adventurous life in fertile Tongking. Not a few also have been called by the Annamese Government itself to repress the numerous LI insurrections which for years have made the northern kingdom a simple cockpit.

The first Black Flags appeared in "PAO SIENG in LAOKAI" in 1870. For a couple of years the Imperial Chinese troops made descents upon them, but effected very little. Finally they were let alone. Then, when Garnier came and overran the delta with his handful of men, the Hui Government cast about for some one who could fight for them, and took LIU JUNG-FU into their service. The result is known. Francis Garnier was killed, and the French evacuated the country. For this success the HAKKI chieftain was created SAN SHING FU LI-FU, deputy governor of three provinces, and was allotted the district of LAOKAI. Since then he has been in regular Annamese pay, and received periodical rations and subsidy for a force of eighteen hundred men. It was the impossibility of remitting this stipend after the capture of SONIAY which led to the comparative inactivity of the Black Flags after the fall of that fortress. LIU JUNG-FU did not see the advantage of fighting the battles of a power which could not defend itself, and collapsed

at the first attack on its capital. The amount of the pay had been twelve hundred cash—say eighteen pence—and thirty catties of rice—about forty pounds weight—a month. Thenceforward the HAKKI chieftain reserved himself for the defence of his own territory, and we may be sure he will make a good fight for it.

The quarrel between France and China over the LANGSON road affair has brought him into action again. His sorely dwindled band will be reinforced by mountaineers from YUNNAN and KWANG-SI. He will receive funds and munitions of war from the Chinese provincial governors, and his undoubted genius in selecting and fortifying strong positions and in laying ambuscades may yet cost the French very dearly.



CHAPTER XII.

UNDER THE WESTERN HILLS.

SHORTLY after the capture of Hung Hoa, the fall of which strong place was supposed to have practically ended legitimate warlike operations in Tongking for the year 1884, a small column of six hundred native troops went out to My-Duc, a small sub province which appears on very few maps of Tongking, but was visited in 1881 by M. Edmond Fuchs, chief engineer of the French Mining Department. All the cultivated portion of Tongking was now in French hands. It was necessary to find the minerals, and M. Fuchs had reported gold at My-Duc. Moreover, pirates swarmed over all the trans-Dai provinces, and it was necessary to suppress them as well as to find gold.

It was reported that a large number of Chinamen were entrenched near My Duc. They were armed with Spencers and Remingtons, and it was supposed that they would fight for their gold-workings. It was therefore thought by some rather hazardous to send out nothing but native auxiliaries against them, and that without the support of artillery. However, Commandant

BERGER, the officer in command, was a gallant soldier. He had distinguished himself in a marked way at Gravelottes as a lieutenant, and lay in the hospital on the next bed to General Négrier, then a captain. The commandant was as highly thought of in his rank as the Algerian general himself, and it was confidently expected that, if there was hard fighting to be done, he was the man for the work. A M. BAVIER-CHAUFOUR, a cousin of M. Jules Ferry's, accompanied the column to report on the gold fields, and had with him Mr. Ivatts, an English engineer, who had seen much mining works in Canada and the Western States of America, and therefore supplied the requisite practical knowledge.

The column left Hanoi at half-past four in the morning, for in the end of April the heats were beginning to grow formidable, as well for native troops as for French non-commissioned officers. The route taken was that which runs due south from the south-west gate of the citadel, passing at first straight across a wide expanse of swamp, half lagoon, half paddy-field. Beyond this the country became drier, from the point where the south-east end of the embankment, on which Garnier met his death, cut the route. For five hours the column then marched through a magnificent country, almost surpassing in cultivation that of any other part of Tongking. Perhaps the fact that the rice was just beginning to turn yellow in the ear increased the idea of fertility; but it was seldom, even in Tongking, that one could see such vistas of cornland, waving yellow fields extending, between the villages, eight or ten miles away to the very horizon, unbroken except by an occasional TU-VAN, with its one tree, or occasionally two—one at each side.

These TU VANS are shames to the good corn mother, the benignant spirit of the filth. They are almost all of

the same general form. In the front is an enclosure surrounded by low brick walls, whose pillars are topped with very sharp conical, or perhaps flame-like, points. At the back of this, on a pedestal between four and five feet high, stands a sort of curule chair, built of brick and plaster. This forms the centre of the shrine. In front of it rises a mason-work cube, a sort of sacrificial table or altar. To right and left extends a series of blocks of rectangular brickwork, placed at equal distances from one another. A tiled roof supported on hard-wood pillars, which rest not in the ground, but, as is universally the case in Pongking, on stone sockets sunk in the soil, serves to afford shelter to the votaries. Great numbers of these TU VANS are to be seen in all parts of the country. They always stand well out in the open, usually on a patch of grass left uncultivated, and with, most frequently, a solitary, bare-stemmed, umbrella like tree beside them. The country people deposit their offerings to the good spirits of the crops. When, as is often the case, there is no cube-altar, the votive gifts are laid on the plinth of the chair. The divinity is purely impersonal, no painted or sculptured image suggests a deity. The offerings consist of flowers and fruits, incense sticks, and the paper models, of which so many are to be seen on the stalls of every country village, paper coats, boots, trousers, images of horses, elephants, and human figures—all highly coloured in the style of the prints of the Lord Mayors show. In the animal figures the carcass is made of thin basket-work, and the coloured paper is pasted on this. There is not much regard for size or proportions, but it is not uncommon to see elephants, and especially horses, of nearly life-size. At each side of the TU-VAN, a few paces outside the enclosure, are a couple of stones set up in the

ground, with two Chinese characters, *HA MÂ*, cut on them in deep relief. This is an invitation to riders to dismount in passing, from respect to the sacred place. All the more important temples have on either side of them similar *HA MÂ* stones. Altars to propitiate evil animal spirits are also put up, but they are simply rude mounds of earth, not unlike the national graves. The offerings deposited here are of very little value, but on the appointed days no small amount of funeral money is burnt upon them.

There are a goodly number of Christian villages in this eastern *DAI* country, but one cannot help noticing that the Christian fields are as well supplied with 'TUVANS as their heathen neighbours'. The hardest work the missionaries have is to combat these ingrained superstitions. The country hereabouts, all along the *DAI*, was formerly a great pirate haunt. The rich harvests no doubt attracted them. The eastern banks are cleared, but the only result seems to be that there are more than ever on the west. A French adjutant was sent out, after the capture of *SONIAY*, with some native troops. He built himself a marvellous bamboo fort, with sixteen gates and other peculiarities, and thence sallied forth periodically on pirate hunts.

Shortly afterwards the *DAI* was struck, and the column marched south west along the ombankment, past a continuous series of exceedingly picturesque villages, with apparently every comfort and convenience they could require, except confidence in one another; for every entry was barred with dense, prickly huddles of bamboo, and every pathway wound about so that further barricades could be constructed at pleasure.

Another day's march led still down the ombankment. These dykes, built to guard the flat country against the

floods of the rainy season, are among the most extraordinary works in Tongking. They are frequently sixty or seventy feet wide at the base, and from twenty five to thirty feet high, and are built in regular series to protect three or four villages, the next series of course joining on so as to make a continuous system. On the top of the larger dykes three carriages might be driven abreast. There are hundreds of miles of them in the delta, and they cover the whole country up to the SONG-CAU river, and to beyond HUNG HOA. During the rains they are the only roads that are practicable, and scores of villages find protection on their slopes. They are admirably constructed, so as to turn rather than check the force of the water. To hold the soil firm, each embankment is built over a regular framework of bamboos, horizontal and at the angle of the slope, all being firmly lashed together with rattan and fastened to posts driven in the ground. As a national work they are far more astonishing for the patient labour they imply, and infinitely more useful than the famous wall of China, or even the Grand Canal itself, concerning which Mr. Colborne Baber speaks in such slighting terms. Where there are no villages seeking shelter under these dykes there are fruit-trees and trebinths of palm-trees, and long stretches of dog roses, white and red, loading the air with their perfume; clematis creepers, with lovely cream-white flowers; rich purple trumpet-shaped corollas, clambering over the shrubs; and, above all, the gorgeous upturned head of the passion-flower. The fresh red cloud of the "forest flame" contrasts with the sombre foliage of the mango and the lychee, the graceful palm, and the feathery clumps of bamboo. Tongking viewed from one of these embankments has a beauty all its own, when the rays of the morning sun sparkle gaily on the tiny drops

of dew, and the flowers open up to breathe the fresh air, and the eye strives in vain to see the bounds of the rice-lands that disappear in the haze which the sun raises up. A light breeze bends the heads of the paddy, and that is the only sound one hears, unless it be the bubble of a stream smothered in verdure or the carolling of hundreds of unknown birds.

But the march of the column introduced discord and fear. From village to village the dull wail of the cow-horns and the beating of tum-tums passed on the news that the Frenchmen's troops were coming. The villagers might have had consciences, or they might have heard that the Annamese Frenchmen were clever at stealing chickens, and apt to pilfer eggs. At any rate, all the village gateways were closed and blocked up with bushes and spiny hedges. A few of the more venturesome stood at a distance and looked at the column as it passed, but the majority hid themselves away in the farthest part of the village.

At length the Dai was crossed in boats at a place where it ran strong and deep in a channel of about a hundred yards wide. The path then followed the right bank towards the line of hills which wall in Tongking on the west. The range is most extraordinary. One is accustomed to the saw-like appearance of a mass of hills viewed from a distance. Here, however, is a line of heights rising to from 600 to 1000 feet sheer out of the paddy fields, and with the individual peaks as nearly as possible in a straight line. They are a kind of prismatic limestone, some mere huge naked rocks, others with bushes, and even trees, clinging to the clefts in their precipitous sides. Behind were other huge reefs of rock of the same character, singularly resembling the fantastic rocky islets of the fairy Hailong-

Bay, and then in the far distance beyond towered the lofty mountains of the Muong country.

One can see isolated limestone peaks of the same kind in the flat country above MAULMLIN, in British Burma, and along the course of the West River in KWANG SI and KWANG-TUNG, but not even there are the hills so regularly connected or so lofty as here. The sight is as unique as the Tongking landscape, with its ocean of paddy fields of which we have just been speaking.

About a mile from the foot of the hills, after a boiling hot march, the column halted at a Christian village, NGUA, in charge of a French priest, who, however, did not show himself. Here the TUAN PHU of MY DUC was in waiting to lead the way. Hanoi information, it appeared, was of little value. My Duc was not in the hands of Chinamen, and never had been. On the contrary, it was quite newly built, and a band of Longkneso auxiliaries was actually in garrison there. This was somewhat disconcerting. Fortunately, however, the absence of Chinamen did not necessarily imply the absence of gold. Here, however, was a check also. The TUAN PHU had heard that there was something of the kind in the hills farther on, but there was no gold actually at My-Duc.

To make inquiries about a guide and preparations for the troops, the stout old gentleman marched off on his elephant, followed by his umbrellas, his crossbow men, his warriors with swords and spears of portentous length, and bucklers round and oval, and flags of many colours. After the midday heat had passed the column marched on under the hills, where, if there had been Chinamen, they had only to topple stones over the crags to crack our skulls. Suddenly, as a ship might have

done, we turned round a rocky promontory, and at the far side of a wide, circular plain, surrounded on all sides but the one by the same jagged rocks, now black against the setting sun, we came upon My-Duc.

It is a neat little place. There is a small mud fort, a square of about a hundred yards to the side, with wedge bastions at the corners, and four fixed bridges over a tidy little moat. There are a few embrasures, but no cannon. Any one mounting the rocks to the north could pick off the garrison at his leisure with a rifle, but perhaps it might not be so easy to get up the cliffs. The Tuan-Phu had done his best. He had fitted up a courtyard, with houses round three of the sides for the officers. The rooms were furnished with little tables and carved ebony benches and oil-lamps, so that with a good deal of imagination one might have fancied one's self at Meunice's. The worthy man had done more: he had arranged for the lodging of all the men. Moreover he gave a "gratification." He furnished a dozen bottles of wine, which was very drinkable for My Duc. He distributed a score of loaves of bread, got from Hanoi a week ago. He furnished eggs and chickens. He gave the Annamese *Tirailleurs* a small cart-load of *supèques*—it requires forty-four *supèques* to make a *sou*. Finally he supplied a guide, who declared there were five gold mines, with a sulphur mine thrown in, only two hours' march distant in the mountains.

Next morning a company started before the sun in quest of gold. We marched an hour over little undulations, where there were dog-roses and a magnificent scarlet flowering plant like a honeysuckle, eccentric shrubs with reddish buff leaves, and others, still more eccentric, with pearly white leaves scattered among the green, blacken to remind one of the north, and bamboos

and betel palms to recall the tropics. Then we reached a new range of ragged hills, with here and there a huge cliff standing solitary in the plain to the left, as we marched parallel to the ridge. There was cultivation everywhere; little patches of paddy-land in the hollows and along the mountain streams through which we waded; acres of maize and peanuts and yams, but never a village. There were tracks—our path in fact—down which buffaloes had dragged timber from the hills, as we could very well see from the round hollows they made, but not a living soul to be seen.

An hour more along the hill-side and we began to be prepared for gold at any moment. Still the guide marched on, and the captain of the TUAN-PHUS army went ahead in his palanquin, with his umbrellas and crossbow men, and his gong beating in measured time every half minute or so, either to reassure us or to impress whatever inhabitants might be within earshot.

Another hour and it began to be hot. We could hear the partridges calling CON-DADA . . . DADA (their Annamese name) in the long grass, and we occasionally heard the gruff bray of a deer in the ravines; but we would have none of them. Nothing but gold would satisfy us.

Another hour and the heat was terrible. We looked forward to wading the mountain streams with pleasure, and there was great consumption of absinthe. After the third halt—the French always march fifty minutes with a halt of ten—we began to think that two hours' march Annamese was absurdly long.

In the fourth hour the captain of the company lost all patience, and informed the guide that, if he was amusing himself at our expense, it would cost very little and take less time to blow his brains out. Thus stimu-

lated, the guide, who was the mayor of the place we were going to, announced that we should arrive in another hour. As a matter of fact it took us an hour and three quarters. We made an immenso and apparently aimless circuit in the plain, and then suddenly turned north west and went straight for the mountains. We passed several outlying cliffs, bigger than the Bass Rock and nearly as bare, and then plunged into a gorge, where the crags on both sides towered eight hundred feet above us, and sometimes actually projected over our heads. The glen, not a hundred yards across at its widest, seemed to be little better than a dry torrent-bed. It was full of bushes and canes. The path was part mud, part boulders, and there was not a breath of air. It was half past ten, and, notwithstanding the height of the wooded rocks, the sun beat down pitilessly on us. Half a mile and we began to stifle. We hated the very sight of the butterflies that came flying down in long lines, one after the other, like a band of Indians or a flock of sheep on a hill-track. We had to make a halt within the regulation time—an utterly desperate measure with a strict disciplinarian like our captain. But happily it was nearly ended. Another five hundred yards and we came to a bamboo gate, and inside that a huge slab of rock that hung over the path, and inside that again a little circle of level ground about two hundred yards across.

This was Gao. This was the site of the gold stream. There were five houses built in the hill Mnong fashion on piles, to guard against the attacks of wild animals. There were half a dozen areca palms, as many bananas, a microscopic patch of maize, a couple of lychees, and some jungle trees. All around rose the wooded rocks, except at the back, facing us, where there was a bare grassy hill.

The gold stream was hardly to be seen. It gurgled down the rocks and then seemed to vanish altogether in the grass. But we were too hot and tired to care an atom for gold at the moment. The five houses were promptly annexed, and then it appeared that there were only two inhabitants among them. The rest had probably taken to the hills. At any rate, no one troubled to inquire after them. An hour spent over breakfast and cooling down, and then the search for gold was begun.

There was a dead check at the very beginning. The guide calmly announced that he knew nothing about the gold at all. He was mayor of the town, and had been told to lead the way there—that was all. The captain of the TUAN-PIU's army tranquilly chewed betel, assured us that he was very tired, and that he knew absolutely nothing at all about anything, except that he and his score of crossbow men had come to protect the troops. So far from being soothed by this intimation, we waxed more fiery than ever. A wrathful lieutenant drew out his revolver and assured the guide that he would put a bullet in his head if we did not find gold within half an hour, and, for his better comprehension, fired a shot in the air in the meantime.

Fortunately for the mayor one of his lieges turned up trumps. We had cut down one of his areca palms to make a salad of the tender top leaves, and he dissolved in tears. The captain gave him a dollar, and he grovelled on the earth in gratitude. Another member of the party gave him another dollar, and he was perfectly prepared to sell his soul and the gold mine. He produced a piece of wood which he called his washer. He brought out a bamboo with a bit of iron in the end of it, which was his spade and "jumper" and everything.

With infinite toil we scrambled two or three hundred

yards up the rocky bed of the stream, very much like a Scotch burn in a mountain glen, except that the hazel and alder were replaced by tropical trees and shrubs which grew everywhere densely round the banks, and helped one to clamber up what was really one continuous steep cascade. At first we searched diligently in the bed among the blocks of limestone, schist, bastard marble, or alabaster and fragments of quartz; but supposed finds only resulted in depreciation and instruction from Mr. Ivatts. A little of this sort of exertion went a very long way at half-past one, with a nearly vertical sun and not a breath of air. It was a matter of doubt whether one got wetter with perspiration or with slipping into the pools.

At any rate, a halt was made to watch the two inhabitants. They began digging a hole in the gravelly bank, washed away the stones and sand on their board, and in half an hour produced three small specks of gold. This was no great matter, but at any rate it proved that there was gold. We consoled ourselves with the reflection that we had hit on a bad place, that we should have gone farther up stream, and that we were out of luck. Anyhow, it was time to go. A big bag was filled with gravel and sand, and the two apparent proprietors of the gold stream were requisitioned as coolies to carry it. Diligent washing next day failed to reveal any more gold dust, but we were satisfied with what had been done in our three-quarters of an hour claim.

It was necessary to get back as soon after dark as possible, for the road was bad, and there was no moon. Nothing else could possibly have justified the starting of a column of men at five minutes past two. It was fondly hoped that, when we got out into the open plain, there would be a breeze to moderate the terrific heat.

But there was none, and when, later on in the afternoon, it did come, it was behind our backs, and so gentle that we hardly felt it.

The results were soon apparent. We had scarcely got out of the gorge when a coolie fell down dead, partly from the heat and partly from fatigue. The poor creature had been too long in the service. Perpetual carrying heavy loads just within his strength and insufficient food—for the army coolies had to forage for themselves, like the birds and beasts—had proved too much for him. He died, and was left where he fell to feed the carrion fowl. The march continued painfully. Several of the officers gave up their ponies to worn-out *Tnaillans*, and after that there was no help for the fatigued; they had to struggle on somehow or other. The captain of the escort, notwithstanding his palanquin, was very exhausted. He related his miseries to one officer after another, and from one he got brandy, from another absinthe, from a third rum, and from yet another more brandy. The results were noisy in the evening and woebegone next morning.

When at last the sun got behind the ragged line of peaks we were too grateful for the shade and the evening breeze to take any note of the purple glow, deepening into black, that stole over the range, showing up its outline sharp and grotesque against the saffron sky. Soon it was quite dark, and the fire-flies came out, and we heard the far-off *peet peet* of a tiger. But we had no admiration for the obbing and flowing light of the beetles, nor any fear of the tiger, still less a desire to go after him. We plunged recklessly through rushing brooks where in the morning we had picked our steps with a wholesome dread of leeches. At last, at eight o'clock, we reached the friendly walls of My-Duc. We

had marched close on forty miles, great part of it in the hottest time of the day.

There was no doubt of the existence of gold, only the mandarins did not wish us to find it. Possibly we marched past some of the promised five workings, for there must have been villages in some of the mountain gorges which we passed. The guide no doubt hoped to tire us out without showing us anything. He was very fairly successful. He showed us remarkably little, and it was very certain that we were fatigued.

Having achieved but a slight success in its search for gold, the column was now absolutely determined to find pirates. The Tuan Phu told us there were some at My-Luong, a place about forty miles off to the north. They were mostly Chinamen, and they worked gold somewhere or other in the neighbourhood.

Next day a start was made, but the third company had not recovered from the exhaustion of the day before, and could not be induced to be enthusiastic about pirates; and after ten miles a halt was made in a village on the banks of the Dai, and perhaps a mile and a half from the hills. A short distance outside the walls of the place, towards the hills, was a pig with his legs tied up, lying at the foot of a tree, to a branch of which was fixed a large paper document stating that this was the village offering to Mr. Tiger, and begging that he would take particular notice of the village seal which figured prominently at the bottom. The Annamese have a wonderful respect for the tiger. They always speak of "stripes" as Ông-cop, Mr. Tiger, instead of Con cop, as, following the names of other animals, he should be called. In all villages where there are tigers in the neighbourhood images of them are put up in the doorways as a protection. The Annamese of a commu-

nity in French Cochin China, who had received orders to set traps for a man-eater, put up in all the waste places, and round about the pagodas, notices begging Ông còp to spare them, and assuring his lordship that it was against their will that the snares had been constructed. A man who has been killed by a tiger is always buried where he died, and never in the family tomb. The son of a man eaten by a tiger or a crocodile, or killed in war, is liable to the same misfortune, and must offer up regular sacrifices if he could escape such a mischance. Another curious superstition of the fishermen of the DAI is that it is very unlucky to catch a porpoise. He is a messenger of the demons of the lower world. If a fish jumps into the boat it is a very bad omen also. To avert impending evil it is necessary to cut the fish in two and throw it into the water again.

After a half-day's rest the column started again up the right bank of the DAI river, still keeping the hills on the left, but getting gradually farther and farther from them. After a time a country practically new to Europeans was reached. We struck diagonally across the fields towards the hills, and several fairly large streams, too deep to be forded, all of them of course affluents of the DAI. Eventually we followed the banks of one of these, called the BUI-GIAN. The country was still highly cultivated, but the features of the people differed somewhat from those of other parts of Tongking. They were squarer built, taller, and broader in the jaw, and the nose was perhaps a little bigger and shapelier than that of the ordinary Annamese, with whom it is a more misshapen button, with a valley instead of a bridge. We were indeed told that most of them were half-Muong, half Tongkinese.

The Muongs are supposed by some to be aborigines of

the country. They speak a dialect which an Annamese can only understand imperfectly, both on account of structure and pronunciation. The MUONGS, from the few the writer saw, hardly seem to be the SIANS of the Upper MUKONG valley, but they are very probably closely akin to them. They are taller and whiter than the Annamese, and have a profound contempt for them. In the frontier provinces this arrogated superiority is so far admitted that MUONGS are allowed to bear arms—queer stockless things of their own making where a Tongkinese would promptly be beheaded for venturing on such a thing. They are fervent Buddhists, real followers of the great master—another point which moves them far above the Annamese, and assimilates them to the races of the MUKONG valley.

The half breed MUONGS whom we met, however, seemed to have but a poor opinion of their semi naked hill cousins, and kept their villages even more formidably protected than those of the delta proper. They had redoubtable crossbows—more dangerous weapons in capable hands than the jezail like guns they carried, and were evidently very proud of, keeping the inlaid metal work in an admirable state of polish.

The nearer we got to MY-LUONG, the fainter became the hopes of finding pirates. At MY DUC it was said there were five hundred, all well armed and strongly entrenched. This came down by stages to two hundred, and eventually, when we were about a mile and a half from the town, we discovered that there were no pirates, Chinese or otherwise, in the place. The troops marched in peaceably in the evening, and then it was discovered that the greater part of the town had been burnt two months before by the pirates.

MY-LUONG had been a wealthy and substantial town.

The houses had been built of big slabs of conglomerate, and, instead of the ordinary bamboo fences to the pathways, there were solid walls of the same material. One or two fine temples testified still more to the riches of the place, and of the few better class houses that remained, many had elaborate frescoes painted on the plaster panelling, wreaths of flowers, fantastic beasts, and the ordinary egrets, and hogs and tortoises of Annamese art. Near some of the temples were some ancient trees of the banyan species, surrounded with tassels of pendant suckers, many of which had already taken root in the ground, and coalesced into one thick stem, which sprang out of the soil with fresh vigour to continue the process. Some of these outside stems were as large as an average European tree, and the upper branches were interlaced in an inextricable but charming tangle of creepers, ferns, rattans, and orchids, the whole supplying a pleasantly cool shelter and an impressive natural fane.

The inhabitants said that, immediately after the capture of SONLAX, a force of about five hundred Chinamen had come over in bands of from twenty to forty, and had settled in a village, KÈ-SHON, lying at the foot of the main peak of the range. They had built themselves a little fortlet on the hill side above the village, and were armed with very good guns, but had left SONLAX in such a hurry that they had only the cartridges that remained at the moment in their pouches. The members of the band had steadily dwindled till there remained no more than seventy, with thirty MUONG auxiliaries. Still they kept the country-side in terror, and stole all the women and children and sold them to the hill-men for rice. They also worked a gold-washing somewhere near.

KU-SHON, however, was distant four hours' march, and it was quite certain that, if the Chinamen were not already gone, they would disappear the moment the French guns bore in sight. A couple of sections were left behind to watch, or attack KU-SHON as seemed best to the adjutant who had command of them. The rest of the column marched due east through an undulating country on the DAI, which was forded at one of the regular country ferries, and thence through the rice fields and past the adjutant's fort to Hanoi, which was reached on the second day.

The first column sent in search of gold and pirates met with but very moderate success. Yet that there is gold in the country is quite certain. The MUONGS bring it down in little pellets to the lowlands both in this part of the country and farther north beyond HUNG HOA, and on the banks of the *Rivière Claire* by TUYEN KWAN. Gold will certainly be found some day when the country is settled, but whether gold-mines and gold-diggers are desirable things is a very different question. There are several old diggers of gold and other metals in Tongking now. They ask for leave and ground wherein to exercise their vocation, and are told to apply to the local mandarin, who knows nothing, and sends them back to the French civilian, who now says it is necessary to consult the Home Government. Several ex-California diggers are very warm over the matter, and compare the system unfavourably with that which prevails in the West and in British Columbia. There a man takes out a licence to dig, for which he pays five dollars, and has thereafter nothing to do but to go and mark himself out a claim according to his lights. If he trespasses on another man's land the gold commissioner comes down upon him and gives him ten minutes to quit with his

tools and belongings, but otherwise the digger is not interfered with. If half a dozen of these experienced men were allowed to go and establish themselves in the Gao hill range they would soon determine whether there were gold-washings there or not. But such expeditions, or armed expeditions of any kind, are altogether forbidden. Moreover, there are already murmurings about relatives of prominent Government officials and agents of French companies, started or to be started, who are supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be sure to pick up all the plums to the exclusion of private enterprise. Native workers already in possession are likely to be assumed to be pirates, or will be required to produce their titles, which will serve the same purpose in a more judicial way.

The rains had barely well set in when the whole of the western banks of the Dai, and not a small portion of the eastern, became alive with pirate bands, who ravaged and burnt everywhere; and in the impassable state of the country it was impossible for the French to follow them, certainly to come up with them. This sort of thing is, unhappily, likely to go on for years in the rainy months. It seems only too true that all Tongkinese are pirates when they find a good opportunity; but of real, veritable, professional brigands there are probably none. The nuclei of the present bands are the scattered Ilur soldiery and the followers of beheaded mandarins, with a very large leavening of old French army coolies, who have acquired experience in the systematic pillaging of villages, and find it more exciting and profitable to go looting on their own account.



CHAPTER XIII.

HAIPHONG.

THE trim, white houses of the French Concession give Haiphong quite a pretty appearance as one steams up the fourteen miles or so of river which separates it from the sea; but when one passes up the mouth of the SONG-TAM-BAC Canal, and still more when one lands, there is a revulsion. From opposite the store-sheds, which used to be the China Merchants Company's godowns, the place looks very desolate, and gives the newly arrived stranger the impression of a two-or-three-month-old settlement in a newly discovered country. The French have been more or less steadily settled in the place for ten years; but it is hardly fair to dwell on this. Still for over a year they have been firmly resolved to maintain themselves in the country, and the results of that year are certainly not very remarkable.

The town perhaps grows, though even this is open to dispute; but under no circumstances can it grow fast, for building sites are only to be obtained by laboriously collecting mud and clay from the surrounding fields, and piling it up to form a foundation on which a house may

stand a foot or two above the swamps into which the greater part of the town is converted by a high tide. The very roads have to be constructed in this way, rising up in lines like the embankments of the open country, with dark, silvery marshes on each side. Under these circumstances there are not many solid houses and remarkably few roads of any kind. The town, which does not cover an area of more than a hundred acres, is surrounded, except on the river and canal faces, by a stockade, which as recently as the 5th of July, 1888, was found to be necessary; for on that night a large band of Tongkinese pirates attacked the settlement, and might even have taken it, had it not been for the fire of the river flotilla.

It seems to be only the blackish water which saves Haiphong from being a regular grave to the Frenchmen. On first sight of the ill-looking swamps which penetrate into every part of the town and exhale vapours under the blazing sun, one would think that nothing could save the place from a pestilence. As it is, every house is practically the centre of a cesspool, and if there is not sooner or later some serious epidemic it will be a matter for wonder. The utter absence of anything like sanitary precautions all over Tongking certainly reflects the greatest discredit on the French medical staff. Possibly it is the want of money which prevents the administration from commencing even the elements of a drainage system; but if the medical officers have made any representations on the subject their reports have been very carefully shelved.

There was a very fair amount of trade in Tongking three or four years ago, but it has almost entirely disappeared during the troubles. Three or four Hong Kong houses had agencies in Haiphong then, but these have

been withdrawn as far, at any rate, as the English firms are concerned. Those firms which remain are only supported by the transport of Government stores, and the supply of drink and other necessaries for the troops. The last trade report for the port of Haiphong, which practically represented the trade of the country, was that of the year 1880. It was drawn up by the then French resident, M. de Kergaradec, an extremely able man, one who knows the country as thoroughly as M. Dupuis, and who is well known and well liked by the Tongkinese. Instead of changing Governor four times in the year, and sending men from all the ends of the earth, the Republic would do well to establish the Count in Tongking. His knowledge and energy would go far to developing Tongking into a magnificent colony, if it is ever to be so developed.

A consideration of this report will be in every way the best method of giving an idea of the trade and the possibilities of Tongking. The imports of Haiphong in the year 1880 reached the value of 5,467,315 francs, and the exports were estimated at 7,507,528 francs, totalling close on thirteen million francs, say £520,000. But this did not represent the true value of the operations. In order to encourage trade, which even then was inclined to languish a good deal, the Franco-Annamese Customs were in the habit of accepting the simple declaration of the traders. The 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty would probably, therefore, with careful inspection, have returned a considerably larger sum. M. de Kergaradec is disposed to estimate it at as much as 25 per cent. Adding to this the value of the opium imported, the drug being free from the imposts of the mixed customs, the whole movement of the port for the year is estimated at twenty million francs, £800,000.

This figure was a great increase on 1879, when there was a stringent interdiction placed by the Annamese Government on the export of grain, but was inferior to the returns of 1878, and as nearly as possible equal to those of 1877. It was after the latter two years that the Hong Kong agencies were withdrawn, so that on the whole it might be said that commerce was stationary, if not even retrograde. But it must not be forgotten that the export of rice was only permitted from four provinces—those of Hanoi, Nam-Dinh, Hai-dzuong, and Ninh-Binh. The numerous *lekin* stations on the upper river also greatly hampered the circulation of merchandise of whatever kind. The imports were in detail somewhat as follows.

English cotton goods and yarn	81 %
Opium	21 %
Chinese medicines	11 %
Chinese water pipe tobacco	9 %
Tea	5 %
Other goods	20 %

The English piece goods were principally Turkey red shirtings, grey shirtings, white shirtings, and drill, and of course came through Hong Kong. The opium also came from the same port, and was chiefly Benares, though a certain quantity of Chinese growth made up in the form of rectangular bricks came down the river. Chinese medicines and tobacco were received from Canton and Swatow, and, like the tea, also came through Hong Kong. Of the miscellaneous goods, Chinese silks, paper, gunny bags, and copper (from Japan) were the most prominent. In summing up the details of the import trade, M. de Kergueladec arrives at the conclusion that from 97 to 98 per cent. of the goods came from Hong Kong. Saigon had no more

than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and about 2 per cent. represented the value of the business done with the Annam coast ports TOURANE and QUI NHON.

The exports are detailed thus:—

Rice	...	...	...	..	.	39 %
Raw silk and silk piece goods	..	..	.	.	.	21 %
Tin	..	..	..	...	.	16 %
Lacquer oil	...	.				6 %
Miscellaneous goods	...	...	...	...	...	18 %

Tongking rice fetches a much higher price in Hong Kong than that of Cochin China. It ranks with that of Siam. Nevertheless it is considerably inferior to our British Burma paddy, and the amount produced per acre is very much less. Where a British Burma rice-field will give ten baskets per acre, the same area in Tongking returns no more than four, or, if more than four, then with a vast quantity of chaff and empty grains mixed up with it. The grain itself is moreover, rather too soft and brittle to stand milling for the European market. On the other hand, two, and occasionally even three, crops are habitually raised in the year. The population of the sixteen provinces is estimated at from ten to twelve million souls, but so much ground is under rice that there would almost always be a large amount of grain to export. The Annamese Government used to forbid the export except from a specified number of provinces, and occasionally even stopped it altogether during nine months of the year, on the plea that it was necessary to keep the home price very low in order that the people might live. Special permission had always to be obtained to export, and it was not always easy to obtain this permission. This it was that led to the withdrawal of the Hong Kong agencies. The French will have no trouble with the

native 'government' now, but it is probable that the right of export will not be altogether on free trade principles. There is as yet no hint of steam husking mills in the country.

All the tin exported from Haiphong came from Yunnan. The amount sent down fluctuated greatly, and depended not upon the produce of the mines, but upon the activity of the Black Flags. Till these bands are settled with there will be no more tin sent down. If reports are to be believed, there is no lack of tin in the northern provinces of Tongking itself; but the mineral districts are all beyond the limits of French occupation, and cannot be touched till the month of October, and even then the flying columns may not be able to grant protection to the mining explorer.

Of the exports, lacquer oil, Cu-nao, or false gambier, star-anis oil, drugs in an unprepared state, and inlaid mother-of-pearl lacquer wares are the most important. Most of the false gambier goes to Hong Kong, and the Chinese extract a reddish-brown dye from it. The supply of this, and indeed of everything but the rice, sugar, and silk, will be at a total standstill till the northern hilly provinces are occupied. Two thousand four hundred tons of false gambier at £4 a ton were sent to Hong Kong in 1880. Star-anis, as has elsewhere been noted, is used in perfumery, and the tree is very rare and local, and known to botanists as *Illicium anisatum*. It seems to be found elsewhere in a few districts of Kwang-si and Yunnan, in Japan and in the Philippine Islands. The oil costs about six shillings the pound in Tongking.

In the export trade again Hong Kong occupies the foremost place, receiving 79 per cent. of the merchandise, 16 per cent. went to Saigon—nearly all silk—

and the coast ports took the remaining 5 per cent. It is worth noting that goods coming from Yunnan amounted to 16 per cent. of the whole.

This trade with Yunnan may be worth examining a little in detail, for it is as much the trade of Yunnan that the French seek as the acquisition of Tongking. The principal goods sent up from Hanoi in 1880 were: Salt, manufactured on the Tongking and Annam coasts; fine cut tobacco, planed down for the water-pipe in Canton and the FUKIEN province; raw cotton from the drier parts of Tongking itself; cotton yarn and piece goods of English manufacture; Chinese paper and drugs in a made up state from Canton; Swedish matches, needles, metal buttons, pepper from Singapore, betel nuts, and a variety of preparations of fish. European manufactured goods, mostly English, represented about a quarter of the total value, which was 1,869,000 francs, say £56,000.

The exports from Yunnan were tin, a considerable amount of which was for the use of Tongking itself, the rest going to Hong Kong; this was by far the most important item, the others being Yunnanese opium and tea and medicinal plants, besides a quantity of false gambier. Till, however, the French establish themselves in LAOKAI, all this trade is at an end, and it is a question whether it will ever grow to any great extent.

During the year 1880 there were 253 European vessels which entered or left the port, the total tonnage being 114,197. Two hundred and five Chinese junks, with a tonnage of 9,616 tons, have to be added to this. Most of these junks, averaging from forty to fifty tons, came from PAKHOI, the treaty port at the head of the Gulf. Yearly, however, the number had been decreasing, and it is questionable whether this

trade will be revived at all. The European vessels were almost all steamers, averaging about 450 tons. There is only about eighteen feet at high-water over the bar of the Cua Cam. This bar, however, might be dredged away, and there is abundance of water for sea going steamers farther up. 85 per cent. of the shipping flew the British flag; the China Merchants Steamship Company, which has since ceased to visit the port, hoisted the dragon banner, and raised Chinese colours, irrespective of the junks, to the second place with 25.5 per cent. Next came the Americans (to whom the above China steamers now belong) with 25 per cent., the Germans with 11 per cent., the Dutch with 5.5 per cent., and last of all the French with only 5 per cent. It seems, indeed, probable that the French flag would not have been represented at all, had not the *Messageries Maritimes* been subsidized to run a monthly steamer from Saigon. Compared with previous years the proportion of British steamers had greatly fallen off, principally owing to the China Merchants Company's vessels, which, however, were officered almost exclusively by Englishmen.

Notwithstanding that the trade of Tongking centres in Haiphong, this port is really only a port of transshipment, where the river launches and junks put their cargoes on board the sea-going steamers. The real centres of commerce in the country are Hanoi and Nam Dinh, and the merchants of Haiphong must more and more become the agents of the commercial houses at these two emporia, with Hai dzuong as a third, when it has been rebuilt. In the meantime there is a great lack of suitable river steamers. The best style of boat for the Song-coi would be side or stern-wheel steamers capable of carrying from eighty to a hundred tons of

merchandise, and having a maximum draught of three feet, or at most four, when loaded. No vessel drawing more than this could hope to mount beyond Hanoi in the dry season. Six feet is the absolute limit of draught to Hanoi during six months of the year.

As yet, with the exception of a number of flat bottomed gunboats, which have been sent out in pieces from France to be fitted up in Haiphong, there are no suitable vessels in the country. The launches brought from Hong Kong are either too small to carry a remunerative amount of cargo, or draw too much water when they are laden. The only method of obtaining a reasonable freight is to take junks in tow, which is extremely awkward in the narrow SONG-TAM-BAC Canal, and, moreover, prolongs the trip very seriously. Unfortunately there seem to be no French houses inclined to procure suitable boats to ply on the river, and, pending the definitive settlement of the country and the publication of the terms on which foreign trade will be permitted, no Hong Kong capitalists are likely to move in the matter.

M. de Kergaradec, basing his conclusions on Cochin China, where the people have the same habits, the same needs, and the same tastes as in Tongking, argues that, with the disappearance of the restrictions which have hitherto been laid on trade by the Annamese Government, the imports of the country ought to rise to 150,000,000 francs. This is five times the value of the import trade in Saigon, and Tongking has five times the population of Cochin China. This is a somewhat loose method of calculation, but let it pass. The question is whether the country can supply an equal value of exports. At present, supposing Tongking were at peace, which it is very far from being, it certainly

would not. But with the introduction of capital, and the improvement, not of the cultivation, but of the produce cultivated, there seems not the slightest reason why this figure should not easily be reached.

Rice is cultivated to a most extraordinary extent, but with greater care in the cultivation and the introduction perhaps of a more fertile grain, the harvests might be greatly increased. The sericulture of Tongking is still in its infancy, and is likely to develop enormously under skilled management, and this the French ought easily to supply. At present the cocoons are badly reeled off, and the threads are of unequal size, which renders the production of fine webs an impossibility. Already workmen have been introduced from Canton, and probably some of the Lyons silk firms will send out experienced agents. The silk trade is almost entirely with Saigon, and will doubtless continue to flow in the same direction. In 1880 the industry represented a value of one and a half million francs, and it is destined to increase to any required extent. The present centres of the industry are NAM-DINH and NINH-BINH, and almost every village in the provinces has its patch of mulberry trees, not the mulberry of Europe, but a kind of annual called the *Morus Indica*. The same improvement may be expected in sugar. There is already a fair amount grown, but the cane is a sapless one, and produces but very little sugar. The missionaries have found that a Javan variety called *violette*, which is very succulent, grows well. All that is wanted is money to introduce it. Skill and money again alone are wanted to produce excellent tobacco. Coffee and tea might easily be grown on the hills of the northern provinces. The missionaries grow their own coffee on the K^h-sô hills.

Independently of all this there is the question of the mines, which may or may not turn out all that is hoped. In this respect Tongking is represented as a veritable mineral land of Cockaigne. Finally there is the chance of a certain amount of trade with Yunnan. But for all this, capital is wanted, and French capitalists do not seem inclined to come forward. They will not leave their native country to settle even in so healthy a colony as Tongking undoubtedly is, in comparison with Cochin China. For the present, at any rate, it seems that foreigners will be kept out as much as possible. At least one Englishman has endeavoured to settle in the country and start a sugar plantation. The native officials were perfectly willing to sell him land, and a price was even agreed upon, but the French civil officers would not hear of it. Permission must be got from France, they said, conditions of cultivation must be agreed upon; naturalization was hinted at. The inevitable result was the withdrawal of the intended planter. Proceedings of this kind will not help Tongking to reach the figure which M. de Kergradow hopes for it—the three hundred million francs per annum, which would place Haiphong next to Shanghai in respect of trade.

The value of the Song-cou as a water-way is now acknowledged to have been greatly over-estimated. Previous to the war there were about a hundred and twenty junks employed in the HANOI LAOKAI trade. They were long narrow boats, carrying at the most twenty tons, and drawing, loaded, little over two feet of water. Two voyages a year was the somewhat modest amount of trade they counted on doing. At LAOKAI they either disposed of their goods by barter, or had them transhipped into smaller boats to go on into Yunnan.

Even junks of this class could not pass Laokai, and had difficulty enough in getting there. It seems Quixotic of the French to believe that they can do more with the steam launches. Several of the rapids could only be passed by discharging the junks and carrying the cargo bodily to the upper end. The junks themselves could only mount the river during eight months of the year. In February, March, and April there is too little water for them. From the end of June to August or September they cannot stem the floods. The journey from Hanoi to Laokai occupied thirty to forty days, and ten to twelve more from Laokai to MANHAI. Where junks find so much trouble it appears hopeless to expect much of small steamers, which would necessarily have powerful engines, and therefore comparatively little stowage space. The cargo would be merely nominal, and the danger in descending the rapid stream excessive. As a water way, therefore, the Song coi is a delusion.

With a railway the country up to Yunnan itself might be opened, and that at no very inordinate expense. Part of the route of such a line, from Haiphong to Hai dzuong, has already been surveyed, and no great difficulties in the way of bridges and so on have been reported. But the line would always be open to danger from floods, and the bridging of the THAI BINH is no small matter. It would be much better if the line were to start from Quang Yen, a town which would then replace Haiphong as the port of the country. From Quang-Yen the line would be clear of the numerous creeks of the delta, and would proceed along the base of the lower hills to the mouth of the Song cau river, pass near Bacninh, through THAI NGUYEN and possibly TUXIN-KWAN, to SONTAY or HUNG-HOA, whence it might follow the river valley north of Laokai and south to Hanoi,

keeping of course to the left bank. Those Frenchmen who have been brought to recognize the comparative uselessness of the Song-roi route are all in favour of this line of railway. Unfortunately the Government is little likely to undertake the expense of such a venture for the present, and it does not seem likely that under French protection any one else will be allowed to do so.



CHAPTER XIV.

QUANG YEN AND THE COAST.

IT is still an unresolved problem which is to be the eventual port of Tongking. Is it to be Haiphong, or is it to be Quang Yen? Quang Yen lies about ten miles north-east of Haiphong on the *Lac HUYEN*. At Quang-Yen there is ground to build on, it has to be brought with much toil to Haiphong on coolies' backs. At Haiphong there is no drinking water; at Quang-Yen it is abundant and good. There is one foot more of water over the Quang-Yen bar than there is at the entrance of the *Cua CAM*. On the other hand, Haiphong is more conveniently situated with regard to *Hai-dzuong*, *Hanoi*, and *Nam Dinh*, and there are already a considerable number of public buildings, while at Quang Yen there is nothing. Still the railway, which seems to be the only means of tapping Yunnan, would find a better terminus at Quang-Yen than on any other part of the coast, and a town built there could not fail to be healthier. Probably matters will be allowed to drift, and events will have to decide which shall be the more important place of the two.

The present fort and village are situated on and along the sides of a number of little rolling hills, where there is space for a town of at least 10,000 inhabitants; but farther west, on the CUA NAM-TRU, there is room for unlimited extension. On the opposite bank here there are some picturesque needled peaks, and to the north rise the big bare hills of the plateau country. The fort is an insignificant square brick erection on the hill-slope, with a curious tongue running out to the north-west to include a height which was left out in the original plan. It is furnished with a large number of cannon, some of them of Siamese make; but the place was taken by the French with no greater exertion than that of sending a garrison to hold it. The arsenal was found to contain a number of French breech loaders, "treaty guns." The ground at the foot of the hills is very low and marshy, and there is a strong sea smell about the whole place; but as a site for a town, Quang-Yen is infinitely preferable in every way to Haiphong. To the north there is a curious little horse-shoe fort, and on the plain below this a square enclosure for a mandarins' burying-ground, the only approach to a native cemetery in Tongking. The place is surrounded by a quadrangle of fir trees, and is very neatly kept, but it cannot be of any great age.

From Quang-Yen it is no great distance to Haiphong Bay, the anchorage for the big transports and ships of war; and to Hong gai, where the coal mines are; indeed one can almost see them from the fort. Hong-gai, a small island at the north of the bay, is admirably situated so that it can furnish coals at once to the shipping, and to a possible railway terminus at Quang-Yen. There are mines on both the island and the mainland, and the coal is of excellent quality, but it is worked as

yet only in the most fitful way. There is no lessce of the seam, and operations only go on when the French land at the place and specially engage men to excavate the coal, which as yet is done open-cast. The basin appears to be very large, and the seam lies over a carboniferous limestone formation, which ought to make the workings quite safe. HONG GAI has long been known as a good coaling station. It was the "New Macao" of the old Dutch traders.

South of this lies the huge expanse of HALONG Bay with its myriads of fair islets. The typhoons and gales which sweep across the gulf from Hainan burst with all their force against the Quang-Yen coast, and in the course of centuries have sapped and gnawed and crumbled away everything that is not solid rock, so that the actual sea-board, as far as Cape PAK-LUNG, is fronted by a huge labyrinth of islands and bare rocks, utterly inadequately styled the Thousand Isles. HALONG Bay is unique in its beauty. One winds about in an apparently endless maze of rocks, some mere bald cliffs, some pierced through and through so as to form natural arches, some eaten away at the base by the lapping waves so that they look like gigantic mushrooms, some covered with a garb of tenacious shrubs and trees; all of them peopled with huge flights of divers, and gannots, and cormorants, and ospreys, and sea-eagles. Never had smugglers or pirates grander or more congenial surroundings; and till the French began their Tongking campaign the whole population of the island hamlets and the mainland towns were smugglers or pirates by turns, and eked out the time in between by fishing. The Chinamen were and are the master-spirits. The few Annamese who did anything beyond starving on what they could manage to pick up were in the Celestial

pay. When an occasional gunboat did follow the harpies into the labyrinth, it was the easiest thing in the world to run the junk into shallow waters where even the ships' boats could not float, or to vanish behind the multitudinous islets.

There is an interior passage capable of admitting small gunboats between the islands and the mainland, but it is too little known to be ventured on without a native pilot, and these are hard to get. The French have a difficult task before them on the Quang-Yen coast here, not merely to put down the pirates, but to check the constant smuggling which goes on. It will be no easy matter, for nefarious occupations of the kind have been the regular and universal mode of livelihood of the population for years. There are, perhaps, three passably honest islands in the whole archipelago—those of CAO-BA, CUA LAM, and BA MOON—and they are only so because they face the sea, and do not occupy such a good position for defence or escape as the more shoreward lying places. CAO BA, the principal island of HALONG Bay, is, indeed, almost a place of good repute. There are huge fisheries here. Often as many as eight hundred junks, mostly Chinese, come and fish all through a season, and never think of doing any harm to one another or to passing strangers, possibly for the reason that the curing of fish is profitable, and the fishing villages are almost open, and certainly offer no good means of defence in the event of the arrival of an avenging expedition.

It is not to be supposed that the French are the only people who have endeavoured to put down the pirates of these waters. China, which was till recent events much more interested in the safety of the coast, has sent many an expedition, and in her thorough way very completely

stopped the game whenever she descended. The outermost group, the Gao Tao, islands of ill-fame, have felt the weight of the Celestial hand several times. The Chinese war vessels swooped down upon them, burnt the houses, destroyed the cultivation, and carried off all the population they did not kill. Stones are pointed out, graven, like that at NAM WAN, in GUM-CHAO, on the other side of the gulf, with the Imperial edict forbidding the re-settlement of the islands under pain of instant death, without mercy or inquiry. But there are abundance of little children playing round these pillars at the present moment. The whole surroundings invite to lawlessness, and the disturbed state of Tongking since the beginning of the century has helped to make matters worse. Almost every year, after the gathering in of the rice harvest, there used to be rebellions, nominally to restore the Lê dynasty, really to harry the lowland provinces. Annam could do nothing herself. She hired bands of adventurers and outlaws from China, and these ruffians, when they were paid off, demanded settlements in the country, and, if these were not granted, simply dispossessed the regular owners. Thus Quang-Yen, which was at one time a fairly well-cultivated province, is now a simple haunt of desperadoes. There is not a respectable town in the whole district, and the few villages of Annamese outside of the walled towns only exist on the condition of playing jackal to the manauvers.

Some of these pirates have regularly established villages, carefully hidden away on the more secluded of the large islands. A path, fenced with prickly cactus and with gates every few paces, winds up from the shore. Look-out towers command the sea all round. There are occasionally patches of riceland and fields full of vegetables. The houses are neat and solid, and the

chief of the band is settled so luxuriously that in such a wild neighbourhood the most innocent people could have no doubts as to his occupation. But when they are out on business they neither start nor return from these settlements. All over the archipelago there are curious semicircular islands. From the outside they look mere bare precipices, rising from a hundred to two hundred feet out of the water. Inside there are shoots of water, like a coral reef atoll, or rather the crater of a volcano, though the rocks are not volcanic. They rise up, almost as steep as on the outside, in a huge funnel. At one spot only is there an entrance, either through a gash in the cliffs or a cave or vault, higher or lower, according to the tide, or sometimes by a kind of shaft straight through the rocky shell, and covered up at high-water. Into some of these, sampans and even large junks can pass at high water, and there they remain in the most perfect shelter, and completely hidden from view. Fish and shell fish abound, and there is plenty of wood for fuel, so that they can stay there for days. Small fishing craft, or look-out men stationed on the heights, give them notice of junks lying becalmed, or other vessels which they can pounce down upon from behind a sheltered point. Then they return again, baffle possible pursuit by apparently vanishing off the face of the sea, divide their booty, and lie hidden till danger is past.

Such opportunities offer a premium to buccaneering. There is probably not a Chinaman on the coast who has not tried his luck in such an expedition, perhaps two or three times. Ordinary fishing and trading junks, come down from Pakhoi perhaps, or on their way back from Tongking, furbish up their small arms, and get their cannon in trim. They seize upon an Annamese fishing boat, make the owners pilot them about, and use the boat

to board any prize they may come across. If the passenger junk, which is the favourite object of attack, sails away from them, they fire their cannon. When there has been a fight everybody on board is killed except the women and children, who are carried off to be sold into slavery. This usually prevents anything like organized resistance, and in such cases it is the invariable rule to land the despoiled victims at some village or market-place on the coast to shift for themselves. The fishing junks from CAO-BA are let alone. They travel in large parties, with a convoy of one or two war junks, who have nothing in the way of fishing nets or cargo to encumber them, and would probably prove too heavy metal for amateur corsairs. The coast fisher people are too useful to be harmed. They give news in return for immunity, supply spare rigging and provisions, and are generally the humble friends of the privateer boats. They are also exempted from the capture of their women, the kidnapping of whom is not the least lucrative of the pursuits of this coast. The poor creatures are carried off to China, dressed up as Chinawomen, and sold as concubines in Canton and the coast ports, or serve to fill the bagnios of Hong Kong and Shanghai. The organized character of this slave-trade in our own Crown colony is a disgrace to our administration.

To put down this piracy will be no easy matter. One junk is just like another, and the craft which is a peaceable merchantman exposed to attack one month may be a regular sea shark the next. The islanders are far too shrewd to keep the same boat any length of time. They are perpetually changing them, and shifting quarters from one end of the eighty mile long archipelago to the other. The French will therefore have no means of identifying a noted robber captain. Moreover,

the moment a cruiser is sighted the junks make full sail for the mainland. If they cannot baffle pursuit among the islands, or vanish into one of their retreats, they run their junks aground fling the cannon overboard to be fished up some other day, and jump into the shallow water with their arms and what else they can carry off, to wade on shore and disappear among the hills, where the sailors landed have not the faintest chance of coming up with them. The Annamese fishermen and woodcutters stand in far too great awe of their neighbours, and have, perhaps, too much sympathy with them to give the slightest aid or information. Quang-Yen will prove as troublesome to the French as the Black Flag country on the upper Song coe, and will be as long in being tranquillized.

The frontier question here, too, will be an endless source of trouble. If the south coast of the province is infested by pirates, the north will be scarcely less troublesome with its nest of smugglers. From Cape Pak-Lung round the Hainan Straits the coast is deeply indented, but it is no longer protected by the curtain of rocks and islands which cover the southern seaboard. The most important islands at the top of the gulf are the low flats which lie in the huge estuaries of the rivers running past the Chinese prefectural towns of LIEN-CHAO and YAM-CHAO. The coast here is tame. Cape Pak-Lung is the nominal limit on the north of the Tongking coast. This is certainly picturesque enough, but that seems to be the only advantage it offers as a frontier mark. It is a narrow and sharply-pointed tongue of land, running far out to sea, and abruptly breaking the coastline. Black, savage, and abrupt, Pak-Lung has long given up to the raging waves all it ever will give. Its granite sides stretch deep down into the sea, and are worn smooth

with innumerable tempests. There is not a patch of green on its flanks, only a cap of clouds on the summit, countless flocks of sea birds, and a score of fisherman's cockle-shells tossing on the waves below.

The view to the west at low tide is singular in its abruptness of contrast with this savage grandeur. As far as the eye can see extends a huge sand flat, with a few shallow channels breaking through the monotony of the expanse. The scene there is impressive in its solitude; not a sound is to be heard, not a living thing to be seen; the waves themselves seem to be dead, and run noiselessly up the yellow sands. But gradually the tide mounts, the water seems to ooze up through the sand, and at last the huge bay of OANH-XUAN is a vast sheet of water. Junks which have been anchored up at the mouth of the VAI HAN-Long river put to sea, and fishermen with their nets come out in thousands all over the shallow bay—some from the river, some from behind the island of VAN-MI, where they live in their boats all their lives.

Behind this island the Chinese province of KWANG-TUNG runs down to the sea and shuts off all the Annamese country round OANH XUAN Bay from the rest of the province of QUANG-YEN, which here ends at the PAK-LAM river. The PAK LAM marks the boundary line on its course from the north, where the "Ten Thousand Mountains" form a range, carrying the frontier on to the Lang son province. It is evident that this intervention of a strip of Chinese coastline between two portions of Annamese territory is likely to cause endless quarrels and vexations. There is a Chinese town immediately opposite MONG-KAI. This is the joy of the illicit trader's heart. If he is cheating the Chinese customs he runs into MONG-KAI. If he is doing honest trade he sails his

junk into 'LONG-HIN-KAI. The one is in 'Tongking, the other in China, but both are, to all intents and purposes, Chinese towns. The geographical complication is rendered worse by the few almost uninhabited islands which lie off the mile or two of Chinese coast, and connect the main body of QUANG-YEN with the PAK-LUNG section.

MONG KAI is the recognized port of the Chinese rebels who have established themselves in 'Tongking, and have given up simple robbery for elaborate roguery. It is situated on the island of VAN-NINH, immediately opposite the mouth of the PAK LAM river: One goes up between the mainland and this island into an apparent barren waste, where not a human being is to be seen. Suddenly, without the least warning, the whole town of MONG KAI opens out. The first glance shows that, though it may be on 'Tongking soil, it is no Annamese town. Annamese villages are wretched thatched huts. MONG KAI is built of solid brick, with the heavy Celestial tiled roof. It has a comfortable and substantial air which is quite striking. There is hardly a house that has not at its gable ends a dragon-headed gutter spout, its verandah decked with flower-pots its doorway topped with a fresco portraying a tree with a moral saying from an ancient philosopher inscribed on a scroll in its branches. The doors are secured with solid planks and huge bamboos which laugh at housebreakers. Outside is the little altar let into the wall, where tapers and incense sticks are burnt daily to joss, to bring the blessings of heaven on the worthy owner. Everybody in China is pious down to the plate. Indeed he needs what Abbé Iluc called *banalités sur la morale* and joss-paper burning more than anybody else, for he lives constantly in the midst of dangers from brother rogues and over-scrupulous officials.

The streets are quiet and orderly as becomes the haunts of moneyed men. The inhabitants move about busily with English silk umbrellas from Hong Kong, and dressed as well as any substantial trader of Queen's Road in Victoria, in long coats of blue, or French grey, or white according to the season, and with trim brocaded shoes and natty white stockings. Not a Hongkinese to be seen, except a coolie or two and the Chinamen's wives. No officials of any kind except the Kong-sen, the Chinese merchant guild. The business houses have a number of coolies who form the municipal police and walk the street at night beating their bamboo staves together to show that they are not sleeping on watch, calling out the hour, announcing that there are no thieves about, and that there is no house on fire. Every hundred yards or so one comes across extensive godowns, where are stored up goods stolen and carried off from all parts of the gulf—balls of opium, bales of silk and cotton, rice, salt, peanut oil, tea, cinnamon—all the produce of the neighbouring countries. These are separated and heaped up together, for Mong-kai does no paltry counter business. Nothing but full cargoes can be got from the business like allies of the pirate and the smuggler. Here and there also are training houses for the kidnapped women, mostly Annamese, where they are educated up to Chinese ways, taught accomplishments, and spruced up for the market.

On the other side of the creek, in KWANG-TUNG territory, at TONG-HIN KAI, there is not a trace of either business or riches. The place is a borough of the prefectural town of YAM CHAO, and the potty mandarin there is a man of easy conscience and large views on the subject of morality. He does not forget that he is the Emperor's servant and responsible to the provincial

authorities, but he is equally alive to the fact that the MONG KAI traders are wealthy and powerful people, and acts accordingly. He often crosses the creek to see his friends on the Annamese side, and is always most cordially received; for no honour is too great to be paid to the man who lets loaded junks pass up the PAK-LAM river, and looks on pleasantly at rich caravans that take the YAM CHAO road. TONG-HIN-KAI has always had a garrison of a few hundred soldiers, who have made the place turbulent and filthy beyond description. From their ranks has sprung many a pirate to help to fill the MONG-KAI store-sheds, and over the PAK-LAM passed many a Canton militiaman into Tongking in 1883 and 1884.

There is an Annamese mandarin in the island of VAN-NINH, but he never ventures to trouble the MONG KAI Chinamen, and would not long be there if he did. He lives at a wretched PAU, a mile or so east of MONG KAI, and named after the island. It is a hamlet of a score or more of rickety mud hovels, where the least rain turns the paths into a noisome heap of mud a foot deep. Naked urchins, with ulcers all over their bodies, wallow in the filth with the pigs; their parents are mere bundles of rags, and the only approach to traffic in the place are the little bamboo sheds in front of the houses, whence a handful of *sapèques* would buy up the entire stock-in-trade. Were it not for the abundance of fish in the bay they would all starve to death. The Annamese official lives in a *soi-disant* fort, and is almost as dirty and ragged as his fellow-countrymen. He also occasionally visits MONG-KAI, and does his best to make himself agreeable to the Chinamen by requisitioning the Annamese fishermen when they are in want of coolies. For this he gets an occasional dinner, and stomachs, for

the sake of the bellyful which he cannot get at home, the scoffs and flouts of his mocking hosts.

To secure the peace of Quang-Yen, France will have to destroy MONG KAI, and not only MONG-KAI, but a score of other Chinese towns planted in Tongkinese territory. Before she has effected this and for long years after, she will have had many a sanguinary fight with the dispossessed pirates and their allies and brothers, the outlaws and bandits from the West River. Embroilment with China will scarcely be avoided, and France will have deep cause for regret that she did not leave a neutral band between her new *protégés* and South China



CHAPTER XV.

THE TIRAILLEURS' ANNAMITES.

THE conduct of the native auxiliary troops in Tongking was a matter of very great interest throughout the campaign. They were of two classes. There were the regularly drilled men from Cochin China, who had gone through a systematic course of military instruction, and were commanded by French commissioned and non-commissioned officers, whom they knew, and most of whom could speak a certain amount of the vernacular. These troops were for the greater part chosen especially for their efficiency and loyalty to the French flag. Besides these there were the Tongkinese levies, raised cautiously at first, during the autumn of 1883, only from among the native Christians, but, after the capture of SONTRAY, drawn from the general mass of the people, without regard either to district or religious beliefs. As compared with the SAIGON troops, they naturally laboured under great disadvantages. There was little time to drill them, and the number of sergeants, whether French or Cochin Chinese, who could be spared as instructors, was necessarily very small. As soon as the men had learned

the elements of field exercise, and knew how to manage their guns, they were hurried off into active service, where, except when there was actual fighting, they were mostly employed on fatigue duty, and were, in fact, little better than a superior class of coolies. Many of them had no doubt seen Europeans for the first time within the year, and naturally stood in great awe of them. In addition to this there is sufficient difference between the Annamese of Tongking and of Cochin China to make it very difficult for the few officers who had even a moderate knowledge of the language to comprehend or to make themselves comprehended. This however, though a great trouble to the French, only made the question more interesting to the outside observer. One saw the whole process of the conversion of peasants into soldiers, for the Saigon men certainly were soldiers, not mere men with guns.

Hitherto the natives of Indo-China have been looked upon as singularly bad material for soldiers. It is not that they want courage. They frequently display a daring and fortitude which is much more rarely found among Westerns. But they, no less than the Chinese, have perhaps been too much assumed to be incapable of discipline. The Chinese army is little better than a rabble, and is hardly less a subject for jest now than it was in the old days, when the warriors carried shields with hideous goblins painted on them, and beat gongs and yelled in order to scare the enemy, just as the old Annamese soldiery put on horrible masks, fiery beards, fantastic head dresses, and theatrical uniforms. Chinese Gordon's force had a very considerable amount of military value, but discipline was only maintained in it by the most drastic measures, and the infliction of punishments so stern that they could only be possible

in the face of the enemy. Concerning LI HUNG CHIANG'S body guard, we can only say that it would be very disappointing if it did not turn out immeasurably superior to the rest of the Imperial army. Beyond this it is impossible to say anything, for it has never been employed on service that can reasonably be called serious warfare. The efficiency of the French Indo-Chinese troops is therefore a matter which may well attract the attention of China's great statesmen.

It is not less a matter of importance to us. After the second Burmese war we made an attempt to raise a Burmese regiment, but the experiment turned out a most lamentable failure. The men would not learn their drill. They were, however, particularly apt in picking up mischievous habits, and soon became a terror to the country-side, so that every one was relieved when, after a few months' existence, the Pogu Light Infantry was disbanded. Since then Burmans have only been employed by the Government to make very inefficient policemen. It is the same thing in Independent Burma. King Theebaw, no less than his father, keeps up a staff of officers, mostly Frenchmen, to drill his soldiers into efficiency, but, nevertheless, the Mandalay army is only effective for show purposes. As a spectacle there has never been anything produced on the European stage which can surpass a royal review in King Theebaw's capital. The Siamese army is equally a farce. The great majority of one regiment goes about with shackles round their ankles, to prevent desertion, and discipline is non-existent. In the rest of Indo China there are no armies.

This development of an Annamese army is therefore likely to be a standing menace to all the surrounding states, and cannot altogether be a matter of indifference

to us. Without being alarmist, one cannot help remarking that every Frenchman who writes about Cochin China draws attention to the ease with which troubles may be created for England on the Siamese and Burmese frontiers, should a difference ever arise between us. Hardly less important, from the point of view of our merchants, are the designs against Siam, the SHAN States, and in fact the whole of Indo-China, which France entertains, and indeed takes no trouble whatever to conceal. These countries she could easily conquer with her native army, backed by at most a company or so of home troops and a couple of batteries of artillery. It would decidedly be for the good, not only of the SHAN States, but of Siam even, to be thus brought *within the influences of civilization*; but it is by no means so certain that it would be to the advantage of our manufacturing industries. In the present temper of France she seems little likely to throw open her new colonies or protectorates to the commerce of the world. Heavy duties are talked of, and it is possible that a French protectorate over Siam would mean a hamper on our present existing trade rather than the development of one of those new markets which our manufacturers are looking for so eagerly. It is certain that up to the present the French settlement at Haiphong has not tended to the expansion of our commerce.

We have no wish to take over the government or the protection of Siam, nor have we any hankering after extension of territory in the SHAN States. It would be much more satisfactory if these places had a good government of their own, and would admit our industrial productions on equitable terms. As long as France had to send troops from Europe to carry out her colonizing schemes, there was a guarantee that aggression

would proceed at a speed no more rapid than has been the case within the last two decades. Now, however, that she has a native army, already large and capable of enlargement at will, it is full time that Siam more especially should set about putting her house in a less temptingly defenceless situation.

The rapid growth of this corps of *Linh-Tap*, or Annamese light infantry, is interesting. From the very first year of the conquest of Cochin China, France has kept in view this scheme of a native army. A company of Annamese Christians, raised at Tourane, some thirty miles south of Hué fought with bravery at the taking of Saigon. Their religion bound these men to the French, for King Tu Duc was a great persecutor. The idea, however, thus begun was immediately expanded. Admiral CHARNER made an attempt to raise a regiment from amongst the *Don-Dien*. The *Don-Dien* were very much like the *emphyteuta* of the old Roman frontier provinces. They were poor settlers who, in return for the usufruct of certain lands, had to render military service in time of war. Under the old Annamese rule they numbered as many as 10,000. There were twenty-four regiments in the six *Grav-Dien* provinces, though the enrolment of the force only dated from 1835. The admiral's efforts did not meet with very great success, notwithstanding that he made them drink the "water of the oath" in the regular national fashion. After an existence of five months the corps was disbanded. A large number emigrated to Annam, and the rest entered the ranks of the newly devised body of *Maias*.

It is from this corps of *Maias*, policemen, or rather *gens-d'armes*, in so far as the French civilian guardians differ from the English, that the regiment of native light infantry has grown. In their enrolment recourse

was had to the old mandarin forms. Each village was required to furnish to the governor of the district a specified number of men chosen from the village roster. The local headmen, with whom the selection lay, made the family of the conscript pay a certain amount towards his support as a *MATA*, and they in return were relieved from a corresponding amount of taxes. Volunteers were also allowed, and the headman usually entered into a contract with these, furnishing them with a sum of money to be repaid when practicable. The *MATAS* of every circle thus raised were assembled in the local capitals for instruction in their duties. They were then drafted, according to capacity, into one of the two branches of the force. The first company usually numbered fifty men, and was employed on active duties, keeping guard at military posts and generally moving to whatever place was necessary, for the suppression of local disturbances or the maintenance of order. They were thus extremely valuable in saving the French soldiers from petty little expeditions, which were arduous and exhausting enough, to Europeans, in a tropical climate. The other company was much more numerous, and was stationary. Its duties were to supply a guard to the civilian administrator, to guard the gaols, to ensure the safe transmission of the mails, and generally to do local police work.

From this force, which was formerly under civilian management, has been created the regiment of *Tu-ai-leurs Annamites*. As a regiment they are not very old. The decree forming the two battalions of LINH-TAP only dates from March 15, 1880, and it may be said that there was really no change in their duties till their employment in the Tongking campaign. They kept guard during the day at the Saigon Government Palace, at the

baracks and the arsenal and elsewhere, leaving the night sentry go to the French troops. They were perhaps more finished in their drill, and had much more musketry practice, but otherwise they were simply the old Maras with a military command. Now they have received their baptism of fire and have gained confidence in themselves.

The enrolment is carried on just as before. If a man deserts and this is very far from being an uncommon occurrence—his village has to pay a fine and supply a man in his place. There is therefore a general public desire to find out the defaulter, and the French Government has the best of guarantees that the effective will be kept up to its proper strength. A proper standard of physique is also ensured by the inspection of every recruit by a standing committee, consisting of the civil administrator of the district, an officer of the corps, and a surgeon. The chief of the man's canton is also required to be present to represent the village interests. Everything is thus done to prevent the drafting of woody men into the force, and at the same time to check the efforts of jobbing headmen. A man who is refused by the committee of inspection must be immediately replaced by his village.

Their uniform is very neat, and very well suited both to national characteristics and to military exigencies. It consists of short, loose trousers, white in garrison, dark blue or black on service, a dark-blue compromise between a tunic and the national coat, a broad scarlet sash wound round the waist under the coat, with the ends falling down in front, and a dandy little flat bamboo hat, with a metal boss on the top bearing the government stamp and the date of issue. This attractive little head-dress, about the

diameter of a dinner plate, is tilted slightly forward by the hair tied up in a chignon at the back of the head, and a red ribbon, fixed to the boss, passes under the chignon and keeps the whole firm in its place. The whole effect is wonderfully picturesque. *On doit un régiment de femmes.* They have almost a light opera appearance. They are armed with the light *gendarmérie* carbines of the 1874 model, with the sword bayonet, and keep their weapons in most excellent order. The European officers and non commissioned officers are drawn from the *Infanterie de Marine*, and retain the uniform of their branch of the service. The native officers, of whom there are a few, wear a dress which is a kind of mixture between the French and the native, and serves to accentuate the happiness of the inspiration which hit upon the uniform worn by the line. The Europeans receive an addition to their regular pay as members of the Colonial army, the expense being borne by Cochin China. They are bound to remain three years with the regiment, and are then, so far as the native army is concerned, perfectly free. One cannot help thinking that there is considerable room for reform here. Three years is a very short time in which to learn the manners and character of a people like the Annamèse, to say nothing whatever of their language. The system which permits an officer, or even forces him after having completed his regular term of service in the Saigon provinces to go to an entirely different country, like Senegal or Guiana, is a most wanton wasting of force. There are, indeed, instances in which officers have been allowed to remain for a lengthened period, with results which one would have thought must have convinced the authorities of the advantages to be derived from it; but it is too often the case that officers, even the

most able, are compulsorily retired, or called off to the other end of the world. The difficulty no doubt lies in the constitution of the French army. There is no possibility of getting officers to volunteer from France for the native troops. They have therefore to be drawn from the *Infanterie de Marine*, and impair the effective of that force; besides that, they still remain under the orders of the Minister of Marine, and may at any time be ordered to proceed to any place under his jurisdiction, to New Caledonia or Guiana, to Senegal or Martinique; and the mischief is that this applies as well to the non-commissioned officers as to their superiors. The most obvious remedy would be to permit all those who enter the native army to be exempt from the necessity of going the round of the other colonies. Possibly, however, some other arrangement may be devised which would press less heavily on those who spend the term in New Caledonia.

For long there was a very great difference of opinion as to the military value of the *Tirailleurs*. Against their immediate neighbours they had displayed no lack of courage. They had a large part in the suppression of local risings and in the fighting in Cambodia. They joined the body guard of various French exploring parties, notably in the great expedition of Commandant Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier, and showed themselves faithful and capable of sustained exertion. But there were those, even among their own officers, who declared that this was no test. The enemy they had to meet was miserably armed, and certainly in no greatly superior force; and, moreover, there had always been Frenchmen at hand to give them support and confidence. It would be vastly different, it was asserted, when they had to meet an enemy armed equally well with themselves, and

especially would it be doubtful how they would bear themselves when they had to meet Chinamen, no matter how armed

The profound respect which the Annamese have for the Chinamen is most extraordinary. The Chinaman is looked up to by all the nations in the East, as indeed they are incomparably the finest race in the East from whatever standpoint one chooses to regard them—intellectual, industrial, or merely physical. But nowhere in Siam, Burma, the Straits, or even in India, are they looked upon with this almost superstitious reverence, which in Tongking actually shows itself in the tone of voice in which a mandarin is referred to. Except in Tongking and at CHOLON, the Chinese Saigon, and infinitely the wealthiest part of it, there are, if we look at the neighbouring countries, comparatively few Celestials in the Annamese territories. In Annam proper the mandarins actually tried to keep them out as much as possible, and limited their places of residence to Hué and its suburbs, and a few coast ports. The Chinamen had nothing to protect them but their pride of race and their absolutely crushing superiority to the people of the country. But that was enough. They walked erect through the streets, and gave way to nobody, great or small, mandarins or mandarins' men, the latter being perhaps the more wonderful achievement of the two. They married all the prettiest women, and got all the commerce. They talked in terms of the most contemptuous pity of the natives of the country, and were only the more respected for it. Even the Annamese of Saigon had the same feelings of awe for the Chinaman. They saw the French soldiers with their guns and artillery, the ships of war, the palatial public buildings, and the spacious dwelling-houses, the products of Western

industry and art, and they were told that Saigon was nothing to compare with France. They merely shook their heads. China, too, had her palaces, bigger and more gorgeous; the Chinaman's house was finer and more commodious; he did more commerce even in Saigon than the Frenchman. The Chinamen were infinitely more numerous, and as for wealth there was no comparison. They had no telegraphs, and their warships did not go all over the world, but they had made many inventions. They could take advantage of those of other people, and no doubt would if they saw fit, all in their own good time. Meanwhile they were "elder brothers" to their brethren of Annam. Their Emperor gave authority to his majesty of Annam to reign, and it was a *sine quâ non* of the existence of a Hur' mandarin that he should speak Chinese. Chinese usages were followed, and the Chinese Book of Rites regulated all the doings of the country. Therefore the Chinaman was looked upon as a relative, a slightly overbearing one, perhaps, but still a "brother" according to the elastic Oriental term. He was not a foreigner, he was a friend. All other nationalities were regarded as foreigners, and therefore to be hated and at the same time, as national weakness was forced to admit, to be feared.

The employment of the *Tirailleurs* in the Tongking campaign was therefore a momentous experiment, and there were not a few who maintained that it was a very perilous one. As a matter of fact very few indeed were sent at first, and then only after very careful selection. At the taking of the citadel of Hanoi in April, 1882, by Commandant Rivière, there were only five and twenty of the native auxiliaries, under a French lieutenant, engaged. They conducted themselves creditably enough,

and demonstrated to admiration that they had no scruples whatever against killing any number of their fellow countrymen. Still, however, it was not contemplated to greatly increase their number until the disaster at PHU-HOAI on May 19, 1888, when Commandant Rivière was killed. Then the desperate state of Hanoi, and indeed of the French garrisons all over Tongking, forced the immediate despatch of whatever troops could be spared from Cochin China; and large reinforcements of the *Trailleurs* were sent, despite the supposed risk. It was only with caution that they were opposed to the Black Flags at first, but they displayed so much steadiness in their first few brushes with them, that confidence was soon established, and, after the capture of Sontay, they had, if anything, more than their share of the fighting, such as it was. Nevertheless, throughout the whole operations fear of Hué influences prevented the despatch of native officers. There was but one, *sous lieutenant* Ngün, who made the campaign, and he was so young that he had been born a French subject. Even now, when the *Trailleurs Annamites* have been retired to Saigon, it is not contemplated to draft into the *Trailleurs Tongkinois* any higher officers than Cai and Doi, corporals and sergeants. The Annamese are, however, nothing, if not intriguing, and possibly the French civilians are right, though the arrangement is very humiliating to the native officers, and hardly likely to lead to the recruiting of the best class of native gentlemen.

- As mentioned above, it is hardly fair to compare the Tongkinese levies with the Cochin Chinamen. They had had no drill to speak of, and they were dressed in a most hideous streaky blue uniform, with a singularly ugly red, white, and blue tipped bamboo, soup tureen-

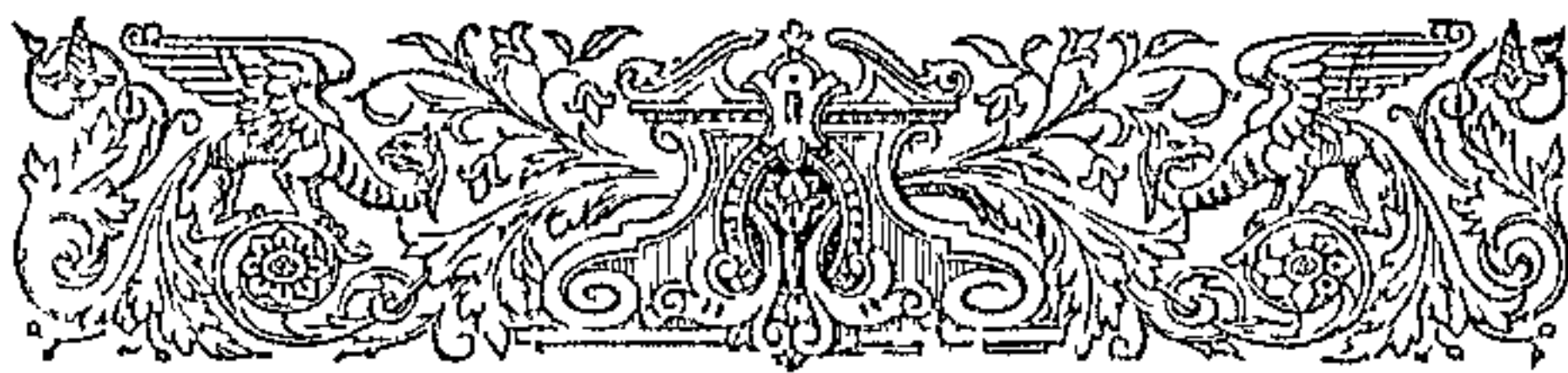
like hat. The number of their company, sowed in red tape on a white oval on the left chest, dealt the final blow at any hopes they might have had of presenting a soldier like appearance. The Saigon men, with new-born pride, persistently called them policemen, and the French troops rather ungratefully encouraged the depreciation by styling them *Bashi Bazouks*. Nevertheless, considering the short time they had been under arms, they gave considerably more promise than the men from the south. They are finer men in every way—in height, strength, and manliness—and, when it came to heavy marching, they simply walked the Cochin Chinamen off their legs. Qualities like these, taking the circumstances into account, might well be set off against some awkwardness offensive to the military eye. They might occasionally carry their carbine as if it were a bamboo pole or a piece of baggage that had to be got along somehow; but they were invaluable in covering the flank of the army and preventing surprises—precisely the points in which the native troops were most useful. Perhaps the best thing the native *Tirailleurs* did was at the capture of YEN-TR. General Buière de l'Isle's column had been on the march since the early morning, and had covered considerably over twenty miles when the advance guard sighted the citadel at five o'clock in the afternoon. It would be dark at six, so that if the troops were not to sleep outside it was necessary to be expeditious. The advance guard was composed as usual entirely of the native troops. There were eighty of the *Tirailleurs Annamites* and forty *Longkmeso*. The march had to be quickened latterly, and the van was considerably beyond its distance from the Turcos, who were, moreover, in Indian file. Nevertheless the *Tirailleurs* were immediately deployed, and commenced and sus-

tained the attack for nearly half an hour unaided. The Chinamen had got the range from the walls, and a sally party came to within three hundred yards, and kept up a galling fire from an admirable shelter. Nevertheless the men never flinched, and the Tongkinese were quite as steady in their volley firing as their more practised compatriots. When, finally, the artillery got into position and silenced the Chinamen, and the Turcos extended the advanced line on the right, a general advance was sounded. Without the least flurry or breaking of line the *Tirailleurs* went to the assault with the most admirable *élan*, scaled the walls and opened the gates to the Turcos, to the ineffable disgust of the burly Algerians.

None the conduct of the Tongkinese was quite as steady and worthy of praise as that of the older troops, and three days later it was one of the "coolie brigade" who first hoisted the tricolor on the *minaret* of THAI NGUYEN. Such comparisons are, however, unprofitable. Enough has been said to show that the French have the material for a most admirable Colonial army, one which will not be so showy as the Algerian *Tirailleurs*, but which, in its disciplined steadiness under fire, will be likely to accomplish much more than the Turco does with his wild, brutish charges, splendidly brave if you will, but just as likely to do harm to the general plan of action as not.

The result of this French attempt is most interesting, and should be most suggestive to the neighbouring nations. Of all in Indo China the Annamese is the least warlike. Under sized and devoid of muscle, he is slim even to effeminacy. The Siamese are no great athletes, but nature has made them physically better men than at any rate the Cochin Chinamen. Yet the whole Siamese army, "water" cavalry included, would

be crumpled up by one battalion of the *Tirailleurs Annamites*. Between the sturdy Cambodian, or the thick-set man of the SIAM States and the Annamese, there is no comparison, yet the Cambodians went down like reeds before a buffalo when they met the *Tirailleurs* in a much less efficient state than they are now. But it is especially China which should take note of the French experiment. The Middle Kingdom is an essentially peaceful country, and will never go in for a career of conquest; but she does want to be able to protect herself against wanton attacks. Drilled Chinamen would be as superior to the Annamese infantry as the disciplined *Tirailleur* is to the fierce but erratic Black L'ag. It is too lightly assumed that the Chinaman is incapable of being subjected to a regular course of drill, and that he grows restive under anything like sustained discipline; but the same thing was said in Cochin China. 'The Celestial has a much better balanced mind than any of his neighbours, and in capable hands he would make as good a soldier as he is a merchant.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY.

THE Tongkinese belong to the yellow race, the Indo-Chinese stock and the Annamese family, which occupies a place midway between the Chinese and the Malayan branch. They are taller than the Annamese, better shaped, and with a smaller head set on a less lanky neck; but nevertheless they are far from being well-grown, and are agile rather than strong. Like their brethren of the south, they are brachycephalous, with a low forehead, this being always the narrowest part of the skull. The facial angle is, however, fairly good. The exterior angle of the eye is certainly not so much tilted as the Chinaman's. The cheek-bones, on the other hand, are much higher than the Celestial's. The nose is a very bad feature; it is very broad, and the depression above is so great that there is practically no bridge at all. One cannot avoid the idea, in fact, that an Annamese nose is the sort of thing one might make with three fingers and a piece of bread. There is a slight tendency to prognathism, but not so strongly marked as in Cochin China. This appearance is often

fortuitously exaggerated amongst the women of the lower class. In order to prevent their huge hat from blowing off on a windy day, they pass the ribbon across their under-lip and throw the jaw downwards and forward. Constant habit often makes them do this even when they have no hat on, and the result is a semi-idiotic and altogether hideous appearance, especially when the teeth are black and the gums red with betel-juice. The chin itself is usually short and well-shaped, and the ears are very large and project in a most unsightly way. The teeth are large, and, as already hinted, are dyed black with a kind of lacquer by almost all except the children and the unmarried women. The effect is singularly disgusting, and from a little distance suggests the idea that they have no teeth at all. The limbs are well-shaped, but the feet are very ugly. There is absolutely no instep; they are large, and are apparently the same thickness all over, as if they were cut out of a plank of wood. The hands are also very long and narrow, and the finger joints are obtusely knotted. As with the Chinese and Siamese, it is a mark of rank to allow the nails to grow long, and the women very often tint them rose-colour, with far from comely results. Like almost all Eastern nations, the set of their legs is altogether spoilt by the way they are carried in childhood by their mothers, straddled across the hips. This, together with a peculiar wide setting of the hip-joints and the size of their feet, make them walk in a very ungainly way, the feet being very much turned out. The chest and stomach are very much thrown forward; the legs are not bent, and the feet scarcely lifted off the ground. In the men this gives the idea of a kind of swagger, in the women a lack of modesty. In colour the Tongkinese does not greatly differ from his neighbours to the south. He is

always a kind of dirty yellow, but the depth of the shade varies a great deal according to his occupation. The mandarins and the women of the better class are something near the tint of a wax candle, while the rice farmer is as dark as a dead oak leaf. The hair is black and fine; both men and women let it grow to its full length, tying it up in a knot at the back of the head. The heads of the children are shaved, but afterwards the hair is never cut and very seldom washed, with results which give all classes, high and low, of both sexes, abundant occupation. King Tu Duc once issued an order that members of his court were not to search for vermin in one another's hair in the presence of the French officers who commanded the ships presented to him after the treaty of 1874. The men seldom manage to grow a beard before the age of thirty, and then it is but a poor thing. The moustache is very scanty, and the bristles which grow on the chin and under-lip could be counted without any extraordinary effort of patience. In this respect perhaps the Tongkinese is worse off than his compatriots to the south.

In mental capacity the Tongkinese is certainly behind the Cochin Chinaman. His intelligence is of the most primitive kind, and he cannot get beyond the most obvious subjective ideas. The Saigonesc may certainly have been brightened up by their contact with the French, as they undoubtedly have been deteriorated morally very much more even than is invariably the case when Easterns come under the influence of Europeans but it seems indisputable that they really have better natural abilities than the men of Tongking. The character of both, however, is lamentably bad. They are without any sort of education or instruction. Their religious sense is extremely blunt, and they appear

to have no moral sense at all. They make light of evil, and scoff at all idea of good. They are as incapable of any great vices as they are of any great actions. They have been roundly asserted to have "no character at all," and are therefore far from being an interesting study. They are, in fact, like the country which they inhabit, a bastard cross between the Chinese and the aborigines.

Their principal faults have no doubt been aggravated by the way in which they have been ground down ever since the annexation of the country to Annam in the beginning of the century. All of the *Li* family, the *Tongking* dynasty, that could be got hold of were put to death, and with them the native mandarins. Of the rest of the people, all such as were in any way above the common rank, whether in wealth or education, and who might therefore have led the people against their conquerors, were equally ruthlessly exiled, persecuted, or put to death on any or no pretext. Rebellions only increased the sternness of the *liu* rule. The ignorance and crassness of the *Tongkinese*, therefore, partly arises from the fact that they never have been taught. Their timidity and hypocrisy were accentuated by the free way in which torture was exercised by the mandarins. Their incorrigible and unblushing habits of lying arose from the same cause. The improvidence which distinguishes them even more than it does most of the Indo-Chinese races was due to the circumstance that any man who was suspected of having money laid by was exposed to the rapacity of the mandarins and all the horrors which followed in its train. The soil may have been very bad, but circumstances have helped to make it very much worse than it was intended to be, though one cannot imagine that nature was even at any time proud of the Annamese.

Ignorance and lying and clinging to it, however, there is room for great divergence of opinion about the Annamese race. They are sober, but that is very much because they cannot get a supply of liquor. The mandarins are terribly dissolute, and the ordinary villager, when he gets a chance to drink a little, goes on till he can drink no more, or until the supply of *Suam-Suam*, rice attack, runs out. They are industrious. They work in a way that few other Orientals, except the Chinese, work; but that is because they would starve if they did not work. There are few uncultivated acres in the Tongking delta, but the population is denser than in many parts of Europe, and to feed the mouths the ground must be tilled and the rivers diligently fished. The Annamese cannot make his wife do everything, and he is pretty steadily to be seen out in the fields, and there are some travellers who give him a vast deal of credit for it. Now that a less rapacious rule is going to make Tongking the wealthy country it should be, it is probable that the native will devote his energies to the perfection of his already considerable ability in steering. The state of affairs as it would be if the Annamese had the ordering of the matter is to be seen when he goes out in his boat. Then his wife and daughters row, and he steers, unless he has a spare six or eight-year-old; then he sleeps.

There are those who view the intelligence with which the Annamese is frequently credited with strong scepticism. He has certainly a remarkably quick power of imitation. But this is dubious. The question is whether this talent is merely a kind of instinct or rudimentary intelligence, what the French are fond of calling *sagacité*, the cleverness of the ape, who speedily learns to do things which wiser animals never attempt. Unfor-

Unfortunately this imitative capacity is ordinarily very ill-directed. In Tongking the native has hitherto had little chance of having good models, or indeed models of any kind set before him; but the Cochin Chinaman has had abundance of opportunity and time for improvement. He has made but very little use of it. Intelligence is developed by study, but the study must be of reasonable matter. The Saigonesse does not care to study Western literature or Western sciences. He has the imitative power, and he takes what is the easiest to him; he imitates French manners and customs, or what he considers to be such; for it would be cruel to say that the result is even an ape-like copy of the *grande nation*. Nevertheless he calls himself and his fellow-countrymen the French of the East, and it is unnecessary to quarrel with the title. An Annamese of very considerable talent and acquirements, the best the country has produced in fact, M. PIERRE TRUNG-VINA-KY, says in this connection: "The Annamese, in spite of their reserve and shyness, are gay, and love raillery, joking, laughter, plays on words, mockery, and criticism. They have also a considerable power of irony, satire, and ridicule. They scoff and banter by turns. Besides this they are vain, ostentatious, and given to luxury. . . . It is for this reason that, in the relations of ordinary life, we say that the character of the Annamese is that of the Frenchman, except for the habits resulting from the education of each." It is difficult to say whether the learned gentleman meant this passage to be a specimen of his own personal ability in quizzing. •

The men of Annam and Tongking have not had the opportunity of making studies from the person in this way. Those of them that do study, pore over the Book of Rites and the works of Confucius, and perfect them-

selves in the knowledge of the laws of immemorial custom. All their efforts are directed to mastering the conditions which govern their society, an arbitrary government, where the *patrie potestas* rules all, where the king is T'ien-T'ue, son of heaven, and the people are his children. The early legislators proclaimed filial piety to be the corner-stone of the existence of kingdoms and the welfare of society. The Book of Rites says "If you would plant mutual affection in the empire, begin by cherishing father and mother; your example will teach the people union and concord." The sovereign is son of heaven, and must profess for heaven the same regard which the heavenly mandate gives him the right to exact from his subjects. So the duties of the father of the family towards the mandarins are the same as those of the children towards the head of the family. The whole thing is as regular as the steps of a ladder. The results to the national and to the family character have been exceedingly bad.

The arbitrary system of government, aided by the national vices, has developed to an almost incredible extent the science of turpitude, intrigue, and chicanery; and analogy leads to the free practice of all these in private relations. Where then interests are at stake the Annamese show plenty of resource and intelligence, but their ability in this respect does not commend itself to those who have anything to do with them, whether they are moral men or not. Lying, knavery, and intrigue are the fundamental conditions of the existence and advancement of mandarins, and they become natural through constant practice. They could give points to the acutest diplomatists and the most skilled Phrynes. The mass of the people, in their capacity of pious children, do their best to follow the lead set them by their rulers.

There are in fact but two classes—the lettered class which rules, and the people who obey passively and implicitly. There is no such thing as an aristocracy or the middle-class. The mandarins are all chosen, as in China, by public examination, and, technically, any one is eligible. There is, however, much jobbing; it is the national characteristic. There is indeed a title—that of Bao, or Ba-Ho which rich merchants are allowed to buy, corresponding to that of *Tuo-Gywr*, “rich man,” at the Burma court. It gives no privileges of any kind, not even the right to carry a big umbrella; but it is a name, and that goes a long way with people so fond of parade as the French of the East. The mandarins, however, are seldom so ill-informed regarding the state of their district as to let any man get rich enough to buy the title. There seems to be only one in all Tong-king, Bao Kin, a man who has the lease of the fisheries in the lake in the centre of Hanoi. Possibly he Tong-Doc, the Governor of Hanoi, did not know the abundance of fish in the lake, or perhaps he was flustered at the time of granting the lease by the “brigands from Saigon,” the title which Hué wit has fastened on the French.

Beyond their deceit and ignorance and dirtiness the people have few salient characteristics. They are attached to their native place—that is to say, the village where they were born; for their wattled mud shanties may be pulled down and rebuilt in a few hours, and are incapable of attracting the regard even of the pigs and fowls which share it with the human inhabitants. This home love, if it can be so called, is largely due to the fact that they must visit periodically the tombs of their ancestors, and proximity saves trouble. Like most people who are on the verge of want all their lives long, they

are hospitable enough and give meals freely to travellers under the conviction that they themselves may probably be some day in the same strait. This same poverty of resources makes them very fond of exchanging presents, which among the country people often assume a ludicrously Lilliputian character. It is a common custom to treat of business matters at table, which also tends to raise the character of hospitality. The Annamese code, it may be mentioned, enjoined that weakly orphans should be brought up at the common cost, but they are usually adopted into some family, though barrenness is not a fault that can be reproached against Annamese ladies.

Tongkinese, Annamese, and Cochin Chinese—all of them are very fond of noise and spectacles, theatres and funerals, gaming, fish and cricket and cock fights, which often result in owner fights, though courage is not the characteristic of the nation. Gambling is as great a curse with them as it is with the Chinese, and indeed the Indo-Chinese generally. The Emperor, Chia Long, gave gamblers eighty stripes and executed the gambling housekeeper, but his successors found it more satisfactory to make money out of the matter. One of the few reminiscences of Buddhism they have about them is the fondness for erecting public monuments, pagodas, houses for spirits, wayside resting-places, and altars, on which the founder's name is placed in large characters. Love of distinction of some kind has perhaps more to do with the matter than piety. The Tongkinese are particularly fond of making themselves conspicuous in some way, if it is only as desperate pirates. They have, however, more the spirit of commerce than their neighbours to the south. They work harder and do some amount of huckstering, but they squander the money as soon as

it is made. It is the women who do most of the work. They keep the house, so far as it can be said to be kept; they look after the little shop which every other house in the village has; they prepare the cotton, weave the clothes, thrash and husk the rice, work in the fields, and row the boat; while the husband lolls about, smokes an opium pipe if he can, or a water-pipe if he cannot, or, if even that is too costly for him, then a queer article made out of the root of a bamboo. On the whole they are not a very interesting people. They are simply a pale copy of the Chinese. The flat and monotonous dallas of the Song-chor and the M'keng reproduce their tameness in their inhabitants.

It is, however, a great mistake, which most French writers make, to speak of the conspicuous amiability and placidity of the Annamese. They display very little animation when a foreigner passes by. They look doleful enough and often alarmed enough. But when you can see them in their ordinary village life it is a very different matter. Then they are as excited and voluble as a *dame de la Halle*. Their vocabulary of abuse and filthy language surpasses that of a Coringeo cocho. They all talk at once, and each tries to outshout his neighbour, and tears his hair when he finds himself bawled down. The Annamese is meek and tranquil only before those whom he fears, and then his humility is nothing but hypocrisy, for he makes fun of himself and the man who has scared him, as soon as that personage is gone. The children look, and are, more intelligent than their elders, but their quick-wittedness develops itself only in iniquity. They lavish the most foul-mouthed abuse on their mothers, and not unseldom try to kick them. It is amusing to see a little smatchet of six or eight ordering about and hectoring a half-dozen

of big blundering coolies, and altogether astonishing to see them do what they are told, sometimes even without grumbling. But it was nothing less than heart-rending during the Tongking campaign to see the aptitude with which the children picked up the worst vices from the worst of the French soldiery. M. Dutreuil de Linois has declared that there is no nation on earth more depraved than the Annamese, and questions which are the worse, the men or the women. The statement is a sweeping one, but one might have agreed with him if he had included Annamese boys.

The Annamese dress is one of the ugliest in the East. Trousers like those of the Chinese, but not quite so wide, a long loose coat with tight sleeves something like a cassock and buttoned on the right-hand side down to the waist—that is the whole. The rich add red leather sandals and a turban; the poor have neither. The colour of the turban (which is a very scanty thing compared with that of a native of India, or even of Burma) is black for the mandarins and the *literati*, red for the old, and blue or green for the young men. The whole dress is of a somber dirty brown-black coloured cotton. There is something radically wrong with the dye used, for no one has ever even passable-looking clothes. The entire body of them look as if they were wearing out their grandfather's wardrobe. The women wear the same dress, but trousers and coat are with them a little longer. Their cassock is also open at the neck, and they wear over the bosom a garment called *Kekouan*, a square piece of bright-coloured silk which is presumably fastened round the body and neck. Except among the poorest the women's dress is silk, and they often put on several coats one above the other, light-blue, green, red, and black, the last, except with coquettes,

always uppermost. White is the mourning colour and the material cotton. They wear as much jewellery as they can get, which is usually very little; but occasionally one sees a damsel blossoming out in a surprising abundance of rings, bracelets, earrings, and pendant necklaces.

When they go out of doors both sexes wear hats. The national Sarako is quite ideally ugly. It is a huge thing like a misshapen candle-extinguisher, not high enough and considerably too broad. Or it may be compared to a bell tent with the sides drawn tight, or a mud pie, or a gunpowder "devil." It is made of straw for the poorer classes, and of fine plaited palm-leaf, varnished over, for the rich. The latter have also a pointed metal boss on the top. It measures two feet in diameter, and comes down over the man's shoulders in a way irresistibly suggestive of the extinguisher. Presumably the Annamese like it, but to every one else the Sarako seems incompatible with dignity of carriage.

The women's Sarako is different. It is flat on the top, has a hanging rim about three inches deep, and measures three feet across. It gives one the idea of a tea-table with a fringe. It also is made of palm-leaf, and has two tassels hanging down to the waist. Annamese women are naturally small, and this huge head-dress still more stunts them. Nevertheless it is not so indecomably hideous as the men's. Both of them serve at once as sunshade and protection against rain, but they are terribly heavy no doubt to keep them from blowing off too easily. Out in the fields, however, both sexes very often wear a much more flimsy article, more loosely put together, and often very ragged-looking when the palm-leaves get loose. This is rounded at the top in a wide elliptical curve, and is ordinarily over two feet

in diameter. The field labourers also very often wear coats made of this same palm-leaf or of reeds, and present a peculiar thatched appearance. This garment has no doubt been introduced from Southern China.

The dirty-looking appearance of the clothes is no doubt inherent in the material. No one appears ever to have a new suit on, except the young women, who are usually kept tolerably neat by their lords and masters. But this appearance of dirtiness is usually materially and consistently aided by the habits of the wearers. They never take their clothes off even to sleep, and when, on state occasions they dress, they simply put the fresh—one cannot reconcile one's self to calling it the clean—suit on the top of the old dirty one. There it remains till it falls to pieces, after having been patched many times with bits of cloth of various shades.

The consequences of their dirtiness appear in the extraordinary abundance of skin diseases, and sores on their limbs. A constant diet of ancient fish and heating food, bad water, marshy plains insufficient protection against the inclemencies of the weather, scrofula, and a variety of other things no doubt aid, but the chief cause is indisputably the uncleanness of the people both in their dress and in their houses. There are extremely few Annamese who have not got an eruption of some kind in some part of the body, and very bad sores are far from uncommon. Eczema and ecthyma are the most common form. The French often get diseases of the kind from the natives, and indeed the *plaie Annamite* is a recognized malady in Saigon otiology.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding their dirtiness, the Annamese are a very ceremonious people. Their etiquette is quite as elaborate as that of China, whence

indeed they have got it. When two men meet in the street, unless they are very intimate, they salute by placing the two hands palm to palm in front of the chest, raising them and lowering them again. The height varies according to the respect to be shown. Before a mandarin an ordinary citizen would raise his joined hands above the head and lower them to the girdle, and in his court he would bow his head into the bargain. This question of *Li*, of salutations, is however so large that it would require a chapter all to itself. Suffice it to say that they vary according as the person saluted is the king, a mandarin of first, second, third, fourth degree, a superior, an equal, a parent, an elder brother, or a younger, and that there are permutations according to the social position of the man who makes the salute. Equal formality extends to the conversation and the language used, as indeed is the case with all the Indo Chinese races. The pronouns of all persons vary according to the age and rank of the individuals concerned. It is even possible to display one's feelings in this way, whether affectionate, indifferent, or hostile. Merely in saying "yes" one uses *Co* to the common people, *Pia* to a gentleman, *Ya* to a superior.

When a man is asked to have a cup of tea or *samshu*, or to eat, or chew betel, the hand is stretched out as if a benediction were being said, and the invitor says, "I hardly dare ask you," *Chia Dam*. The refreshment, whatever it is, must be offered with both hands and accepted in the same way. After eating it is customary to take the chopsticks horizontally in both hands, balanced between the thumbs and the forefinger. Then the hands are raised up to the forehead twice in salute, and the chopsticks placed together on the top of the empty bowl. In Cochin China the seat of honour is at

that part of the table nearest the door. In Tongking it is precisely the reverse. In both, however, the middle of the table is the most distinguished. The Tongkinese say the back of the house is the most honourable, because in the royal audience hall the throne is the farthest from the entrance, and the courtiers are grouped nearer or farther from it according to their rank.

No one, down to the poorest, ever thinks of going out without a servant or follower of some kind. The very beggars have a little child or a woman following them to carry what the charitable may give. Ordinarily the servant carries a neat box in bamboo, inland mother-of-pearl ware, or silver, containing such betel, tobacco, and so on, as may be required. A literate has in addition always a man carrying his writing brush and ink.

As may be imagined, the Annamese, including the Tongkinese, who are the best branch of the race, are beneath contempt, from a military point of view, until they have been taken in hand by regular instructors. The men the French occasionally met during the campaign were armed with ancient match-locks and flint-locks in some places, while in one or two citadels there were a few hundreds of the breech-loading rifles, given to Annam according to the terms of the treaty of 1874. These, however, were so ill-kept that they were useless where they were not dangerous, and in any case the powder used was of more than dubious quality. But by far the greater number had nothing better than huge bamboo spears with inferior iron heads on them, swords • of the same material, which bent with every blow, bows and arrows, and bludgeons. The best they could do was to run into the citadels, shut the gates, and get out at the other side as expeditiously as possible. They were supposed to have some kind of uniform, but were usually so

ragged that it was impossible to make out what it was. The "Tiger" company of Hat-dzuong had a blue and white jacket, and the body-guard of the Hanoi governor were clad in red; but such facts were only to be ascertained by a comparison of many warriors. Their military exercises were of the opera-bouffe character. They would caper about, twist round with one leg in the air, flourish their lances, between twelve and twenty feet long, and cleverly enough manœuvred with both hands. A lance fight is worth seeing. In practice a wooden button is substituted for the head. The two performers menace each other with fierce look, and gestures, make sudden leaps forward, backward, and to either side, advance rapidly on one another and make their thrust, often with such vigour that when it is parried they roll head over heels in the dust, to the delight of the on-lookers. They are on their legs and oft again, however, before the opponent can shorten his spear to make a thrust. After a quarter of an hour or more of this, one of the combatants gets a prod in the side, and then both retire to a neighbouring stall and quaff abundant cups of scalding tea. It is all very funny, but there is no suggestion of anything but absurdity in it.

An eye witness gives the following account of "a battle" between the Imperialists and some Yellow Flags. Both parties halted a long distance off from one another and fired from time to time all their guns, heedless of the fact that the enemy was quite out of range. Now and then the D'z-Doc, or general of division, who was comfortably snuggled up in a hammock, and had cautiously planted his standard in the rear, would have his *tum tum* beaten, and would call out, "Soldiers, have you made up your minds to annihilate this vile foe?" The soldiers lifted up their voices with one

accord, and said "Dxx" (why, certainly). Then they rushed up on the v'lo enemy at full speed, and the v'lo enemy retired a few hundred paces and then stopped, whereupon the Laidy warriors promptly got under cover. It was now the turn of the other side. The Yellow Flag general extracted a similar vow to do or die from his army, and the braves charged with the same valour and with the like result. This sort of thing went on from daybreak to sunset and nobody was hurt. Then a French gunboat came by, and the rival generals promptly concluded a truce. The Annamese commander related that in a previous encounter, where the fighting was very severe, he had one man 'killed et mo dead.'

If they are not formidable fighters, they are certainly not overburdened with religious sense. They are nominally Buddhists, but the Buddhists of Burma, or even of Cambodia, would sternly disown them. Even more than elsewhere the teachings of the master are overgrown with Shamanism. Each family has its own guardian spirit, and exerts what piety it has there. The temples and spirit-houses are spoken of elsewhere. It will be enough to say that the Buddhism is derived from the depraved Chinese form, and that even of this degenerate type only the grossest superstitions are retained. The pagodas, or joss-houses, as they rather should be called, are almost constantly empty. In the Middle Kingdom one constantly sees religious functions going on, and multitudes of worshippers praying. In Annam, understanding Annam to include Tongking as well as Cochin China, one sees nothing but occasional noisy public ceremonies, where there is much feasting and junketting and remarkably little reverence. Even ancestor worship, which, as in China, is the true faith, ordered by custom and law, is very superficially ob-

served. The periodical ancestor feasts are merely occasions when the pious descendants gorge themselves with food and make boasts of themselves with rice-spirit. The mandarins, with a little more of the national *singerie*, profess to be Confucians, but the mandarins are the worst class in the country, and religion is certainly not their redeeming characteristic. Superstition is the only thing that really has a hold on the Annamese. They are as far as possible from being fanatics, but they are too scared of goblins and genii to be sceptics.

Perhaps the true explanation of the unsatisfactory character of the Annamese is to be found in the fact that they are half-castes. They are certainly a very mixed race, though their true parentage is somewhat misty. The ordinary theory is that the original inhabitants of the country were MUONGS, the race which now occupies the hills on the western frontiers. Who these MUONGS are is a question which has perhaps yet to be solved. The French consider them to be LAOS, in which case they are Mongolians, and are not very far removed from the Chinese. But other authorities, among them Professor A. H. Keane, assert that they belong to the *sinifu* branch of what he calls the brown Caucasian race; the Abbé Bouillevaux, on the other hand, thinks that the Annamese are closely connected with the Malays in their origin.

It is possible that something definite may be discovered about the mother stock in the high table-land of CAO-BANH, which seems to have been the original seat of the race. However that may be, it is certain that numerous alliances with the Chinese, the adoption of the Celestial-administrative system and religion and long residence in a flat, marshy country have removed the Annamese very far from the first type. Towards the year 214 B.C. the famous Emperor SHIH HIWANG TI, who

built the Great Wall of China, and destroyed the books of Confucius, sent armies far and wide, even as far as Bengal. One of these armies, along with a huge number of emigrants, amounting to about half a million in all, established itself in Tongking. A hundred years later another army of emigrants arrived from the provinces of KWANG-SI and KWANG-TUNG. These colonists were artisans, vagabonds, adventurers of all sorts, but they were all young and strong. They had no goods and no wives, but they soon got both in their new country, and from this time commenced the physical and moral fusion which has given the Annamese of to-day their Mongolian characteristics, certainly then civilization. For a thousand years, until the beginning of the tenth century of our era, in fact, Tongking and great part of Annam was a simple Chinese province. The old feudal family system was destroyed, and with the introduction of Chinese written characters and Chinese literature came in the new aristocracy, that of the *literati*, appointed, as in China, by public examination. The study of the Celestial characters and writings was early imposed by law on the people, by a Chinese governor who belonged to the district of Confucius, and is known in the annals of Annam as the lettered king, SI VUONG. Previously the Annamese had a kind of phonetic writing, which a missionary, Father MONROUZIER, claims to be still in use among the hill tribes of the southern province of NINH-AN. He even believes that he has discovered some specimens of the writing in cave inscriptions in the SONG GIANG valley. In a year or two, when travelling in Tongking and Annam becomes somewhat safer, we may hope for some interesting ethnological discoveries. Meanwhile, all that is certain is that the Annamese are a bastard race, with all the faults of the half-breed. It is somewhat doubtful whether the French will improve the national character



CHAPTER XVII.

THE FRENCH COLONIAL ARMY.

THE name *Infanterie de Marine*, and still more the translation, "Marine Infantry," that is usually given of it, is very apt to lead Englishmen into error. We are too ready to jump at the conclusion that "Marine Infantry" and "Marines" are the same thing, and that the French *Infanterie de Marine* is simply a body of soldiers kept on board the larger war-ships, and disembarked for shore service when necessary. Nothing could be a greater error, and the members of the corps continually grumble that whatever credit has been due to them, not only in the Tongking campaign, but in the war of '1870, has been persistently assigned to a mythical body of Marines, a force which, in the English sense of the word, does not exist at all in the French service. The same remark applies to the *Artillerie de la Marine*, who are very far from being the ship's gunners they are frequently taken to be.

The *Infanterie de Marine* is simply the French Colonial army, and has no more to do with ships than any other soldiers whose place of service makes it necessary for

them to cross the sea, and the *Artillerie de la Marine* is formed of the batteries told off for foreign service. The French Cabinet does not include a Colonial Secretary, and the troops for foreign service are therefore placed under the orders of the *Ministre de la Marine*, the First Lord of the Admiralty, whence the name *la Marine*, the Colonial arm, as distinguished from *la Guerre*, the troops under the command of the Minister for War, and recruited for service in Europe only.

The men for this arm are drawn at the usual conscription. Every year the 4,800 men who draw the lowest numbers are told off for service abroad. Those who come next to them serve for five years, and the remainder for two, before going into the reserve. As in the territorial army of the 1800 men for the colonies the tallest and most powerful men are assigned to the artillery, and the remainder go into the line. The conscripts from the coast provinces, those at least who have any knowledge of seafaring, are of course drafted into the navy. Otherwise every one, with the usual exceptions of the son of a widow, the oldest of four brothers, and "the man who has killed an enemy," has to stand his chance of drawing a bad number and being sent abroad. It is characteristic of the French dislike to emigration that the son or brother or sweetheart who goes out in the *Infanterie de Marine* is mourned and lamented over as if he were going on a forlorn hope, or starting in a ship with a typhoon blowing outside.

Beyond this force France has no troops available for service abroad except the Algerian garrisons, which constitute a distinct branch by themselves. They consist of the Foreign Legion, nowadays mostly Alsace Lorraine men, with a sprinkling of Englishmen, Irishmen, Americans, and even Germans, the Turcos, natives of

the country, with a considerable infusion of Frenchmen, who join for the sake of the rapid promotion, the Zouaves, all of them French, and only to be distinguished from the Turcos in perspective, of course, of their colour — by the substitution of black trousers for red ones, the attraction to this force being the gay uniform which makes them the pets of the boulevards, the high pay, and the untrammelled life of *école des roques*. Finally, the Algerian Light Infantry, the most prominent regiment of which is that of the *Disciplinaires*, the *Joueurs*, the *Zephyrs* of Ouda's "Under Two Flags," a simple convict corps, a sink into which are drafted all the thieves, the blackguards, and insubordinates of the rest of the French army. The *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, the light cavalry, are of course an entirely distinct body, and can barely be counted upon for Colonial service, except in countries where this arm can manoeuvre.

The *Infanterie de Marine* numbers about twenty-four thousand men for all the colonies; the Algerian troops raise this available force to about a half more; and then there is of course the navy, with possible landing brigades, to be counted in. This body of troops has just been barely sufficient. With her now engagements France will have to at least double the number of the Colonial army, for Tongking is a very long way from being settled yet. To enable the Republic to take Bac Ninh and even partially occupy the country it was necessary in the autumn of 1888 to call for volunteers from the regular army. They were readily obtained, and at the moment of writing there are still in Tongking the three regiments thus raised, the 23rd, the 11th, and the 143rd of the line. During the enthusiasm prevailing in France at the time of the call for these levies there was no difficulty in obtaining the numbers re-

quired, and probably three or four times the number could have been had without any trouble; but it will not always be so. It must not be forgotten that the French army is the French people, and that Frenchmen, even with gorgeous pictures of *la nouvelle France* dangling before their eyes, evince but the very faintest possible desire to go and make their fortunes there.

Leaving altogether out of account the troops which will be required to settle the dispute with China—and they will be no small number—it is quite certain that the present garrison of Tongking, say eight thousand men, cannot with any safety be reduced, and may every now and then have to be increased. This is leaving out of account, but by no means forgetting, the numerous companies of Tongkinese auxiliaries whom the French have raised, and may still go on raising. These men have but the very faintest ideas of discipline as yet. During the hot and rainy months of 1881 several companies of the *Tirailleurs* deserted almost *en masse*, and, what was worse, carried off their cabins and ammunition with them. Whatever French writers may say about the ardour with which the country has received French protection and the loyalty of the native troops, an impartial observer cannot help believing that a French reverse would turn many of these auxiliaries into active enemies, and very many more into but half-hearted supporters, ready at any moment to turn their coats.

In any case the *Tirailleurs Tonkinois* cannot be trusted to hold the fortresses without at least a section of French soldiers to keep an eye upon them, or to back them up, as the case may be. This is a very serious matter, for it must not be forgotten that after nearly a year's occupation the French do not hold the country, they merely

hold the fortresses—the official towns would perhaps be a better term. Even in the cold, dry weather it was impossible to go any distance from the French posts without a guard. An official proclamation forbidding all sporting expeditions on this ground is probably sufficient proof of the statement. As soon as the rains and the heat made it impossible for the French troops to move about, pirates swarmed all over the country and raided up to the very walls of the most strongly held citadels. Hanoi itself, in July and August, 1881, was twice alarmed with bands of armed men; on one occasion, it is even asserted, dragging cannon within eye-shot of the walls of the citadel. Hanoi, the only port of the country, and the base of all operations, was rendered uneasy by the erratic movements of bands of night marauders to the north. With only a native garrison, even though it be officered by Frenchmen, there would be no security against a night attack, taking it for granted that there was no collusion or treachery.

The French only hold the delta now, and they only hold the strong places. Next cold season they are pledged to occupy the north. Their honour requires it. To conquer those provinces, with the fresh inundation of Chinamen that has been poured in all along the frontier, will be no easy task. The country is difficult, transport is difficult, provisioning is still more difficult. The Chinamen will have opportunities for ambushes in every ravine. If war goes on with China, France can scarcely hope to establish herself in more than a part of the northern Tongking provinces.

If peace is made with China the matter is not yet settled. LANG SON, QUANG-YEN, CAO-BANG, LAOKAI, have been for years the sanctuary and happy hunting-ground for outlaws and desperadoes from all the surrounding

countries. China has no authority over these men. She would have beheaded them long ago if she could. France will have to settle scores with them herself. She can hardly expect China to come in and help to pacify a country which China has for years considered practically her own, and now thinks she has been lawlessly despoiled of. In this event France will no doubt easily occupy all the towns, but she will be farther from holding the country than she now is in the delta, and she will have to call for more troops from France. There are now three of the line regiments in Tongking. They did not volunteer for an unlimited time. In any case they will leave, and are leaving as soon as their time expires. Not only has the place of these men to be filled, but, as seems indisputable, actually new regiments of volunteers will have to be called for.

It may perhaps be well to say that this is necessary on account of the territorial system of the French army. Apart altogether from the fact that conscripts for *la guerre* are exempted from foreign service, and that therefore the ordering away of a corps or a regiment of the *pantalone rouges* might cause a mutiny, or at any rate great dissatisfaction, there is an additional difficulty. All the men of one province go into the same *corps d'armée*. The sending away of that army corps therefore implies the sending away of all the young men of that province. It is palpable that such an act could only be one of desperation.

It is evident, therefore, that since France seems bent on extending her influence abroad, she must reorganize her army system, and the most obvious way of doing this is the increasing the number of men drawn at the conscriptions, probably tripling the present number. That would require the passing of a Bill through the

Chamber, and it is questionable whether even M. Jules Ferry's ministry, long though it has lasted, would be able to stand against the odium which such a measure would call up. What other alternatives there may be it is not our place to suggest, but that some change is imperative is beyond dispute. Tongking cannot be held for some years with a smaller garrison than it now has; that garrison will probably have to be increased, and at the present moment more than half of it ought, by the constitution of the army, to be doing duty elsewhere.

Perhaps the greatest novelty of the campaign in Tongking was the balloon service. It cannot, however, be said to have been a great success, and perhaps hardly justified the expense. A good deal of this was no doubt due to the utter collapse of the latter part of the campaign. The Chinamen ran away so fast and so persistently that even the officer in the balloon was unable to see more of them than less elevated people on the mud down below. Some enthusiasts went so far as to say that this cowardly characteristic of the Celestial legs was due to the mere presence of the balloons. The Chinamen thought that it was "joss pidgin," and perhaps imagined that death was going to be poured down on their heads from the very skies. Certain it is that the only place where the balloons were really used was at the bombardment of the Trung son forts, and there the engineer officer had not above five minutes' work. He simply pointed out, or rather called down—for it was extraordinary how distinctly his voice was heard from a height of at least a thousand feet—where the forces of the enemy were, and where they had works. The artillery directed their guns accordingly, and the Chinamen jumped off their sampans and ran away.

Perhaps the most interesting result obtained was the knowledge of how long the balloons could be carried without the manufacture of new gas, and the consequent necessity of taking or leaving an immense amount of cumulous impedimenta. The method adopted was to convey one balloon for purposes of observation, and another smaller one to act as a reservoir to fill the working balloon when necessary. On this system it was found that one supply of gas was quite sufficient for twelve days, and on the thirteenth the balloon could have been used for observations if it had been necessary.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that they gave a great deal of trouble, and on some occasions degenerated into a pure and simple nuisance. The larger balloon was carried about two-thirds inflated, and from twelve to fifteen men were necessary to drag it along. The least wind necessitated the adding of extra men, for it swayed about in a very dangerous way. Then, whenever the path was narrow and there were trees about, the terostats had to make long *détours*, for if a rope had caught in one of the trees the balloon might have swung down and ripped the silk. This was especially troublesome on roads where there were many villages, and frequently seriously delayed the columns. In Europe, where there are broad turnpikes, this trouble would no doubt not exist; but in Europe light cavalry scouts would probably be far more useful, and possibly more expeditious, in giving news of an enemy's movements than a balloon, even if it were fitted with a field-gun, which would necessitate greater elevating power. Altogether, the Tongking balloon experiment does not seem to have advanced the science of military ballooning to any appreciable extent.

The question of the discipline and conduct of the troops

in Tongking is a very delicate one. The writer experienced many acts of kindness from officers in all arms of the service, and made, and he hopes retains, very many good friends. But the conduct of a certain number of the soldiery has had such an influence on the state of affairs in Tongking that the matter is not one that can be altogether shirked. The English soldier is profligate enough and rough enough, in all conscience, with a conquered population; but at any rate, some bounds are set to his brutality. He cannot seize upon chickens and eggs, and more valuable things, and carry them off by force, or give an absurd sum for them in nominal payment. If he did he would be flogged. Yet on several occasions men of the Foreign Legion surrounded in regular parties, with look-out men posted round, quarters of Hanoi, and went in by turns to abuse women and to carry off whatever seemed good to them. This sometimes happened two or three nights running, yet none of them were ever caught or punished. Bullying of the people in the street, sometimes in a mere playful way, but occasionally from simple innate savagery, was far too common, and was never apparently interfered with. The bestiality of the Turcs is not to be laid, perhaps, at the French door, except that if the French introduce such animals into a country they ought to muzzle them. The Annamese at the best is a cur, but there is a point that passes his endurance. Then he takes to the fields with a spear and a cleaver tied to the end of a bamboo, and blows up the tender on his antiquated match-locks. He becomes a "pirate."

There are other points in which the French soldier is infinitely superior to his English brother. "Tommy Atkins" is an insufferable grumbler, yet the French soldier underwent without a murmur hardships which

the Englishman would never endure. Take his wine and his bread from a Frenchman and he is indeed desolate. Yet for ten days after the capture of Basenish the French troops had neither, and they appeared rather inclined to take it as a joke than otherwise. The bread was replaced by mouldy, weevil-eaten biscuit, some of it green and utterly unfit for food, and tea was doled out instead of wine. Tea the Frenchman abhors, but he laughed even as he grimaced and made what fun was practicable of the matter, asserting that the commissariat wanted to Anglicize him, for it is an ineradicable belief of your ordinary Frenchman that English people habitually drink tea at dinner. It is in his adaptability to circumstances that the French soldier is most admirable. If he gets mouldy biscuit he does not like it, no doubt, but he does what he can to make the best of it. He steeps it in warm water, sprinkles it with salt and pepper and pork fat, and makes a dish which does not look very pretty, but tastes remarkably well when one has marched all day long; or he breaks it into pieces, and makes soup of it along with his preserved meat, which is too strong for him, and equally repugnant to his natural inclinations. The English soldier would throw the biscuit away, and announce, in a most emphatic way, that if he was to fight for his country he must be properly fed. The absolute ignorance of every Briton of the most elementary notions of cookery is quite astonishing. Every Frenchman knows something of it, and is ready to take his part in preparing some dish. He makes a remarkably good soup out of the most scanty materials, and swishes up an omelet out of eggs—as to the obtaining of which it is as well not to inquire—and chicken cutlets out of a bird, in whose transference of ownership the unlucky villager

has probably taken no part, or only a most useful one. The English soldier leaves everything to the regimental cooks, who make rude but substantial messes out of the best material, without attempting anything beyond the usual routine, and "Tommy Atkins" cleaves to his national birthright, and grumbles as if he was being starved.

It is not merely in commissariat matters— it being granted that the regular commissariat department in both armies is equally uncertain and erratic, that the French soldier is superior to the English. Our soldiers are too much coddled. They are allowed servants in barracks. A ludicrous story is told of a warrior in Hong Kong, who lodged a formal complaint against a barrack room servant because that lazy man refused to bring him coffee in bed in the morning. Similar tales might be recounted by the half-dozen. The French have no luxuries of the kind, yet from the constitution of the army there are numerous men of gentle nature in the ranks, men who could well pay for a servant of their own, but are debarred from doing so by regulation.

The way in which the French soldier is loaded on the march is undoubtedly absurd, and would never be endured by our line-men. To begin with, they carry three times the number of cartridges, and their knapsacks are filled with a variety of articles, some of which are absolutely useless on the campaign, and others that with our army would certainly be carried in the baggage train, such as portions of the tent for each section, cooking utensils, and parade uniform. The Algerian troops and the volunteer regiments from France were supplied with no tropical uniforms, and had to trudge laborious, long marches in their heavy long coats and thick trousers, besides carrying a spare suit in their kit. Not only did they march thus but they absolutely went into action with

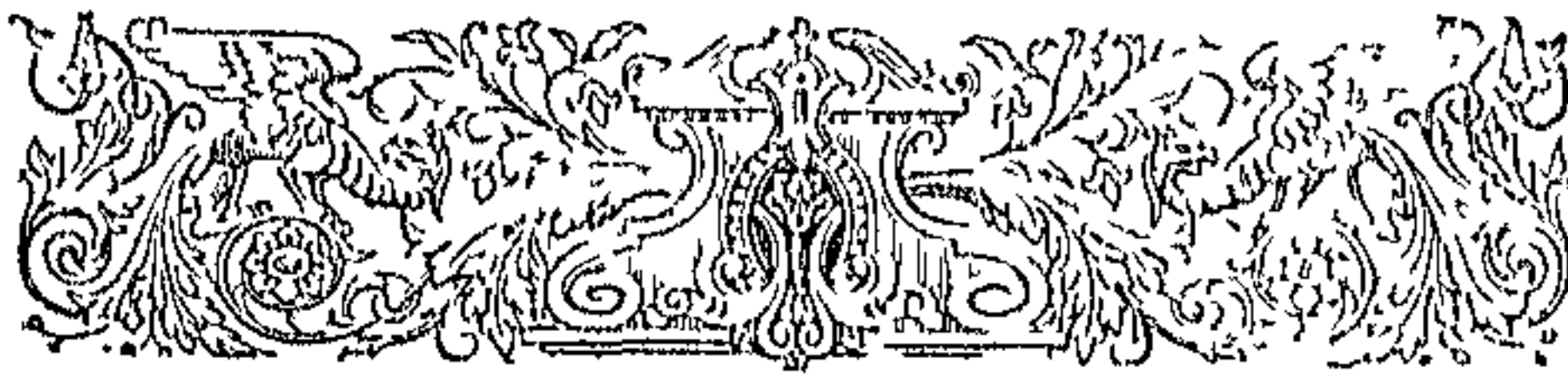
these encumbrances, and yet were expected to outmarch nimble, light-loaded Chinamen and half-naked pirates. It is quite impossible to imagine what "Tommy Atkins" would have said if any one had had the audacity even to suggest such a thing.

No doubt the leavening of educated men in the ranks helps to make this cheerful obedience possible. When the simple peasant, the man who a year ago was at the plough-tail, sees the *bachelier ès-lettres* picking feathers off a fowl for the common pot, and the *docteur-ès-sciences* meekly looking for a dry place in a paddy-field to sleep on, he naturally considers it preposterous that he should make objections, where these, whom he recognizes as his superiors, say nothing. But this indiscriminate mixture of all classes of society in the ranks sometimes leads to curious incidents. One comes across a captain of Marine Fusiliers fondly embracing his brother, a simple gunner in the artillery of the line; a commandant who asks his nephew, in the ranks of the Colonial troops, to dine with him. There are sometimes even more singular relationships; a lieutenant of the *Infanterie de Marine* had a brother a corporal in the Foreign Legion. They were Belgians; one had been naturalized, the other had not.

It is as much this intermingling of rich and poor, cultivated men and boors, as the usually assigned Republican principle of the equality of all men, that leads to the laxity of discipline which is so noticeable to an Englishman in the French army. The salute to an officer is a slovenly thing at best, a mere jerk up of the hand, sometimes only as high as the shoulder, and too often rendered only to the officers of a man's own regiment. It is all very well to say that the thing is a mere trifle, that it is a relief to an officer not to be

saluted by every one in a walk through a crowded camp or garrison town, and that it would be absurd to punish a man for such a slight matter on a campaign; but neglect of such small things leads to much more serious offences—straggling on the march, handing rifles over to the too numerous boys that accompanied the columns (the absolute abomination and horror of the energetic Négrier and his soldierly chief of the staff, Captain Lortoul), drinking water anywhere and everywhere regardless of the protests of the doctors and the orders of the officers, and breaking bounds at night. It is absurd to say that the men are too intelligent for rigid discipline when they make such absolute and criminal fools of themselves for want of it.

Nevertheless the French soldier is a gallant fellow, brave to a fault, never so delighted as when he has heavy odds against him, perhaps a little too sanguine and vain-glorious in victory, and a little too despondent under a reverse—the faults of his race—but willing to undergo any fatigue and any privations to come up with the enemy.



CHAPTER XVIII.

ANNAM THE COUNTRY

WITHOUT Tongking Annam is nothing whatever. It was only by an accident, as we have seen, that she became overlaid of the northern province, of which formerly she had been a conquest and a colony. Eastern estimates of population are not worth much, but we may at any rate accept as giving the relative proportion the statement which assigns Tongking twelve million inhabitants and Annam three.

The country is simply a narrow strip of territory, winding in the shape of the letter *S* along the eastern shores of the Indo Chinese Peninsula, between the mountains and the sea. The rivers of Annam are therefore necessarily very short, but they are very numerous, and are joined one to another by a great many canals, natural and artificial, which offer abundant means of communication almost up to the foot of the lower hills. The chief streams are the Song-Ngua, which rises in the Ba-Ilan country of the northern hills, the Thruong-Tinn, or Hué river, the Song-Grang, and the Song-ol.

A huge barrier of hills separates Annam from the

Mekong valley, rising up into peaks of from 2,600 to 6,600 feet in height. The trend of this range has a very marked effect on the climate of the country. Thus, when the moisture-laden south-west monsoon blows in Cochin China, Annam is in the middle of the dry season, from the month of May to October. Conversely, when the north-east monsoon has passed over the lofty ridge, it has lost all its humidity, and the Mekong valley becomes dry and parched. In summer the heat is very great, the thermometer frequently rising over 100° Fahrenheit for days in succession. On the other hand, a regular winter, when the temperature goes down occasionally as low as 45° Fahrenheit, gives Annam a great pull over the perpetual summer of the Saigon provinces.

The traveller passing up the coast from Saigon is not favourably impressed with what he sees of Annam. The country is so narrow that it passes before the eyes like a panorama. The general features are high wooded mountains in the background, bare grassy hills, blotched with outcropping rock coming down to the sea, and stretches of sandy, flat land lying in between. There is abundance of excellent ports, but the whole country looks like a desert, and the only signs of life are a stray fishing junk or two, and an occasional demon-shrine, or temple, on the hill-sides.

BINH-TRUAN is the first province reached. It is celebrated as the ZAMPA, or CAMPA, which Ser Marco Polo visited in the thirteenth century. In those days CAMPA was a kingdom which extended over the greater part of the east of Indo China. Nowadays BINH-TRUAN is only noted as a province which has been bandied backwards and forwards between Annam and Cochin China, but which now rests with the former, to be absorbed in the

and with the whole kingdom of Annam. Otherwise there is not much to be said about it, except that it is a tangle of hills inhabited by a race who are probably the last remnants of the aborigines of this coast. Valuable timber, ebony 'Trac, wood-aloes, and eagle-wood, are said to be found fairly abundantly in its hills.

KHANH-HOA, the next province to it, round the south eastern point of the peninsula, where the coast begins to run north, is very like BINH-THUAN in its physical characteristics. It is principally noted for its silk culture, which has long been thriving, and is said, with proper supervision, to be likely to become very valuable.

In the next province, PHU YEN, the hills begin to draw back a little from the coast. There are more flat lands, and consequently greater cultivation. A fair quantity of rice, maize, peas, and sugar-cane is produced, and the mines of the hills have a great reputation, as yet unconfirmed by Western investigations. The southern part of the province is marked by the bold headland of Cape Vaoia, a landmark sufficiently prominent from the singular shaft of rock which shoots up to a considerable height from the summit, like the end of an axle-tree.

Then comes the province of BINH-DINH, with the port of QUI-NHON, open to foreign commerce, and occupied by a company of French troops since the treaty of 1874. The harbour is very fine, forming a vast rectangle, well protected by a mountainous tongue of land, which runs down to the east and overlaps a sandy spit standing straight out from the mainland to within a hundred yards of the rocky declivity, crowned by a small fort. The effect is very striking when, after steaming to all appearance straight into the land, the vessel turns suddenly to the right under the abrupt

shore and passes into a wide, level basin, half water, half sandy plain, enclosed by lofty mountains which rise up sheer on every side. Naturally the place is broiling hot, and very far from healthy. Nevertheless it is picturesque enough, with the public works built by the French, the barracks situated in pleasant gardens, a few private houses, the large hospital dwarfing every thing else in a sinister way, and behind the palm-tree tufted village of the Annamese. Considering the soil, the place seems fairly prosperous; but up to 1879 the customs receipts had not exceeded an eighth of the expenses of the staff. The Tongking campaign caused the withdrawal of the garrison, but trade still goes on in a fitful way, and if the neighbouring hills really contain iron, tin, lead, copper, silver, and gold, as is said to be the case, the port may eventually become flourishing.

The province KWANG-NOUT, immediately north of BINH-DINH, is fairly level and therefore agricultural, producing the ordinary tropical crops, and looked upon as one of the best tribute-paying districts.

Beyond this we come to KWANG-NAM, with Tourane Bay in the centre of its coast-line. This magnificent harbour is as fine as the ports of San Francisco, Rio, or Sydney. But it is picturesque in a very different way. Everything is wild savage, and desolate-looking. A bluff, stumpy promontory, running up from the south, shapes it into the form of the figure six--a sturdy, thick-set figure six--that measures eight miles by seven. As one turns into this huge bay there is not a house or a sail to be seen. To the north and east are huge, savage hills, their sides shaggy with forest growth, their tops capped with clouds, their feet plunged into blue water, and cut into crescent-shaped inlets. It is

not till one comes abreast of the low brushwood-covered promontory that the southern shore is opened, and you see a few scattered fisherman's huts, scarcely rising above the low sandy beach. The two forts on either side of the entrance were pounded to ruins by the French guns in 1858 and 1860, and are hardly to be distinguished from the flocks of grey rock that force themselves through the rank jungle growth. The whole prospect is forlorn and desolate in the extreme. Nowhere is a shrine to the devils of the mountain and the forest better placed than on the western shore of the southern foeland.

The village of TOURANE is barely visible from the anchorage which is in the southern portion of the bay, a great part being unfortunately very shallow. TOURANE is not an impressive village. There are perhaps two thousand inhabitants in the long, straggling line of the houses that line the left bank of the river FLAN, each hovel being more wretched than its neighbour, with the exception of the brick palace of the ambitious Celestial who proclaims himself, on a big sign-board, *Mou-nassou de Mat'riel Maritime*. There is not much trade in the place now, though the inhabitants persuade rice and vegetables to grow in what seems to be sand pure and undiluted, with drifting dunes in between, that look as if the slightest breeze would spread them over the whole face of the country. But there is a considerable stretch of level ground behind, and a railway could easily be run down the coast to KWANG-NGAI. A canal at a trifling cost would prevent the further silting up of the south of the bay which, thanks to the present course of the FLAN river, is yearly becoming serious. But the bay must always remain more of an anchorage than a centre of trade. The French abandoned the position

in 1860 on account of the mortality among their troops.

Four or five miles up the river TIAN, rising up, as if they were built out of the sandy beach, are several huge marble rocks. One of these is honeycombed into caves through and through by the sea-waves of remote centuries. The chief of these caves is turned into a kind of natural sanctuary. It is situated nearly at the top. Steps cut in the natural rock lead into it, and are guarded by angels and devils. An insignificant-looking wooden joss-house stands to the right, and facing the visitor and to his left are altars cut in the solid cliff, with stolid-looking Buddhas installed upon them. Some Chinese inscriptions, laboriously chiselled on the marble walls, complete what the sacrilegious hand of man has done. The cave is a rough circle of about sixty feet in diameter, and perhaps eighty feet high. In the roof are several fissures, shaded by trees and bushes, which admit the proper dim religious light and tangled festoons of creepers and parasite roots hang down in graceful drapery. Water oozes down the walls and stains them red and green. Without being exactly impressive, the place is sufficiently striking, and is well worth the trudge from the river over the yielding sand-drifts.

A little below this, over to the sea-front, on a cramped platform, is a humble monastery, numbering not more than five or six buildings. There are a few trees to give them shade, and a collection of the eccentric shrubs that seem to thrive in clefts of solid rock. Behind them rise the jagged marble pinnacles, and in front is the great blue ocean, dotted with sunny islands. In view of this grandeur of nature the monks should be good, pious anchorites. But they are lazy, rapacious harpies, who prey upon the casual visitor as if they had gradu-

ated in a European show place. These monks make a vow of chastity and keep a school of neophytes who are attracted by the prospect of a life of idleness. The king assigns them an annual modicum of rice; they are freed from religious services and all other *convics*, and receive abundant alms from the religious, which they eke out at the time of the national festivals by the sale of sham relics and fraudulent amulets. They only leave their charming retreat on the occasion of public ceremonies, feasts, burials, and other celebrations, where they will be well cared for. They have, of course, no concern in politics, and but little influence with the Government; but the sense of decency makes the mandarins profess to hold them in great respect, and they stand correspondingly well with the people. But as disciples of the Great Master they would be scouted in any proper Buddhist country, like Ceylon or Burma.

The royal road from Saigon to Hué skirts the bay and climbs through a gorge in the northern hills, but it is too small to be seen from the harbour. By this road Hué is about sixty-five miles off, and this distance, over a very heavy country, the couriers cover in twenty-seven hours. This *TRAM*, or postal system, was established in the eleventh century, when Annam was still a portion of the kingdom of CHAMPÁ. The main *TRAM* stations consist of one big room, surrounded with a little entrenchment for protection, the situation being occasionally very exposed. The name of the place is always written in large Chinese characters over the entrance, and there are always men ready to carry on a despatch. The smaller *TRAMS* are only intended for shelter, and are usually eight miles apart. The larger *TRAM* posts are, in level country, at distances of sixteen or seventeen miles, in the hilly districts at half that interval. The

couriers ride at a sharp trot. They wear no particular dress, and are very seldom armed; but nevertheless they are always recognizable. They carry their despatches in a bamboo tube slung over the shoulder, and bells at their bridle rein announce their coming. The village streets are immediately cleared of all obstacles, the boatman has his canoe ready at the ferry, and in front of the *Pham* stands the relief courier ready to carry on the message. In this way despatches are hurried across the country at an extraordinary pace, and what would occupy the ordinary traveller three days is covered by the *Pham* in one.

After one passes the huge wooded point of *Tourann*, which seems all the higher from the brusque way in which it springs out of the sea, and the two picturesque little wooded hillocks that mark the south end of the lagoon, which conducts all the way up from here to *Hur*, the coast falls in a remarkable way, and there is nothing to be seen but low rolling sand-hills with an occasional woebegone hamlet. This is the character of all the *Kwang-Duc* coast, the province in which *Hur* is situated. To the north it is scantily wooded, that is the only difference. Well back from the coast are some undulating spurs, but the main range is far away on the horizon. So we are carried through *Kwang-Tri* and *Kwang Binh* to the ruined old wall, with here and there loopholes still visible, which in former days served as the boundary between *Annam* and *Tongking*. These northern provinces assimilate to the soil of *Tongking*, and are much more fertile than the others. But the low seaboard with no landmarks, and the reefs which run far out to sea, are very dangerous, and the *Annamese* themselves dolorously call it "the coast of iron."

Another disagreeable feature of these parts was, till

within the last year or two, the abundance of pirates. As it is with the Chinaman, piracy comes as natural to the Annamese fisherman as rapacity and stealing does to the mandarin. The native practitioners were usually beheaded, but the Chinese junks, from the Gao 'Tao and the Thousand Islands to the north, were most feared and least often caught. When they were captured they were usually carried to the capital and taken into the royal service, where they robbed in good company. Since France has had a large fleet in these waters, however, the pirates have found their occupation gone, and have had to betake themselves to the interior.

In the north of KWANG-BINH, inland from Capo VTUNG KROA, are to be found the splendid caves of BO KINH, one of the marvels of Annam. Here the river NGAN-NAN, one of the affluents of the SONG-GIANG, is said to pass for miles through subterranean chambers over three hundred feet high, the roof bristling with stalactites that reproduce themselves in the green waters below, and develop as fairy and spectral a scene as can well be imagined.

From HUE northwards is the most agricultural part of the country. The arable land is perhaps one hundred and fifty miles long by fifteen deep on the average, but the population is rather scanty. The soil is really good, some low for rice-lands, the rest rising slowly up to the grassy intermediate hills, and producing sugar-cane, coffee, in the Christian villages, tobacco, cotton, silk, cinnamon, and pepper. The missionaries report it to be much healthier than Cochin China and the Tongking delta, and infinitely superior to the coast-lands. Something may be made of this part of the country, and the lower ranges may afford good pasture ground; but except for the minerals which may possibly be discovered,

Annam is likely to be always a needy land, largely dependent upon its neighbours for food.

No doubt the country has hitherto been blighted by the leprous plague of the mandarins. The Annamese borrowed their official system from China, and, like everything else they have set their hands to, they have debased and perverted it. It is professedly the examination system, but as the examinations are managed in Annam, the official class has become practically hereditary. One is not a KWAN's son for nothing. Influence and intrigue was all that affected the examiners. A high mandarin's son might become successively CI-NH-HOC, CO-NGON, and TAN-CHU; take all his three degrees without being able to write better than a simple coolie. No doubt all are equally capable, seeing that all are equally ignorant, but that did not make matters any better. The governing system was to have in every province a TONG-DOC, or governor. Under him were the KWAN-AN, provincial judge and administrator, the KWAN-TO, chief revenue collector, the LUAN-PIU, or lieutenant-governor, who did most of the TONG-DOC's work, this official being more a political agent than anything else. Then there was the LANH-BINH, the commander-in-chief of the local militia, and in the various subdivisions of the provinces, heads of departments, circles, and boroughs, KWAN-PIU, KWAN-HUYEN, and KWAN-DAO. The whole system was very pretty on paper, but M. Dubouil du Rhins declared that in practice he found nothing in it but extortion and the bastinado. The country was organized, not civilized.

Besides these, at the court were the seven THUONG, the Ministers of Public Works and Marine, Finance, Foreign Affairs, War, Sacred Rites, the Interior, and of Justice. Their duties were to oke out their miserable

salaries by fleecing the provincial mandarins. Above them was the Privy Council of the "Four Columns of the Empire," and above them again, as robber-in-chief, the King. Truly the country wanted taking in hand by good administrators like the French



CHAPTER XIX.

HUÉ, THE CAPITAL.

THE French have occupied Hué many months, but they do not care about letting foreigners visit the ancient Ciampa city. The writer was told by the Tongking authorities that to go there it was necessary to obtain the sanction of the Annamite Court. That vague body proved to be the efficient stalking-horse it was intended to be, and the permission was never granted. The following description of the town is therefore entirely from French sources.

Hué is situated on the left banks of the *Turoung-Tien*, between twelve and thirteen miles from the sea, where the little village of *Tiuan-an* serves it as a port. Access to the river is rendered difficult by a bar of hard sand 1,500 yards from the mouth. At no time of the year is there more than eleven feet over this bar, and the slightest breeze or swell makes it an impassable line of foaming breakers. The mouth of the river is defended by four forts, two of them on the extremity of the river bank, two of them on islands a little way behind. They were round, built of stone, with an earthen rampart all

round and a small fosse. Across the lagoon which as it were furnishes the river with two mouths, there is another fort abreast of a barrier formed by a quintuple line of piles, running out from the shore to meet one another at an angle of sixty degrees, leaving a passage only about sixty or seventy feet wide in mid-stream. A thousand yards farther is another barrier running at right angles to the bank, and protected by another brace of forts.

It was this system of defences that Admiral Courbet attacked in August, 1883. The King Tu-Duc had died on the 17th of July previous, and a Prince Duc-Duc had succeeded him, a nephew, who was believed to be pledged to hatred of the French. The admiral arrived with two ironclads, the *Bayard* and the *Atalante*, the gunboats *Vipère* and *Lynx*, and the despatch boats *Château-Renault* and *Dre*, on the 16th. On board was Dr. Harmand, the Commissary General, with an ultimatum and a draft treaty, already signed by himself. The Annamese refused to give up the forts, and the bombardment commenced at five o'clock on the evening of the 18th. The Annamese returned fire immediately, and there was a brisk engagement for the time that daylight remained. The *Bayard* and the *Lynx* were both hit, but no material damage was done on either side.

Next day the squadron re-commenced fire, and continued all day long, notwithstanding that the Annamese fire was from the first feeble, and eventually completely silenced. On the 20th of August, to the sound of the *Marseillaise* from the admiral's band, and covered by the fire of the two gunboats, a thousand men were landed. The forts were taken easily enough in spite of the resistance of the garrison with what feeble arms they had. The village, a mere line of miserable cottages,

was fired to cover the retreat, but it proved but a slight obstacle, and the Frenchmen shot down the wretched peasant soldiers in the lagoon after a fashion which was described, to the horror of Europe, by a French officer. He was cashiered for giving a somewhat florid account of what needed softening down rather than a vivid description.

In the afternoon the barrier forts were carried in much the same fashion by the *Vipère* and *Lynx*, and by nightfall the whole defences were in French hands. At three in the morning the arrival of the Minister of Foreign Affairs from Hué to Hanoi was announced. An armistice was arranged, but Dr. Lamand would sign no treaty except at Hué, and there accordingly, on the 25th of August, he got the signatures of their Excellencies TRAN-DINH LUO and NGUYEN-TRONG-THAP to the treaty which he had brought with him the principal point of which was the recognition of the French Protectorate over Annam and Tongking, the country to have no communications with foreign powers, China especially included, except through the French Resident. M. PARASUD DE CHAMPELUX was left with five hundred soldiers as Resident in Hué.

The river between PHUAN-AN and Hué passes between flat rice-fields only diversified by the usual villages and tree-surrounded pagodas. At length, from MONG-CA, the inland port, where there is from twelve to twenty-four feet of water one catches sight of the capital, TANGH-HUÉ, "The City."

The river and a canal surround the place on every side. Like all Annamese cities it is divided into two portions—the official town or citadel, and the outside portion, which one might almost call the suburbs, were it not that it is there only that the citizens reside. Inside

all are either officials and their train or soldiers. This outside town is nothing more than a wretched village of bamboo huts, two or three streets of shanties, with an occasional brick house belonging to a Chinaman. The commercial town is nothing like so important as the same portion of half a score similar places in Tongking.

The citadel, with its moat 120 feet wide, is a huge quadrilateral, close on two miles to the side, with a half-dozen large bastions on each face, each bastion with sixteen guns more or less antiquarian. Gateway towers in the Chinese architectural style cover the entrances, and paltry thatched huts shield the guns from the inclemency of the weather. Inside this are public offices and monuments, barracks, inferior mandarins' houses, and the like, very prominent among which is the magnificent palace presented, in 1873, by his majesty to the Court Executioner. Headmen in the law are either the lowest of the low or very exalted personages, for they often have exalted heads to lop off.

Inside this exterior line comes another, 760 yards square, but unfortified. This encloses the dwellings of the royal attendants and retinue, surrounded by gardens and pleasure-grounds. The city, so-called, is therefore made up of what lies within these two *encintes*. There are shady walks, wide squares, broad streets. The houses themselves are far beyond what one ordinarily sees, even in trading towns, where there are no high mandarins. In one quarter there are a number of workmen and artificers of different kinds, for whenever a man displays particular skill he is carried off and taken into the royal service on a pittance of rice and a handful of cash a month. There are also vast rice-sheds, arsenals, containing, it is said, four thousand pieces of cannon, and treasures.

Inside the second line comes the royal enclosure, shut in within walls as formidable as those opposed to the world. This central work is also a square, concentric with the others. Till 1883 no European had ever penetrated within its sacred walls. None but the highest mandarins were allowed to enter, and privacy was made the more certain by the fact that the common people were not even allowed to pass through the gates of the outermost line. The palace and the capital were thus singularly well situated to resist hostile attack, but the fortifications were built at the beginning of the century under the direction of the French colonel, Olivier, on the Vauban system, and were altogether out of date; besides that, they required a force of four thousand men merely to hold the outer walls. M. Dutrouil du Rhins did not place the total population at a higher figure than thirty thousand, with perhaps thirty thousand more for the surrounding villages.

Duc-Duc had vanished on the arrival of the French troops. Dr. Harmand therefore put on the throne a prince named Hup-Hoa, a brother of Tu Duc, who promised to be as completely a puppet as was desired. He had barely been on the throne three months, however, when he was poisoned by the national party. The French Resident set up in his place a youth, nephew of Tu Duc, who was expected to be pliable. To ratify the August treaty M. Tricon on his way back from China, proceeded to Hué. Of the public audience then granted, the following is a written account, furnished by a French oyo-witness:—

“On the morning of the 5th of January, 1884, the day fixed for the ceremony, the glacis which separates the walls of the citadel of Hué from the river was covered with people, eager to see the foreigners who, for

the first time, were to obtain an entrance within the walls of their inviolate capital, and anxious as to the consequences of this unprecedented departure from Annamese custom.

“ The two cannon which had been brought up from THUAN-AN on the first alarm of the death of King Hiep Hoa were pointed at the citadel, and the troops formed up in line in the passage separating the principal entrance to the Legation from the landing place. Among the Frenchmen but one feeling prevailed. All desired to see a satisfactory termination to this audience which the Government of Huó had been induced to accord, and which might be fraught with the most serious consequences. The sun shone brightly; the air was pure and sweet. A quiet silence reigned, save for the distant low murmur of the Annamese troops drawn up within the citadel.

“ At a quarter to eight o'clock, the First Chambellan of the Empire arrived at the Legation to seek the Minister of France and the Resident of Huó, and to conduct them to the royal presence. The procession started from the Legation on foot, passing between the ranks of French soldiers, who presented arms, while the trumpets sounded a march. At the head came M. Tricon, Minister Plenipotentiary of France, Envoy Extraordinary to Huó, and M. Palasno de Champeaux, Resident of France at the court of Huó. After them came Captain Legard, commanding the forces in THUAN-AN; M. Galy, Secretary to the Minister, and Captain Rüdiger of the Marine Infantry. The barge in which they embarked was towed across the river by a steam-launch from THUAN-AN, and was followed by the sampans bearing VIAM-NINH and his suite. A short distance from the landing-stage stood richly ornamented palanquins for

each member of the mission. They were accompanied by a guard of twenty men of the Maima Infantry. On each side of the road the Annamese garrison formed line. Poor and dirty as the uniforms of these troops are when viewed closely, they nevertheless had a picturesque and charming effect. The red-tunic'd maimos and blue-jacketed soldiers were succeeded by warriors in coats of many colours, with immense conical hats, long bamboo spears, rusty old flint guns, painted wooden shields, and other arms of a bygone age -- the whole presenting a picture not wanting in grandeur and originality. When the party arrived at the second gateway, according to ancient ceremonial, the escort of infantry stopped, there to wait the return of the Minister. They were served by order of the court of Huó with a sumptuous collation. The remainder of the procession then turned to the left, and, passing along fortifications defended by both European and Chinese cannon, arrived in an immense courtyard filled with the royal body-guard. In the centre stood the elephants of war, caparisoned and mounted, motionless as giants cast in bronze. Behind these were the cavalry, drawn up in line, and behind them again the artillery, with the gunners in blue, ranged beside pieces of the most curious antique patterns.

“The silence was profound.

“After leaving this first court, a second was traversed, where, in the midst of a square of warriors with strange banners, were the war-horse and elephant of the king, in complete housings.

“At the end of this court the procession halted, and, after descending from their palanquins, the French were invited to partake of a collation served in an ancient pagoda. Here also they were requested to deposit their

arms, and after a short delay, the Regent of the kingdom, NGUYEN VIN TUONG, arrived and begged that they would follow him to the presence of the King.

"They then entered the last court, a place of great grandeur, paved with marble. At either side of the door were enormous bronzo vases, a present from some emperor to a former King of Annam, in old days considered as a vassal. A richly dressed throng of civil and military mandarins filled this court, in the middle of which were placed five carpets for the guests of the King.

"In front a large stone staircase led to the Grand Hall of Audience, at the end of which was the throne.

"A great shout announced the arrival of the King, who, clothed in the royal yellow robe, seated himself on the throne.

"King KIEN-PRUC, whom the course of events had put in power only a month since, is a youth of fifteen years of age, direct heir of the Emperor (sac) TU DUC and his successor HIEP-HOA. He is of slight build, with a soft and intelligent eye, and is marked by a gravity of demeanour well becoming a monarch who holds in his hands the destinies of twenty millions of men.

"Behind the throne the ministers were arranged in a half-circle, and from their ranks the Grand Master of Ceremonies advanced to present the Minister of France to his Majesty.

"After M. Tricon and his suite had twice saluted the King, the latter withdrew to the Chamber of Audience, whither M. Tricon and M. de Champenoux were conducted by a side staircase. The French Minister opened the conversation by expressing, on behalf of the President, his best wishes for the welfare of the King. His Majesty in turn inquired after the health of M. Giévy.

"King KIRN-PIUE then said that he regarded France as a friendly nation, and that he only desired to see the good relations which had always existed between the two nations continue and prosper. A treaty had been concluded at Hué by M. Hamman, after the capture of TIUAN-AN; but certain clauses of this treaty bore so hardly on the Annamese nation that he was very desirous of seeing some amendment made. He counted on the kindness of the President of the Republic to agree to some slight modifications in favour of the people of Annam, who were devoted to him.

"M. Fricou replied that he was much gratified with the statements of the King, and that he would faithfully report them to the President, of whose acceptance of them he had no doubt. The Minister, after again saluting the King, withdrew and, with his suite, left the palace.

"At the gates of the city an immense crowd was assembled, but the Annamese now no longer regarded the French as foes, but as allies. As a proof of his friendship, H. H., the Regent, accepted M. Fricou's invitation to breakfast. They were drunk and responded to, and a long conversation was carried on, during which the Regent promised to use his influence to induce the Council of Ministers to conform to modern ideas; and, when their excellencies separated in the evening, France could count one ally the more."

This is a tolerably fair account, but it was a good deal too sanguine. As a matter of fact, the private interview between the Regent and M. Fricou was not altogether pleasant. The YIN-NINH protested incessantly against the too numerous introductions of French officials into the country, but was assured that this would prove not a source of impoverishment, but of

wealth. He was then asked if M. Harmand was acceptable to the country as Commissary-General. M. Harmand had just been recalled, and, instead of coming up to Hué with the Minister Plenipotentiary, had gone straight on to Saigon. The Regent expressed his most lively delight that the imperious doctor had had nothing to do with the negotiations. "No, no," he said, "I consider M. Harmand incapable of directing affairs here. Up to the present he has done nothing but create trouble and confusion." This was an opinion shared by many Frenchmen and all foreigners.

It then came out that the principal softening down of the treaty that the young King wished for was the employment of some other name than Protectorate. On this point, however, M. Ticon was inflexible. "Cannot the Protectorate, which must eventually extinguish Annam, be replaced by something else?" pleaded the Regent. "No," said the Plenipotentiary, "your Excellency suggests to me precisely what Li Hung-Chang suggested two months ago. 'China does not want war,' said he, 'but leave us Tonking.' Your Excellency asks the same thing. You ask us to give up the Protectorate and keep the rest—that is to say, nothing." The wretched mandarin might well have said, "With the Protectorate, you take everything, and leave us nothing." This practically closed the conversation, and left the mandarins much more half-hearted allies than the French supposed.

Shortly afterwards several high mandarins set out from Hué overland to Hanoi to pay their regards to the governor, General Millot. They were not very expeditious, and did not arrive till the early days of March, just before the departure of the forces against Bac Ninh. They were received with great state. A guard

of five hundred men turned out to welcome them, and a salute of six guns was fired. The general's band, which had only arrived a day or two previously, played the *Marseillaise* and some opera-bouffe airs. NUYEN-VIN TUONG interviewed the general, and said pleasant things; viewed an ascent of hot-balloons with apparent interest, and sat through a lunch at General Brieré de l'Isle's. Then he went off to turn the local Long-Doc out of his house, and a day or two afterwards left on his return journey. His Excellency looked only a little more debauched and villainous than other Annamese notabilities. He had a strong guard of red-coated Hué soldiery, with inlaid mother-of-pearl scabbards to their swords, some property guns and spears, two tarnished gold umbrellas, and four ordinary black ones. He had ostensibly come to help to re-organize the country, but his return journey was marked by several highly suspicious circumstances. In various villages of THANH-HOA and NAM-AN he made halt for several days; and shortly after he passed south there were some sanguinary risings against the Christians, who are very numerous there. Seven French priests were put to death, a great many of their flock murdered, and one or two new citadels were commenced. The end of the dry season, however, prevented a punitive expedition, and affairs in the southern provinces are not in a state that suggests much cordial alliance with the French there.

Matters went on in an unsatisfactory way until the beginning of August, 1881, when the anti-French mandarins, under the guidance, it is said, of the irreconcilable old Prince, HUYNH-KY-VUON, poisoned the poor little boy-king. It is said that his private guard was instructed to present him with a sabre and a cup of poison. The poor boy bid him wait, and walked in an

agitated way up and down his room. The sentinel got tired of this, laid hands on him, flung him on the floor, and forced the poison between his teeth.

A fifth king on the throne within thirteen months does not say much for the state of the kingdom of Annam. HAM-NGHI is the new puppet. He was crowned on the 17th of August, 1884, in the presence of representatives of all arms of the French service. They were allowed to enter the palace by the gate, till then sacred to those of royal blood. His Majesty will soon become as much a mere figure head as King NORÔDOM of Camboja. He was a fetish, he is a farce.



CHAPTER XX.

SAIGON

SAIGON, like Kienlo, the old name for Hanoi, means the "great market." In the days of Annamese rule the town was called *Cra-Dinh-Hanh*. It is situated on the right bank of the river in a kind of square formed by the *Donnai*, the avalanche creek the *Chinoh* creek, and the canal connecting these two "arroyos."

Before the French occupation Saigon was the capital of Lower Cochin China, and the residence of the *King-Luoc*, the Governor of the southern provinces. In 1836, the fortifications erected north and south of the town by Colonel Olivier, the engineering officer in the Emperor *Gravona's* pay, were destroyed by rebel hands. They were built up again in successive years only to be captured in 1858 by Admiral Rigault de Genouilly. In those days the town was nothing but a collection of huts huddled together and built on piles along the banks of the numerous water-ways. Rail bridges of a few bamboos lashed together were the only means of communication otherwise than by boat, for the muddy shore was impracticable. A picture of the town as it then

was may be seen in any Burmese or Siamese village, or indeed inland in Cochin China itself.

A couple of years later, when the town was still menaced from the lines at Kr Hoa, Saigon was hardly more attractive. It was little better than a long street, with every here and there a desolate vacant space. The houses were mostly of wood, thatched with the leaves of the dwarf palm, with now and again the red tiled roof of a brick building. A large number of junks thronged the river, and made a sort of floating town, such as the Chinaman and the Siamese loves. Along the banks of the Chinese *arroyo*, however, the enterprising Celestials had already built themselves rows of substantial brick and mortar dwellings, some of them old, the majority now

While the French garrison was besieged in the citadel, pending the release of the troops employed in China, even this miserable town was destroyed. Night after night incendiaries came in from the Kr-Hoa lines, and not even the instant execution of many of them, seized torch in hand, could save the place. Nothing but the Chinamen's houses remained when at length the Kr-Hoa works were stormed in 1861.

Today Saigon presents a great contrast with its former state. It is well known as one of the most attractive towns in the East. Owing nothing to natural advantages, it can quite hold its own with Hong Kong and Singapore, of which the traveller brings home enthusiastic memories. The buildings of Hong Kong are imposing, but French taste makes more out of less material. The roads of Singapore, half suggestive of the jungle, supply abundance of beautiful drives, but the boulevards of the French town, without losing their tropical character, are infi-

nitely prettier. Every house has its garden, spruce and trimly kept. The public offices are spacious, without the dreary, warehouse look of most of our British buildings of the kind. Singapore prides itself on its Government House as the finest in the East, but it has not the grand aspect of the *Palais du Gouvernement*, though it has incomparable advantages in situation. The French abuse the admiral who built the palace, and lament the twelve million of francs it cost, but if it were destroyed by an earthquake they would build another exactly like it and for the same price.

The plan of the town is conceived with the ambition which foresees the great Indo-Chinese Empire. Admiral de la Grandière, who laid out Saigon, dreamed that it was to be a town of five million souls, and he marked out its limits with this grand idea in his mind. Time, as it rolled on, has not justified his hopes. Saigon does not indeed decrease in numbers. There is even a steady increase, but it will be far on in next century before the admiral's skeleton town ceases to raise a smile.

But if in one way Saigon beats English colonies, it is very inferior in others. The *Rue Catinat* is the pride of Saigon, but it is a morass of shops. There is only one French mercantile firm in all Saigon—the rest are all Germans, or other foreigners, but principally Germans. Nevertheless, the *Rue Catinat* is a charming street, for all its shops. There are elaborate cafés, most seductively open, there are groceries and hosiery and hatters and saddlery shops; there are apothecaries halls and French and Chinese jewellery stores; there are shops where Chinamen make boots and shoes and European clothes; there are hotels, there is a temporary theatre, and there are Parisian *Magasins*—let us not forget the *Coquet Magasin* of *la Doriane*. At the upper end, just before

one reaches the open space where stands the pretentious cathedral, you pass various public offices—those of the interior, the treasury, the posts and telegraphs, and others, all of them admirably neat. There are other delightful streets in Saigon, but none of them can compare with the *Rue Catinot*.

It is not fair to compare Saigon with Hong Kong or Singapore. We have held these colonies for a long time now. Rangoon makes a better comparison. We have now occupied the capital of British Burma seven years longer than the French have held Saigon. The contrast between the two towns is instructive. In 1881 Saigon had a population of 13,481. This was the town proper, and did not include the surrounding villages. The huge *enceinte* of the town, however, thrusts away these suburbs so far that they cannot reasonably be counted in. Still, allowing them a population of 10,000, which is liberal, and counting in CHOLON with 39,925, we have a grand total of 63,406 in 1881. At the census of 1880 Rangoon had a population of 134,176, and it is growing by leaps and bounds. The villages of POOZOON-DOUNG and KRAMMUNDINE do not leave us much doubt as to whether they should be included or not. They are ~~already~~ on the point of being engulfed, just as London has swallowed up the villages of last century, the High-gates and Chelseas and Kensingtons.

But Rangoon is not a beautiful town. There are people whom it is impossible to suspect of preconceived malice, who do not hesitate to declare that it is extremely ugly. Government House, Rangoon, is fairly watertight. Beyond that it would be affectation to make any assertions. The only public buildings which pretend to be anything at all but simple coverings are the Town Hall, which is quasi-Oriental, a kind of half-caste

erection, and on the other side of Lybelle Square the new Law Courts, apparently designed by some one with a very misty recollection of Gothic architecture. There is not a doubt that, as far as appearances go, our Burmese capital cannot be mentioned in the same day with Saigon. Still, after all, the general object of every one in going to the East is not so much to make a great show as to gather together a reasonable store of pieces of money. But the Rangoon merchants emphatically do, but the Saigon storekeepers do not. It comes to the old story. We are a nation of shopkeepers. The queer thing is, it is the Frenchmen who never get beyond the shop.

In 1880, leaving out of account the military and naval forces there were in Saigon 1,099 Europeans. Of these 1,047 were French, seventeen were English, and twelve Germans. The Frenchmen were mostly servants of the Government. The rest were shopkeepers and the like. The Germans and English were the merchants, and could easily have bought up the rest of the population. It troubles the French greatly to account for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Few Frenchmen care to emigrate, and the reasons they give are very various. 'The colony is too far off, too little known. No one has an idea of what may not happen in a place where the Government is so military and so despotic. The State does not yet aid emigration. Frenchmen who have any money at all prefer to stay at home. Those who have none might as well stay where they are. The Chinese alone used to be looked on with favour, and they were masters of the situation. Finally, a singular reason is given, which it is almost impossible for Englishmen to understand. Colonists are not allowed to make money or run themselves according to their own good pleasure.

The Colonial Government mixes itself up in all their affairs. A governor can turn out any one, whether Frenchman or foreigner, whenever he pleases. The consequence of all this is that hardly a solitary Frenchman makes money in Saigon. There is abundance of money to be made, but those who make it are all foreigners and mostly Chinamen. If it were not that the colony is so near to the Middle Kingdom, it would hardly have attained to the moderate degree of prosperity which it now enjoys. If Burma were as easily got at from China as Cochin China is, we should not have so much land lying untilled as is now the case in PEGU and TENASSERIM.

Still the fact remains that Cochin China, so far from being a profitable possession, is actually an expense to the Home Government. British Burma, on the other hand, has now for many years paid an annual surplus into the Indian exchequer of a million sterling, and this even during the last few years, when trade with the interior has been to a great extent thrown out of gear owing to the vagaries of our objectionable neighbour, King TIBBATAU.

The great want of the French in Saigon is capital for ~~the~~ few national houses there are. The majority of those who are in business are simply storekeepers, but there are a few mercantile houses. While the unfortunate French merchant struggles for a living, and can barely keep his head above water, the English and German houses, thanks to the resources at their back, have no difficulty in drawing to themselves all the exterior commerce that is worth having. As to the interior, the trade there is, as everywhere else where there are Chinamen, entirely in Celestial hands. The fact that the German houses should have the better of

them in the matter of money is the most bitter pill of all, for is it not an axiom that France is rich and Germany poor? With Englishmen it is another matter, for all Englishmen are rich, and all of them are shopkeepers.

The Saigonnais congratulate themselves that they have got rid of the *proconsuls militaires*. The admirals of the old days considered themselves, on shore as well as on the quarter deck, *maîtres à tous Dieu*. The whole career and often the reputation of the officials was at their mercy. Seeing that the town is simply *ville de fonctionnaires* this was barely satisfactory. The subordinates all took the character of their chief. Their sole endeavour was to reflect the sentiments and follow the ways of the *vieux de la montagne*. But even now with the civilian governors, two of whom have succeeded one another, it does not appear that matters have mended very much. There are not enough independents, or rather non-officials, to constitute what might be called public opinion. The officials swamp everybody at the elections; besides that, many of those who might be independent are bound to support the governor, for the sake of the contracts that may be got by blind backing through thick and thin. It is not therefore ~~sought~~ to deny that Saigon is *une ville morte*. The misery is that there is no attempt to resurrect it, nothing done to bring it to life again. The only idea that suggests itself is to go farther afield, to stretch out in all directions—to Annam, Tonking, Hu nan, Laos, Siam.

A blot on a sheet of paper is a nasty thing, but it does not improve matters to spread it all over the page. The Secretary of the Interior writes that “there remains an enormous amount of work to be done before the colony can be galvanized into real progress.” The only

answer he gets is that it is useless to confine himself to Cochin China, like a snail in its shell. It is not easy to see how a bad system of government will be any the less harmful in a larger area. Bad French government in Tongking or in Annam is a doubtful substitute for a feeble native government or a want of any government at all. Cambodia does not show much for its fifteen years of French management, except that it has at last practically fallen into French hands. The king was a barbarous ruffian before; he is a civilized blackguard now. The people are just as they were.

Life in Saigon finds its excitement in play and in gossip at the cafés. The gamblers keep very late hours, and this accounts in some degree for the almost universal practice of the siesta. So does the habit of eating an enormous breakfast at eleven or twelve o'clock, with wine, *chasse* of cognac or liquor, and finally beer. A goosed cobra kind of sleep is the natural result, and it is gone about in the most systematic way. The merchant shuts up his office, the shopkeepers put up their shutters, the cafés are deserted. Everybody calmly undresses and gets into his *marmesque*, the sleeping jacket and "pyjama" of India, and goes to bed solemnly, not to get up again till two in the afternoon. The custom is a great nuisance to strangers, who cannot understand the indignation of the hairdresser at being called out of bed at one in the day to cut a stupid new arrival's hair.

Opium-smoking is of course common among the people. The Chinese introduce it wherever they go. But it is also very largely practised by the French residents, notably by the officers in the Colonial army. Opium-smoking is absurdly abused by people who know nothing whatever about it. An opium pipe is perhaps

the best thing a man can take after an exhausting march, when fatigue drives away sleep, or in a malarious country, where the fever fumes are thick and heavy out of the marshes and rank jungle growth. Then it is a positive blessing, and superior to a pipe of tobacco; but it is a different matter in the towns. Opium is no more harmful in moderation than alcohol or tobacco, but when a man regularly smokes himself to sleep with his half-dozen, or his dozen, or his score of pipes, after breakfast and dinner, the habit becomes dangerous; the blessing becomes a curse, just as any excess is pernicious. Eating too much kills more people than anything else in the East. No doubt the opium pipe is very seductive, and therefore any tendency to its systematic use should be checked. Over-indulgence retards the digestion and thickens the nerves, and so produces atrophy.

Unfortunately there are too many Frenchmen who indulge to excess. They learn the habit in the worst way, through the *Concubine*, the "*moosme*" of Annam. That damsel is one of the first things a Frenchman procures when he reaches the country, and prominent officials do not hesitate to announce in print that the language can only, and, as a matter of fact, is ~~only~~, learnt through the *cocotte*. The girl is a regular piece of furniture, for she is bought from her family—at a very cheap rate too, for the Annamese are prodigal; but nevertheless she usually takes command of the establishment. She is a not unattractive hussy, and makes the best of her time, for she is quite aware that comeliness, especially Oriental comeliness, is a very transient thing. She is therefore corrupt and rapacious in the extreme, and, the better to manage her plans, teaches her master to smoke opium. But it would be well if he only smoked

in the company of his *chère amie*. He very often goes to much worse places. There is something peculiarly degrading in the spectacle of an officer in full uniform stretched at full length on the filthy boards of a stow, smoking himself into stupor. Too many of them become possessed of an ambition to colour a pipe for themselves. When a man starts colouring an opium or a tobacco pipe, or a cigarette tube, he becomes a mere slave, and should have some one to take care of him.

There are two delightful and well-kept-for gardens in Saigon—the Town Gardens and the Botanical Gardens. This is the great promenade, unless the band is playing on Sunday nights at the *Cercle des officiers*, under the shadow of the cathedral. The Botanical Gardens are well supplied with Oriental trees and plants of all kinds, and additional attraction is afforded by the aviaries and the collection of wild animals—orang-outangs, alligators, serpents, deer, and tigers. The tigers are fine specimens, and you will be taken to see them at night on the chance of hearing them roar and seeing the flame of their eyes.

The market is also one of the sights of the place. There is a shed in the middle, where the Annamese are established, and sell provisions of all sorts—meat fresh, dubious, and dried; fish in every state, from those that have still a flick left in the tail to Nueo-may, a noisome liquor obtained off the captures of many months since; fruit, eggs, vegetables, and all the mysterious roots and dried leaves and herbs that the Cochin Chinaman loves. Round the sides of the rectangle are ranged the little shops of the “Malabars”—the Frenchman indiscriminately calls every Indian, from a Sikh to a Burman, a “Malabar;” and further, transfers the name to the

hack carriages which Madagas or Malays usually drive. The Indian trader offers a gr at contrast to the Chinaman. He shouts, and clamours, and pounces down on every lady, and uses all his powers of persuasion and volubility to induce her to enter his booth to buy of his stock, usually cloth goods of an inferior character. The Chinaman, on the other hand, sits tranquilly fanning himself, and makes no attempt, by word or gesture, to attract a customer, yet he makes the more money of the two.

We are told that the five boulevards, the thirty-nine streets and the three quays of Saigon, measure twenty-three miles, three hundred and sixteen yards. This is satisfactory, but their appearance is more so. They are broad, constructed at right angles to one another, and metalled with BIEN-HOA stone. The pavements are everywhere well shaded with thick foliaged trees of all kinds, and the drains are well looked after by the municipality. Lamps line them at regular intervals, and are filled with oil, gas being as yet, and likely long to remain, too expensive on account of the want of coal. The water supply is good, and the hygiene, public and private, is well attended to. On the whole, if the Frenchmen would live a healthier life, there is no reason why Saigon should be considered so deadly as it is, notwithstanding the excessive heats.

CHOLON is the place where all the coal trade of Saigon is done. It is just under four miles off, and a steam tramway keeps up a regular service every half-hour. The town is, to all intents and purposes, Chinese; for though they number only about half the total population, they have all the trade, and all the shops, and all the best houses, to say nothing of the money. Chinese emigrants established the town in 1778, but it was not

till the Annamese Government was turned out that the place became really prosperous. Now the quays, which are of very great length, are lined with junks and vessels of all descriptions, loading and unloading cargoes from the richest marts of the East even the coolie work being done by Chinamen.

When the French came the town was dirty enough, with long, narrow, and winding streets; the houses dark and dangerously crowded together. The hog back bridges over the creeks were impracticable for wheel traffic, and almost impassable for Europeans. The tide often swamped the roadway, and every house had a heap of filth in front of it. The first thing the French did was to drive wide and airy streets through and through, give facilities for the building of wharves and the banking in of the creek, erect new bridges, determine the proprietary of the land, and light and drain the town. The chief thing to be done in this way was the utter destruction of the Annamese quarter, and the construction of it on a new site. A large bazaar, flagged with granite, with lofty, well-ventilated arcades and roof, has risen in the middle of the town, and is a perpetual scene of life and commercial activity.

Nevertheless the place retains a thoroughly Chinese air. The paltzy stalls of a few Annamese women cumber the sides of some of the streets but otherwise the frontage, with the narrow, deep houses, the huge red and black and yellow lanterns, the gay swinging signboards, are all suggestive of the Middle Kingdom. Corn-chandler, restaurant keeper, greengrocer, apothecary, tailor, shoemaker, gold and silversmith, ironmonger, furniture dealer, pastrycook—every one has his name over the door in letters of gold, and pendent signboards painted red, blue, gold or black, according to

taste, recommending his wares. By day, the clerks sitting naked to the waist languidly fanning themselves; by night, the place brilliantly lighted up with lanterns of all sizes and colours, setting forth the long name, and the goods to be sold. CHOLON is a vastly more entertaining place than SAIGON. It has some very fine joss-houses, showing the wealth of its inhabitants, which is further evidenced by the throng of well-dressed traders in the streets, with long coats of white, or blue, or pearl-grey, silk trousers, embroidered shoes, spruce white stockings, and occasionally long silk gaiters coming up to the thigh.

It is at CHOLON that the majority of the rice-mills are, and that the bulk of the rice trade is done. A few figures showing the growth and figures of that trade may be interesting. The table is drawn up by half-years ending at the dates mentioned.

	June 11 81	Dec 11 81	June 1882	Dec 11 1882
To Europe . . .	\$750 00	\$1 000 00	\$750 00	\$1 000 00
To Java . . .	810 00	(810 00)	900 00	177,000
To Straits . . .	11 00	11 00 00	21 00 00	8 70 00
To Philippines . . .	15 00	11 00	10 00	2 10 00
To Hong Kong . . .	2 70 00	11 70 00	5 00 00	2,727,000
	\$1,500,000	\$1,808,000	\$6,277,500	\$1,888,000

	July 011	Dec 11 1	June 1881
To Europe	\$5 00	\$7 000	\$1 100 000
To Java	132 000	18 00 00	700 000
To Straits	4 70 00	(0 00)	10 000
To India	8 80 00	80 00 00	1 101,000
To Hong Kong . . .	5 80 50 00	1 22 000	2 870,000

\$6,805,000 \$5,170,000 \$7,478,000

It will be noticed that in the first half-year of 1881 there has been an altogether extraordinary rise in the amount of rice exported to Europe. Till this year the home shipments were altogether insignificant. Now, for

some unexplained reason, they suddenly leap into second place

The only towns of any importance, after Saigon and CHOLON, are MYIHO and VINH-LONG. MYIHO is the second town of the colony, though it has lost some of its former importance. It stands on the left bank of the eastern mouth of the MÉKONG, at the point where the *Arroyo de la Poste* runs into the river from Saigon. It is the present terminus of a railway from Saigon, not yet quite finished, but intended eventually to run up to PNOM PENH, and farther. Many Frenchmen denounce the line as a farce, and say it is of no use to any one except the official who pocketed a commission on the granting of the contract. It is said that the *Arroyo de la Poste* and the *Arroyo Chinois* will take all the merchandise and the majority of the passengers to Saigon *via* CHOLON. The water communications of the country are no doubt extremely good; but that is in itself no reason why a railway scheme should not pay. The contrary has been proved in many places. The town of MYIHO is very prettily laid out, with palm-trees at regular intervals lining the long, straight roads. Otherwise, except a college founded in 1880, there is nothing notable in the place unless it be the citadel. This is a square of about five hundred yards to the face, planted vaguely in the plain a quarter of a mile or so from the river. It might just as well have been anywhere else within fifty miles as far as natural defences are concerned. The twenty-foot-high denticulated walls are surrounded, at a distance of a hundred feet, by what was once a moat, but is now a mosquito nursery in the guise of an evil smelling marsh. Of the ancient Annamese buildings there are no signs. Mud huts leave no ruins behind. The French have dotted a few houses belonging to Government officials,

and barracks for the garrison, in a random way over the grass-grown interior. A company of French soldiers holds the place. Of the sentinels at the three gates the writer visited, one was a half-grown hobbledehoy, another was smoking a cigar, and the third lay at full length on a bench, with his gun propped against the wall ten paces off.

MYNHO has about 15,000 inhabitants; VENIR-LONG has seven times that number. It is situated as near as possible at the head of the MÊKONG delta, and is also occupied by a company of French troops, also installed in a citadel. There are no Europeans here except Frenchmen. There are therefore no places of business, nothing but the ostentatious houses of the officials and the barracks, the post and telegraph offices, and a primary school. All the rest of the town consists of the miserable shanties of the Annamese, diversified by the solid, heavy-tiled dwellings of the sons of HAN, who are as industrious here as elsewhere, and produce a very satisfactory revenue for the place.

HAIRAN is another town, of no importance at present, but from which much is expected some day on account of its position. It lies at the mouth of a deep inlet in the Gulf of Siam, across the entrance to which there is unfortunately a reef over which large vessels cannot pass. There is even now a very fair coasting trade carried on with Siam, and a good deal of produce comes down to it from Cambodia. It is a place of some strategical importance from its position in the gulf, and has already played some part in the military history of the colony, and may yet play more.



CHAPTER XXI.

CAMBODIA—THE CAPITAL AND THE PEOPLE.

THERE is a weekly steamer service from Saigon to PNOM-PENH, the capital of Cambodia, and the distance of 250 miles is covered in less than a day and a half. The steamer—there is as yet only one to PNOM-PENH, though there are other smaller vessels running to HOCCHANG, CHAUDOC, BARIA, BENTREI, and BARTAMBONG—was built in Glasgow by the same makers who turn out the magnificent fleet of the Irrawaddy Flotilla. The Burma-boats are twice the size of the *Norodom Premier*; they run twice a week to Mandalay, are incomparably better fitted up, and the company owns some twenty or thirty of them, besides flats which the steamers tow alongside. The MEKONG river-boat has some difficulty in filling its own hold.

The route is down the Saigon river, up the CUA CAM, and into the MEKONG, a little above the town of MYING. That town, VINH-LONG, and other smaller places, such as LONG-XUYEN, SADER, VINHLOI, and occasionally others are visited. The voyage is, like that on all Indo-Chinese rivers, at any rate on their lower courses, sufficiently

monotonous. The banks on both sides, and the country as far as the eye can reach, are only a few feet above the surface of the river, which submerges whole districts in the rainy weather. At first the view of yellowing rice-fields, cocoanut and areca palm plantations, orange groves, bunches of sugarcane and mulberry-trees, and so on, is picturesque and amusing; but after the first forty miles one gets tired of it. Towards PNOM-PENH the river bank rises a little, but it is not till one is close there that any rising ground is to be seen, and then only in the far distance.

The capital is situated at a large, star-fish-like bifurcation of the river, called by the French, like dozens of similar places in other parts of the country, *Les Quatre Bras*. The junction of these four arms naturally adds greatly to the commercial importance of PNOM-PENH. Downwards from the town run the *Flume Postérieur* and *Flume Supérieur*, and above are the *Mékong* and the *Tonlé-Sap*.

The first view of PNOM PENH, when one reaches it as the writer did in the month of January in the very early morning, is exceedingly striking. There is a blaze of light which shows far and like a line of furnaces in the Black Country, or near Glasgow. As one advances, comes the hum of many voices, and a first impression is that King NORODOM's capital must be a huge and most industrious place. But in the summer months, when the steamer struggles up against the rain-swollen flood, there is barely a taper-light to be seen, and the only sounds to be heard are the chirp of the grasshopper and the deep notes of the bull frog.

The whole industry of the place almost is fishing. All along the banks, high above the river in January, rise a series of large, long-roofed houses, stretching in stages

down to the water-level. On the top are dried the fish, split down the belly and opened out. Down below are gigantic vats into which chopped up fishes are thrown along with salt, and so converted into oil. This manufacture of fish-oil is quite a new industry in PNOM-PENH. A demand has sprung up for it, and during the last two years the price has just doubled with the result that nearly the entire population is occupied in fishing and preparing the oil.

During the months of January, February, and March, the number of fish caught in the river is almost incredible. The river is then at its lowest, and thousands of fishing-boats are out every afternoon and night, and catch with every cast of the net a multitude of fish which it is almost impossible to hoist into the boat. Later in the year, men, women, and children wade into the shallow water with baskets and pails and basins, and carry off fish just like so much potatoes. Afterwards the industry is transferred to the Great Lake SIRM RIV. Gigantic fishes, something between a dog fish and a porpoise, are then caught. They measure over five feet long, and are as full of oil as a whale or a seal. It is only when the river rises with the rains that the fishing industry ceases, and with it everything resembling industry of any kind.

PNOM-PENH is pleasant to visit then. In February it smells like a sewer, and every one of the inhabitants seems to suggest the odour of Caliban. Otherwise New-don's capital is picturesque enough to look at—from the outside. The actual town is, like all other Eastern places, much less attractive. It is the merest fringe on the river bank, little more than a street deep. In the centre of this long strip of town, in a place cleared out for itself, dwells the *personnel* of the French

Protectorate. The buildings are all very solidly built, and have the usual mercantile air about them—of course at the expense of the Cambodian style. Beyond this there are no buildings except of the most paltry kind, the foreign houses having been burnt down in one of the numerous fires to which the Ashok lands are subject.

The royal palace is disappointing when compared with that of Siam, and even with the least model of Burma. King Norodom is a slighty personage, like all semi-savages and children of tender years. He greatly resembles in this respect the father of King Thibaw of Mandalay; he likes new things. The main occupation of the foreign trading population in Phnom-Pen is to find out some novelty which will strike the royal fancy. Then they are careful to make him pay for it. The French used to be rather proud of him as a *protégé*. He was supposed to have acquired a gloss of Parisian civilization. What amount he has is exceedingly flaky.

The palace enclosure is a huge, indefinite kind of space, inside which his Majesty has built and given up a number of residences one after the other. There is one which he had erected in European fashion, after French designs. It is now abandoned, and the key to the front door is apparently lost. At any rate nothing can be seen except a few hieroglyphs and roof designs, executed in the vestibule by an artist named Holland. In front of this is a garden in a dismal state of desolation, with a magnificent bronze fountain, sent from France, the basin empty, "the little wanton boys" capsized off their bladders, and the whole thing likely to collapse in another season or so.

Alongside this is the present throne-room, an oblong hall, built in semi-Chinese fashion, with dragon-tail

pinnacles and lavish gilding. The walls and the panels of a double central line of pillars are covered with fine French mirrors. There is much gold and garish tinsel work, especially on the throne at the far end of the hall. In the centre are raised places for the most eminent among the Buddhist monks. Numerous chandeliers hang from the roof, which is adorned with mythological designs painted on cloth sent out from Paris. Beside this again stands a large open-pillared hall, which serves as the Parliament House, Law Court, and Theatre. There is a sort of permanent stage at one end, and above are hung painted pieces of card-board to represent clouds. Besides these there is the harem, in which there are three hundred or more wives. There is also an iron palace in which foreigners are received. This, some may remember, was at the great Paris Exhibition; but it has been cut down in size to suit the king's taste for things in miniature. There are also other halls, courts, stables, and what not scattered about, notably a band stand, where a *troupe* of Manillamen discourse Offenbach's music to amuse his Majesty when he is bored, and persuade the French that he is civilized.

NOBODOM smokes opium all day long, drinks champagne by the magnum, and is a frightful Bluebeard in his conjugal relations. Nevertheless, till lately the French believed that he liked them, and was quite Parisian in his ways. He is certainly not much worse; so a magnificent bronze statue of the king was erected, in which he is dressed in an impossible uniform, and looks like an opera-bouffe hero.

Were it not for the fish-oil trade, which has sprung up in some altogether unexplained way during the last four years, Cambodia would be in a most pitiful state. But there is a large demand for the fish-oil in Europe,

and whenever there is a demand for anything in the East the Chinese step in and supply it. If the miraculous quantities of fish are not swallowed up, PNOM-PENH may run Saigon very hard as a money-making place.



CHAPTER XXII

HAINAN.

NOTHING seems more likely than that the conclusion of the hostilities between France and China will see the occupation of the island of HAINAN, either as a material guarantee for the payment of an indemnity, or as a new accession of territory to the colonies of the Republic. At the moment of writing the French fleet seems to be devoting more attention to Formosa, but this may be because that island offers a better point for the organization of forces with the view to prosecuting hostilities on the mainland after the winter shall have passed, or because Formosa is intended to be held also. In any case Hainan from its position, as well opposite the coast of China as on the eastern side of the gulf of Tongking, presents attractions to French earth-hunger which appear likely to prove irresistible.

The following hurried notes attempt no more than to give a sketch of the character of the island and its inhabitants. They are drawn up from particulars gathered during passing visits to Hanoi and the neighbourhood, but much more from the interesting and able papers of

the Rev. Mr. Henry, American missionary in Canton, and of Captain Calder of the Canton Viceroys steamer, *Sui-Tsing*. These articles, being hidden away in the pages of the *China Review* are no so well known to the general public as their literary merit and painstaking observation deserve.

In general it may be said that the whole northern half of Hainan is a plain, level to a great extent, but mostly undulating, and broken in a few places by isolated hills and low ridges. The north-west seaboard is especially low, and the soil appears for the most part to be very sandy, and great parts of it are therefore devoted to cocoanut plantations, the more extensive of which are, however, on the eastern and north-eastern shores. There along the seaboard they occupy most of the land capable of cultivation. From MAN-CHOW, up through LO-JIWU and JIWU-TUNG to WAN-CHANG, stretches a wonderful belt of these palms, seventy miles in length, and seven miles broad. This great tract yields the chief supply of cocoanuts that go in junk to all parts of the mainland. The great fleets of junk that come and go in the fishing season to this part of the coast are evidence of the immense industry carried on. The fishing villages present some queer phases of life, not only in the business done, but in the people who gather from all parts of the mainland. A motley crowd they are, often the very scum and dregs of the large cities, criminals flying from justice, and the villainous parasites that live only by preying on their fellow-men. The native craft are of the most primitive character, simple coracles sewn together with rattan, and caulked with cocoanut fibre. The fishermen have little more evidences of civilization about them. They go about, most of them, stark naked, and it may be imagined that

the scapogracers from the mainland have little trouble in cheating them as they please.

The central and southern portions of the island are mountainous. The highest elevation is reached in the Ivo Tinget and Li Mother ranges, from which all the larger streams take their rise. These begin as clear sparkling mountain brooks; but not a few of them, by a long course through reed and grass-grown tracts, become first miasmatic and then brackish. In the political divisions of the island, eleven of the thirteen districts converge to a centre near the great hills, some of them running in narrow slices for many miles into the wild mountain country. The line of the water-courses may have influenced this division, as well as the desire that each district should, as far as possible, share in the beneficent influences supposed to emanate from great mountains in the centre. The passage of the SHUT-TAN, a "Water-head" ridge, is no light matter. At this divide between the northern and southern streams the hills seem to loom up almost perpendicularly.

Mr. Henry gives a fine description of his passage over the watershed. He ascended the steep and slippery hill-side from the village of KWAI-KANG. "For nearly a mile the way led through woods, with here and there a field enclosed by a picket fence. From these open spaces fine views of the country, widening as we ascended, greeted us. 'White Stone' ridge stood out grandly above the valley, whose depths we know, but whose heights were only now revealed to us. We saw how the little stream was formed by several mountain brooks which rose high up the slopes, two of them forming fine cascades as they started down the mountain side, the nearer one falling in a broad sheet over a perpendicular wall seventy or eighty feet high, into a deep,

vine-covered ravine. We met with but few signs of life—a woodcock flying across the path, francolin crowing in the copse, and parquots chattering overhead, were all that appeared. Emerging from this belt of woodland, we came upon some rice-fields with little granaries, five or six feet high, built on the spot. The driving mist gradually increased in chilliness as we ascended and entered the tall grass. The path was very narrow and completely covered over with jungle grass, in some places taller than our heads, and tangled across the road in a most annoying manner, the whole soaked and heavy with moisture. The carriers had to put forth double exertion to press their baskets through the overhanging mass. The sharp grass, with blades which cut the hands that pushed it back, and the ubiquitous leeches, added greatly to the general discomfort. This passage across the ridge was four miles or more in length, the highest point reached being about two thousand feet above the valley, and probably three thousand above the sea. All hope of seeing the fine mountains beyond when we reached the top of the ridge was blasted by the driving storms of mist that shut out everything except the bleak sides of the Sun-Pai range near at hand, and occasional glimpses of the Pu-Pai ridge, with its finely wooded slopes running off at an angle to the south. Difficult as the ascent had been, the descent on the other side was even worse, though not so long. The steep pathway, covered with a low arch of tangled grass above, and filled with reeking pitfalls below, made it not only disagreeable, but really dangerous. At the foot a brook of wonderfully clear water flowed, in quiet contrast to the mud we had just waded through; and a short distance beyond it, over some marshy fields, stood the little village of Shui-Ying, the first in the Li

district of Ung Mau-'ling, as it is called there. It contains but two houses, in one of which we found a place to rest until the bearers came up, nearly two hours later. After an hour's rest we continued our way over another ridge, a mile and a half farther, to TA-ILAN. The road was better, but much obstructed by fallen trees and shrubs. All was wild and dreary looking, except in some of the ravines, where fine tree ferns were growing, with wild bananas and broad leaved alpinias replacing the general waste of jungle grass. The town of TA-ILAN is on a hill-side overlooking a fertile valley, and contains eight or ten houses, the largest and best being that of the headman, to which we were taken, set highest on the hill, and built somewhat in Chinese style. Formerly it contained forty houses, but a year ago was burned by a band of robbers, now Hakkas and Li combined, who swept the whole valley, burning villages and driving off cattle. Our host showed us the hatchet marks on his door which they tried to break open, and pointed dolefully to the little flocks of goats, which were all that were left of large herds, seventy head of large cattle having been driven off at the same time. The people here belong to the section called the Kona-Kruk Li, and speak a dialect so different from that across the ridge that our Li bearers had to converse with them in Hainanese in order to be understood. The houses were poor in consequence of the recent disaster, and were thatched with the fan palm, which grows in abundance half a day's journey from the place.

"The way next day led through one of the most charming bits of scenery one can imagine, following the course of the mountain brook, which became a rushing torrent in places, making us thankful for the help of our guides in selecting the shallower and less rapid places.

It was a broad and finely shaded road, a rich and varied forest growth lining it on either side, huge trees covered to their tops with vines and ferns, and cummings of delicate ferns (*lycopodium caudatum*) forming a rich green carpet over the rough banks. The stream bursts through a narrow, rock-bound gorge, along which it is impossible to travel, before it falls in a steep descent into the valley beyond. We ascended through several miles of cool woods that cover the shoulder of the hill to the left. The farther side of the hill is bare and frightfully steep. As we emerged from the trees we reached the best point from which to view the great Five Finger Mountains; but alas! the mist was too thick to give us even the faintest inkling of its outline, so we had to be content with the half-understood description of the Li, who pointed out the situation of the five peaks that compose it, and to take their word for it that the middle and highest peak was struck by lightning not long ago, and so shattered as to destroy its striking outline. The massive sides, to a height of about three thousand feet, were plainly seen, covered with trees. From this point we looked into the heart of the Li country—a country of rich valleys and fertile plains, high mountains and romantic scenery, well adapted to grazing, and capable of supporting many times the population of the scattered villages. The descent of this hill was very trying, the path leading down the sheer steep in places. We reached the foot without any mishap, and passing through another belt of woodland, where noisy paroquets chattered above us, and a monkey fled in dismay along the branches of a large oak-tree, we came to the town of NAN-AN, on the banks of a large stream which flows out to the sea in the Kox-YAN district."

Here, unfortunately, Mr. Henry had to turn back

through the ill-will of a Chinaman, who told the reverend gentleman's coolies terrible stories of the robbers who swarmed in the hills beyond and scared them so that nothing would induce them to go on. But he has given us a picture of the interior of the country which, till he passed through, was quite unknown to Europeans, and indeed to all except the actual natives of the country.

In the sixteenth century the statesman Hsi-Jui proposed, as the best means of controlling the Li, to open roads from north to south and from east to west, crossing each other in the centre. This simple plan, known in official records as the "cross roads proposal," was never undertaken, and the interior had remained a wild unknown, which even the most venturesome Chinese, spurred on by the hope of gain, had scarcely dared to penetrate. When Mr. Henry left NAM FUNG and went into the Li country he could get no directions as to the road beyond a couple of days or so, and had afterwards to inquire his way from place to place.

The first hills were bare and treeless; it was only after a long days journey that the lower forest-clad ranges were reached, many of the hills being crested only with fine groves on the summit, while others showed great black places, from which the grass had been burnt. In the ravines small streams gurgled along, hidden by the heavy masses of vines that twined and intertwined in impenetrable screens over the yielding bamboos, making ascent along the water courses a simple impossibility.

The rank jungle grass which covers the slopes, when cut in the proper season, makes excellent thatch for roofs. The great difficulty of agriculture is the toil of breaking up this jungle soil. After the surface covering of grass and shrubs has been burnt off, there remains a

layer of matted roots a foot thick, which must be grubbed up by main force before the soil can be utilized. Neglect for only a couple of years now vitiates the commencement of the whole toil over again.

Beyond this border country a great deal of the journey has to be gone over in the bed of the mountain streams, the bottom stony, the current swift, and the banks lined with pathless jungles of trees and bushes. But this somewhat cheerless path was better than that through the rank grass, where the grayish-brown leeches hang to the end of every blade of grass and leaf, and feel about in every direction for prey. When once they have got hold, nothing will detach them but fire or saturation. It is impossible to escape them; the only thing is to become accustomed to the infliction, and pick them off whenever practicable. The bearers carry sharp bamboo sticks, with which, by a quick notion, they sometimes can detach them; but a European cannot manage this, and, unless he has abundance of time, had best wait for the first halting-place, and steadily burn them at the kitchen fire. Up in the lower hill country here there is a considerable quantity of tea, growing wild, the leaves of which the natives dry and infuse after the fashion of the stuff used for the same inferior beverage in Pongking. There is also a fair amount of teak timber, with its large, handsome leaves and clusters of pink flowers.

Mr. Henry was unable to get through to the south of the island, which appears, however, to be a more large of mountains; but the coast is pretty well known from the observations of Captain Calder, though the typhoons, which yearly burst with their full force on the eastern and south-eastern coasts, tend year after year to change it more and more, to tear away every now and again a little of the land, to raise a shoal here, and demolish

another in some other part. The coast begins to rise steadily on the east, and continues to do so all round the south, with here and there a bold foreland running out to assert itself, and furnish a little shelter to troubled mariners. There are, however, comparatively few anchorages, and few of the bays are to be trusted. The native junks usually keep clear of this part of the island during the summer, or typhoon months. All the west coast is high and mountainous, rising in one remarkable headland, known as the Devil's Thumb, to an altitude of two thousand feet. All the north coast is shoal, and the strong current which runs through the Hainan Straits, between the island and the mainland of KWANG-TUNG, makes the passage very dangerous during the early months of the year, when heavy fogs hang over the banks.

The estimated area of the island is twelve thousand square miles, and the population possibly two millions, but it is impossible to give more than an approximate estimate, for great part of HAINAN is really unknown. The interior is peopled by aboriginal tribes called LI, who are practically independent, and have maintained their position against the Chinese for two thousand years. Settled in different bolts also are the LOI and the HAKKAS, the former a distinct race, who dress like the Chinese, but in stature, features, and speech are very unlike them. They are probably descendants of some "MIAOISU" tribes, brought ages ago from the highlands of KWANG-SI and YUNNAN to act as mediators between the Chinese and the wild aborigines. More will be said about the HAKKAS and LI below.

The Chinese themselves only occupy the coast line, in some parts only the narrowest of fringes. In general, Mr. Henry thinks, the limits of the LI districts might

be placed at five miles inland from Ling-Mun on the north, the same distance inland from Nam-Pung on the west, while the south, in parts of the Chang-Pan, Kom-Yin, and Ling-Sun provinces, the Li possessions extend to the coast itself, their rugged hills, covered with impassable jungle, reaching down to the very sea. There is always more or less hostility between the Chinese and the Li, and between the Li and the Lakkas, of both of which sects there are two divisions.

About eight hundred years ago the great Chinese statesman, Su-Tung-Po, who was banished for a time to Hainan, wrote as follows of the island, giving a general description, which Mr. Jordan, the translator, late consul at Hongow, characterizes as a true picture of the Hainan of to-day. "There is a great deal of waste land in Hainan, and the custom is to make a livelihood by trade in fragrant wood. The island does not grow enough rice for its own consumption, and its people have to fill their bellies with slops made of a mixture of sweet potatoes, tubers, and rice. I have been moved to pity at their condition, and have composed the following exhortation to agriculture, in imitation of 'Pao Yuan-Ming, to give them advice on the subject. —

" 'Sad it is that ye Chinese and Li, who are both alike subjects of one emperor, should, from lack of instruction rather than your own natural bent, have fallen into such an uncivilized and degraded state. Whenever evil passions are to be gratified, or plunder is sought, arms are ever forthcoming, and internecine feuds ensue. For the wrongs thus inflicted no redress is procurable, the fault of which lies with the officials. He even has sent calamity upon your land: neither wheat nor millet is grown, and the people are without ordinary comforts of life. You plant strange trees, and, when they have

decayed, gather your harvest of fragrant wood from then on (this is to make the scented necklaces worn by officials; the CHIH NAN of the island is still celebrated), corrupt and grasping officials swoop down upon you like hawks, and prey upon you like wolves. Nor is there any lack of good and arable land. Broad stretches of fertile plains lie interlaced with the tracks of wild beasts, and the melody of the birds makes music to the ear. The archer pursues the startled deer betimes in the morning, the wild boar is driven from his lair at night, and all the while your aged ones have to stave off hunger with slops of sweet potatoes and taros. Give heed, then, to my earnest words and find happiness for evermore. Sharpen your hoes and axes, and, neighbour joining neighbour in friendly partnership, clear away the jungle, and mark out your land into cultivable areas. Let fathers and elder brothers wield the rod of correction over all idlers. Heaven does not part with her gifts easily, but neither does she niggardly withhold them. If you work with all your might in the spring you may expect a rich reward in the autumn. When the clouds arise and the rain ceases let all go afield. Filial obedience and parental affection are our prized tenets, and disregard of them will disgrace you, but bare arms and bare feet need bring the blush to no cheek. Let all idlers, scoffers, and gamblers be handed over to the savage of Li. Then when the fall comes, and you gather in all round your full bins of the ripe grain, you can hold high revel at your harvest home, and imbibe unrestrainedly of the very best." "

Such advice from a distinguished literate is very rare. But Su-TUNG-PO had actually opposed the introduction of essay writing as a subject at the examinations, and thought that learning to plough and dig was

much better than joining over miserable books, as no doubt it is for a good many people. Su-T'ang remained 1200 years in the island and did an immense deal of good, instructing the people, improving the buildings, and writing excellent poetry, besides gratifying his whim for digging wells, though he himself was a hard drinker, as all his race and a poet ought to be, according to the Chinese notion.

Hainan will bear comparison with the most fertile islands in the world. Sugar is cultivated to a very considerable extent, and forms a principal article of export, as also does ground-nut oil. The coco-nut, as already mentioned, abounds, and rice is raised for home consumption is raised with ease. Only a comparatively small part of the island, however, is under cultivation, the remainder being covered with jungle. It requires the greatest care and labor to prevent this from encroaching on the reclaimed land bordering on it. If the country were developed by Europeans it would be found suitable for the cultivation of almost every kind of tropical produce. Hard wood timber is plentiful. Indeed there is apparently no soft wood available, for all the woodwork of the houses is of solid hard-wood, much of it well dressed and polished, giving the dwellings a very substantial and rich appearance. Farm produce of every kind is abundant, and is sent to the Hong Kong market, pigs and cattle figuring in great numbers. The inhabitants, unlike the Chinese generally, are great beef-eaters, but the falkow, fides, and horns are the chief source of profit from a commercial point of view.

The mineral resources of the country are also believed to be very great, though not a very great deal is known about them. Gold is known to exist in several districts, and in one place, ten miles south-west of Nam-Tung,

mining was carried on to some extent a few years ago; but the owners of the land, and the people living near, were afraid that the earth would take revenge for the removal of her precious deposits and bring some disaster upon them, and forbade its continuance, so that all operations of the kind have been for some time stopped. In other places complaints were made that the mining *d'bins* destroyed the grain fields and injured the water supply. Suspicion of the Chinese, rather than any genuine superstitious fears, however, seems to influence the Li. In the SHUK-LUK hills of the CHUMUNG TA district, copper mining was carried on on quite an extensive scale, the ore being of a very rich quality. Owing to improper management the mine caved in and nearly a hundred men were killed, and since then nothing has been done towards re opening the workings. Reasonable honesty in dealings with the Li would, however, probably result in a re-commencement whenever it might appear to be worth the trouble.

The chief products of the interior, brought down to the coast towns by the aborigines, are rattans, deer-horns and sinews, dried mushrooms, fragrant woods and gums, and dressed hides. The trade at present is in a very primitive state and is capable of enormous development. Mr. Henry met with numerous flourishing towns in the interior, and gives a general impression that the people are prosperous and well-to do, if it were not for the periodical raids of robber bands.

• The meteorology of Hainan is very interesting. Many pages in the local chronicles are devoted to the record of storms, earthquakes, and similar phenomena. The peninsula of LUT CHAO, opposite, is considered the home of thunder, but Hainan is the favourite playground of the typhoon. The frequency of these terrific storms is

proverbial, and the devastation wrought appalling. One year, the chronicles state, three of these tornadoes occurred in a single month. Hailstorms are recorded, in one of which, in 1828, the lumps of ice varied in size from a man's fist up to a bushel measure. The melting of this ice caused floods that destroyed the rice, bringing severe famine in the following year, which was aggravated by descents of locusts that devoured the remnants of the crop. In consequence people died of starvation in great numbers, and many fled over the straits to the mainland. Earthquakes are recorded as of frequent occurrence. Several with disastrous results have taken place in the present century, and have been felt in all parts of the island. The rocks which cover the surface of the north so thickly are evidently of volcanic origin. They are hard and black, in many places filled with cavities caused by bubbles of air in the molten mass which they once were. The history of the island records no volcanic eruption, so that these igneous rocks must have been thrown up in prehistoric times. The country people build their houses of this volcanic stone. The thick walls and low roofs may be an admirable protection against typhoons, but the black outside and the dismal interior are far from being pleasing to the eye.

The HAKKAs occupy a rich and cultivated belt of country lying between the older Chinese settlers along the sea-shore and the aboriginal LI in the mountains. The thrift and enterprise of the HAKKA emigrant from the north is well illustrated in the history of the colony in the interior of Hainan. About a hundred and twenty years ago two HAKKAs from the north east of the Canton province came to Hainan and pushed their way into the interior. Near the great hill, SHI-MO LING,

they found good farming and grazing land unoccupied. They settled there and prospered. In a year or two they sent for their families, and the report of their good fortune induced others to follow until a large settlement was formed. From this small beginning they have increased in numbers and in holdings until they occupy, wholly or in part, a district some forty miles in length by fifteen in breadth. Their headmen assert they number 20,000, centring round the towns of LING-LUN, WO-SHE, NO-TAI, NAM FUNG, and LOK KI. They are on fairly good terms with both Chinese and Li, and are honest, well to do, and hospitable, retaining their own language and customs, and referring constantly to their old home across the sea where the temples and tombs of their ancestors are. They are called the LO HAKS, or old Hakkas, and they live in a most picturesque country, with wood clad hills and valleys, stretches of good rice land, and broad expanses of shrub grown pastures, with roads leading in all directions to the numerous villages. Away to the south rise abruptly, from the midst of a heavy covering of dark green forest, the jagged walls of white-coloured rock, known as the PAK-SHEK, or white stone ridge, and beyond the dim outlines of the mountains of the interior and the solid, dome-like mass of SHIA MO-LING, to the west. The great hill is a most conspicuous object, rising more than three thousand feet above the plain. The lower portions are bare of trees, but the middle and upper zones are densely wooded. To the south it is a great precipice of black rock, over which water in streams and in little runlets, oozing from clefts in the rock, pours down apparently in one broad sheet when the sunlight glistens upon it. The hill is inhabited by Li, whose groups of straw-thatched huts cluster on the sides and top, the open

spaces among the trees showing the fields they cultivate.

The "Old Hakkas" are so called to distinguish them from the SAN HAK, or "New Hakkas," who came to Hainan about twenty years ago. These men belonged to the turbulent bands that caused such widespread disorder and desolation in the districts of SAN NING, YAN-PING, and SAN HING, and were driven out in the beginning of the reign of TUNG-CHI. They settled near the "Old Hakkas," but soon began a system of robbery and oppression. From the Chinese of LAM KO on the one hand, and the LI on the other, they stole cattle and lands until the country rose up in arms against them. The people of LAM KO were perfectly helpless before them, and the soldiers sent by the magistrate were repulsed time after time. At length a force of trained soldiery, under a general of some distinction, was sent, and then the SAN HAK were subdued and driven from their stronghold, in the valley of TAN KAI, beyond the PAK-SHUK ridge. The slaughter in the battle fought here was very great, but the executions that followed exceeded the number slain in battle, while all that remained alive were ordered to leave the island on pain of death. Many traces of this brief and bloody episode remain in the places occupied by this short lived colony. Under direction of the officials they were separated into small companies, and transported to various places on the mainland. The number killed and transported has been estimated as high as ten thousand. This, however, is probably in excess of the actual number. After the defeat many escaped to the hills, and, being outlawed by the Government, joined with the plundering bands of the LI, and have been a scourge to the country ever since. The old Hakkas refrained from any open recog-

nition of their badly behaved countrymen, but were well known to give their sympathies and even substantial help in many ways. The authorities however, in the absence of any overt act, wisely overlooked the secret aid, and in the edict ordering the removal of all the "New Hakkas" were careful to state that the peaceful Lo Hak were to remain unmolested.

The Li seem to be much more closely related to the Malays than to the Chinese. They have a distinct type of face, square features, noses not so flat as that of the Celestial, eyes of a different type, and with a dark, copper-like complexion. A hint of their origin is perhaps found in their name, which is variously pronounced *le*, *lai*, *lay*, *loi*, and in one place even *Moi*, the name the French, after the Annamese, give to the Shans of the Mékong valley. The people add a labial when speaking of themselves, and say *B'lai*, *B'lay*, and so on, which is near enough to MALAYU, though *Mlai* and *Mlay* to suggest some connection. Unfortunately not enough is known of their language to afford any satisfactory philological tests.

They are divided into fifteen or sixteen different tribes, known by distinct names, and differing more or less in dress, language, and customs; but all evidently belong to one homogeneous race, bound together by common ties and, as a rule, living on friendly terms with each other. The Chinese divide them roughly into the SHANG-LI, or "wild" LI, and the SHUK-LI, the "tame" or civilized LI. The latter live on the outskirts of the hilly centre, and dress much like the Chinese; but the SHANG-LI is essentially a hunter, and discards trousers and other such evidences of civilization. He also seems to be taller and more athletic, averaging five feet nine or ten, with a muscular, well proportioned

figure; while the "lamo" tribes, more especially to the east, seem to be generally undecorated, though square built. The women also seem to follow the same rule, those of the interior being tall and slender, with oval face and perfect features, while in the outskirt country they are generally short, fat, and round-faced. They are far from bad-looking, and have none of the bashful prudery of Chinese women. Their dress consists of a short petticoat or kilt coming down nearly to the knee, made of grass cloth, and usually of a blue ground, with a few horizontal, bright-coloured stripes running through it. Like the men, they wear their hair done up in a knot on the top of the head, like a Burman, and also, in accordance with Burmese fashion, frequently make it up round the head, twisted in the scarf which serves them as a turban. The younger women wear nothing but the exiguous skirt, but when they are married, except in the far interior, they add a jacket. When they are married they are also tattooed with blue stripes and marks over the cheeks, forehead, chin, hands, arms, legs, and partially on the breast and back—wherever, in fact, there are ordinarily no clothes. In their ears are inserted deer bones, whose diameter of quarter of an inch recalls the Burmese *Na Doung*. When they come down to the lowland villages not a few wear the hair drawn back from the forehead and held by a comb. A Chinese work, quoted by Mr. Henry, and entitled "Fresh Notices of Kwang tung," gives some curious details about the Li.

"The Li Mother mountains are lofty and precipitous. In their midst rise the Five Finger and the Seven Finger Peaks. Among them dwell the Wild Li and the beasts of the forest, while the Tame Li encircle them about. The Tame Li understand the language of the Chinese; they are accustomed to enter the cities for the purpose

of trade, and in the evening, at the blowing of a horn, gather in crowds to return to their homes. The Wild Li are not accustomed to come to the cities, and are seldom seen. In the YAM-TSU year (about 1600 A D) over twenty Wild Li appeared unexpectedly with presents before the high officials. Their banner, inscribed with the words, 'The Li people submit to civilization,' was fastened to a betel-nut pole. One man bore a large offering of flowers. They cast before the officers an article in shape like a cart wheel, the outside of which was white, while on the inside flowers were traced in black. One man carried in his arms a YAU-TSUK tree, seven or eight feet in length; two men brought in a porcine bear, and two carried a yellow deer. The countenances of these men were all black and forbidding, their hair was unkempt, their feet bare, and their short garments reached only to the waist with a triangular piece of cloth to cover the lower body. Those who saw them took them to be demons. Over their foreheads the hair was twisted into a knot, in which gold and silver skewers or han-pins of ox-bone were stuck. Those who insert the pins perpendicularly are Wild Li, and those who insert them crosswise are Taine Li, this being one way to distinguish them. The women generally wear the Li skirt which is made of one whole piece of cloth, the upper and lower portions being firmly joined. From the neck to below the knees it falls without a seam, but is sewed together along the four sides, and figures in the five colours are embroidered upon it with silk floss. This skirt is made with hundreds of fine pleats, and more than a hundred feet of cloth is used. Being long it interferes with their walking, so they tuck it up in the middle, fold over fold, on their backs, which gives them the appearance of carrying great burdens.

Their faces are stained with shapes of flowers, butterflies, and such things, from which they receive the name of 'tattooed women;' the tattoo is not considered a mark of beauty. [It is possible the Li may have first of all tattooed their women to prevent the Chinese from stealing them, just as the Chins tattoo the faces of their girls so that the Buimans might not carry them off] When a Li woman wishes to marry a man, each has regard for the good looks or otherwise of the other, and the engagement is formed by mutual consent. The man first traces a pattern on the woman's face, which must be in exact conformity to the pattern picked by his ancestors, not the slightest variation being allowed, the reason he gives being that he fears that after death his ancestors would not recognize her; moreover, previous to the betrothal the hands are tattooed, and on the evening before the marriage the face is done with patterns all given by the man, which are a sure sign by which she is recognized as his, and prevents her from marrying another. Only the daughters of free families are allowed to tattoo.

"The Li women all carry a piece of lacquered wood, on which are written several lines of a Li ballad; the writing, however, is like the wriggling of worms, and cannot be deciphered. The bow never leaves the hands of the men. It is made of a rattan that grows in the shape of a perfect bow, the two ends having notches on which to fasten the strings. The strings are also of rattan, and the barbed arrows of bamboo, without feathers, but armed with three barbs, in shape like the horns of the water caltrop, which, entering the flesh, cannot be withdrawn. The Wild Li are very fierce and violent, their bows draw two hundred catties (266 lbs.). They go armed with spears, having corselets of bone and helmets made of the bark of some fragrant tree.

"The districts are from twenty to thirty *li* (say ten miles) in extent, and each district has upwards of ten villages. The soil is rich and the people numerous as in the villages of the Chinese outside. The mountains and peaks rise in ranges above each other and are covered with deep forests. The water is noxious and the mountains covered with a purple mist. The air is damp and close, being shut in on all sides, so that outsiders cannot enter with impunity. In this way, by means of what is in fact a calamity, all savages obtain their security.

"The Tame Li are the parasites (literally, daniel) of the Wild Li, and the tax collector is the devourer (literally, paddy-worm) of the Tame Li. Whenever a Wild Li wiggles, the Tame Li are up and after him. The wickedness and deceit of the Tame Li are provoked by the demands of the tax collector. The tax-collector corresponds to the village elder, or the headman of a street, and exacts service from the Li as if they were captives whose lives he had spared. All taxes are levied according to his assessment, and find their way into his private purse. When his superiors demand them he says, 'Ah! these Wild Li, I don't dare to press them lest they rebel.' This is a specimen of their villainy and deceit. In case an official goes in person to the Li villages to receive tribute, if, as he arrives at each place, he partakes cordially of the repast prepared for him, the Li are delighted, treat him with great respect, and hasten to bring in all their dues. If in any way he fails to respond to their hospitality they become excessively enraged, and lie in wait along the forest paths with their bows and arrows to attack him: in this then evil nature corresponds to that of their water and plants. The official must appear pleased, smile graciously, and con-

verse with them, receive their offerings, and in return present them with some silver medals and red cloth. With these they go home most happy, place them upon the incense altar, and regard them as precious. If, however, the official despises them because they are naked, and requires them to put on proper clothing before he will see them, the news of such treatment is soon spread abroad, and they are thenceforth seldom seen. The tribute is also withheld, and there is nothing for the officer to do but to ask the tax collector to see to it.

"The LI are mostly of the two surnames FU and WONG. If a chief has not one of these names the LI will not submit to him. When a man wishes to become a chief an ox is tied to a certain place to be shot with the bow. If the arrow goes clean through the ox's belly and comes out on the other side his right to become a LI chief is vindicated. In making agreements written characters are not used. When anything is borrowed they take a cord and make a knot in it, which serves as a deed or pledge. If the debt is not paid, although decades and centuries may have passed, the children or grandchildren may bring out the knotted cord and demand payment, nor can the descendants of the debtor deny the claim.

"The LI are much given to cursing, and their spirits have power to work great injury. For instance, if a man falls out with his associate, he straightway curses his deceased parents. In a little while the man's body begins to seem like fire, his head and stomach being racked with pain. He, aware of the cause, does not let it be known, but simply says, 'I have offended the earth god,' and offers worship, pouring out a libation of wine and presenting an offering of meat. These he sacrifices to the earth, repeating prayers the while.

When the sacrifice is ended the man and his wife divide the things between them and eat them, whereupon the sick man recovers immediately.

“If any one in trading cheats them with spurious or adulterated articles, they lie in wait along the road, and, seizing the first man that comes along, carry him to their home, where he is beaten with excessive severity. The victim of this treatment sends a letter to the family of the real offender informing them of the matter, insisting upon their sending the goods originally required, so that he may be released. If they cannot get hold of the man he informs his associates, who apply to the magistrate for Tame Li to be sent with a warrant to arrest him. Although he does not understand writing, he will recognize the official stamp and deliver up the goods forthwith.

“Tradition relates that the spirit of thunder carried an egg into the mountains from which a woman was produced, and further, that a man from GHAO-CHI (Annam) crossed the sea in search of fragrant herbs, and upon the marriage of these two, children and grandchildren followed in great abundance. This was the Li mother. Originally the Li belonged to the race of birds and beasts; being derived from an egg, their natural disposition was distinct from that of human beings, so that from ancient times to the present they have remained uninfluenced by the royal civilization.’

This tradition of original birth from an egg is very common among the different Indo Chinese peoples. The pieces quoted above give at once some interesting sketches of Li customs and a hint of the way in which the Chinese treat the mountaineers when they have the opportunity. The charge of cowardice and timidity which the Chinese bring against them can hardly be

sustained, and might, in many cases, be applied to the Chinese themselves. A constant state of warfare exists. It is generally understood that the Chinese provoke quarrels by cheating the more simple savage, who then retaliates by making a raid on the settlements, killing the men and carrying away the women. The Li, armed chiefly with bows and spears, are no match in the open field for the Chinese, with rifles and cannon. They therefore conceal themselves in the jungle and make sudden sallies, retreating before the enemy can retaliate. The Chinese are therefore afraid of the jungle, equally on account of these ambushades and the malaria which prostrates many of them. It says a great deal for the natural friendliness and forbearance of the Li that, in spite of all the bad treatment they meet with, they should permit the Chinese to travel and trade unmolested through their country to the extent they do.

The construction of their houses is very simple. Most of them are of the "boat" pattern, so called from their resemblance to the upturned hull of a boat. Two rows of hard wood pillars are firmly embedded in the earth and joined by cross beams to form the main support. On these beams are laid the strong and supple trunks of young trees, which interlace in a curved line at the top, and on them bamboos are placed crosswise, making a light and solid frame, which is covered with an impervious thatch of jungle grass. The side walls are made of woven bamboo, three or four feet high, and beyond these the straw thatch slopes several feet until it almost touches the ground, forming broad and well protected eaves very much like those used by the KACHYENS on the Burmo-China frontier. Under these generous eaves the dogs, goats, and other animals find a comfortable shelter. The end walls are made of bamboo lattice, with a door in

the middle of each that stands open all day long. No windows are needed, for the openings in the bamboo work admit sufficient light even when the doors are shut. Within, the space is sometimes, but far from always, divided into apartments by light bamboo partitions. The floor is of earth, but beaten smooth and solid. Along the whole of one side are the beds, arranged on bamboo frames raised a foot or more from the ground. The houses are usually built against the slope of the hill, and the main entrance is from the upper end, where the roof projects, forming a portico.

A large fire burns in one corner, and the Li have usually but one large iron kettle, which serves all purposes in turn—cooking, boiling water, wash bowl, foot bath, and so on. On the walls are hung heavy nets for the capture of game, the mode adopted being to enclose a space, usually of swampy ground, with the net, which is four feet or more in height and several hundred feet long, and drive the game into it. Wild pig, deer, and such animals are caught in this way. Bows and arrows, spears and knives also adorn the beams, as well as numerous trophies of the chase, in the shape of the jawbones of the animals captured.

The Li do not seem to have any form of writing, none certainly that is generally known to the people. Captain Calder found what appeared to be characters of some kind scrawled on the interior walls of a temple in a Li village near YU-LIN-KAN, but none of the villagers could tell him anything about them, except that they had probably been written by a medicine man, who was, however, not forthcoming. The characters have a resemblance to a kind of mixture of Chinese and Malay, something like what one might imagine these characters written on the surface of rippling water. The Li do not seem to have even

any recognized symbols for numbers, and it is only those who have come in contact with the Chinese that have any notion of time. They do not care for money, but are keen barterers, and will readily give a bullock for a box of gun caps, two for a pound of gunpowder, and five or six for a gun. The possession of a gun of some kind is one of their dearest ambitions. One singular point about the Li is the circumstance that they seem to have no form of religion, unless perhaps it might be a regard for good and evil spirits; but even in Shamanism they seem to be far from perfect. They have no ancestral worship, no Fung-Shui, no state religion, no signs of image or spirit worship, no shrines nothing that would seem to indicate a religious belief of any kind. Over the doors of some of the houses are to be seen occasionally a few slips of gilt bespattered vermilion paper, but this is probably put up simply because the Chinamen use it, and with no idea beyond ornament. It is said that a special corner of the house, that behind the door, as with the KACHYENS, is supposed to be sacred to LI-POH-SIN, a kind of fairy grandmother; but Mr. Henry was never able to see anything in this supposed holy spot but hoes and poles and hats, which certainly suggest no idea of sanctity. The religion of the Li is as much a mystery as their possible written character.

Another singular matter is the entire absence of graves. In all Mr. Henry's journey he saw no tomb, nor any sign of a burial-place. The Li are a healthy, robust race; but they must die like other people. Still, no inquiries could draw out any information as to what they do with their dead. Mr. Henry was of opinion that the body was placed in any secluded place, and that care was taken to replace the earth and cover it over so that the place might not be recognized. Possibly they have their

"skeleton hills" like some of the hill tribes of Burma. Mr. Calder claims to have seen a wake, but he only saw the Lr near the coast, where they may possibly have adopted Chinese methods. In going through a village he saw a dead and half drowned bullock in one place, a few sleeping and drunken people at another, and the remainder gorging themselves, some on raw meat, others roasting pieces of it over the fire, and all more or less intoxicated. "On the forty ninth and sixty-fifth days after death the relations again assemble at the grave and hold another feast. They do not seem to regret the death of an old person much. On one occasion I noticed a coffin at the side of a hut; it was empty, and, making inquiries about it, I was told by a young man that his old father was dying. He expected he would be dead in a few days, and he, the son, had just made a coffin for him. I asked if he was not sorry that his father was dying. he laughed and said: 'No, he is of no more use; he can only eat, and I have to provide food for him, so why should I be sorry that he is to die? he is an old man, and it is better for him to be dead than alive.' On the other hand, the Chinese work quoted above says: "When the parents die, the children gather together what wealth of personal effects they have left and, in the presence of the chief and the people, bury them, saying, 'The favour bestowed by our parents is so great that we have nothing wherewith to requite them, and cannot therefore presume to appropriate what they have left behind to our own use.' Moreover, of the people about, none would dare to steal them lest the evil spirits should injure them, so it is said. When carrying burdens in every case they use but one shoulder, no matter if the way is over steep hills or dangerous places, their ancestors always did so, and they will not presume to change the mode. This is an

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instance of their stupid affectation of filial piety." It is much to be feared that the Li have no belief except in the existence of evil spirits, the lowest and most degrading cult that exists.

As far as is yet known there are only two ports of any real value for foreign shipping. These are Hoihow, the westerly port, in the north, and Yu Lin-Kan in the south. Of these Hoihow, close to Kiungchow, the capital, is the only one that is really used, and labours under very great disadvantages. The banks and currents of the straits are very dangerous, and the channel is very intricate. Ships have to anchor in an open roadstead, and have no protection in either monsoon. The town lies three miles up the river, and a long spit of sand runs out into the bay, and at low water little is to be seen but a broad stretch of slimy mud. Boats can only go up to the town at high-water, and then only with a man who knows the channel. Such a state of affairs is a ruin to trade where there are many steamers, or when large cargoes have to be shipped. The town consists mainly of one long street following the bends of the river, with one or two straggling side streets. There is a wall round part of it, and two or three Mastello towers, in the way of fortifications, besides a long earth-work, with bamboo palisading and a few guns, which have been run up since the commencement of the Tongking campaign. This might be easily shelled from the anchorage, but determined troops with good breech-loaders might make a direct landing very difficult. The works can, however, be turned without the slightest difficulty.

The inhabitants of the place were originally compulsory exiles, and are supposed to have come from the FUKIEN province. Now they speak a dialect of their

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own. The country round about is rather pretty. To the west there is swelling ground with pleasant woods, and a Chinese camp now occupies a great portion of it. The main interest to the European lies, however, in an old cemetery which covers a great part of the main slope. Hundreds of the monuments have the cross plainly cut upon them, and the names of Chinese converts, with all the particulars of age, residence, and position given. The inscriptions on several of the Chinese tombs, as well as the size and shape of the monuments, show them to have been men of high position in the Church. Conspicuous among the others are the tombs of three Europeans. One of these was a German, and the Latin inscription records that he died October 9, 1686, after having been eight years in Hainan. He was evidently a man of unusual importance, his tomb being much more elaborate than the others. The other two seem to have been Portuguese, who died in 1681. Many of the Chinese tombs bear nearly the same date, and the annals of the prefecture record, a particularly deadly plague that swept over the place at that time. The existence of such a cemetery so finely situated, and with the tombs of so many respectable people, seems to show that at one time the Church of Rome had a large following in Hainan. The Chinese records have not much to say on the matter, but tradition asserts that a Tao-Tai was among the converts. It is also claimed that the present temple of longevity at Kiung Chow, the capital, was once a Romish church. The officials now worship there on New Year's morning and on the emperor's birthday. The Jesuit Mission is said to have been opened in 1680, and to have gone on progressing for half a century. Then the suppression of the Society of Jesus probably led to the disappearance of the Hainan

branch. It is strange, however, that from being so numerous the converts of the north of the island should have dwindled away so completely. A modern mission was commenced by French fathers in 1849. It has met with little success.

KIUNG-CHOW FU, where the chief officials live, is only a short walk off to the east. The path lies over grave-covered, barren hills, and part of the way between lines of ever green hedges, with every here and there a *Par Fang*, plain, shabby gateways spanning the road in memory of constant widows who never married again, though some of them were no more than betrothed. The ancient walls of the city look very picturesque, covered as they are with a green garment of ferns, figs, and various creepers. The houses are curiously low. A tall man has to bend double to get inside. This is for better security against typhoons. Numerous gardens, ponds, and groves of bamboo show that there is abundance of room for the inhabitants. Outside the west gate is the centre of the delicate cocoa nut ware industry, for which the north of Hainan is celebrated. Some of the carving and silvering is quite remarkable in the fineness and subtlety of the tracery. The whole town, however, has the appearance of a place that has seen better days. It is not probable that it will see them again, for if any place is to grow it will be Hoihow. Any European houses that may be built will rise on the wooded slopes to the west.

But unfortunately, unless something is done soon to improve the water approach to the fort, there is a strong likelihood that in a few years the entrance to Hoihow will be completely blocked. Even now the cargo boats have such endless difficulties in threading their way up the shallow tidal creek that it seems almost a marvel

that trade continues to exist. The spit has extended nearly a mile since 1869, and at this rate of progress cannot be long of bridging the entrance to the creek. It is said that a very moderate amount of engineering skill could turn a large volume of water into the branch of the river that flows past Hoihow, and so scour the channel as to keep it open for boats at all states of the tide. Mr. Jordan, late consul at KIUNG-CHOW, at the end of his valuable report for the year 1884, actually anticipates the closing of Hoihow altogether, and says that the choice of another port would seem to lie between HSIANG-PU, the port of TAM CHOW, and PU-CHIEN, a harbour about sixteen miles to the east of the present treaty port. The former is a good harbour, but is not a very important centre of trade, while there is a bar at the entrance of the latter place.

The harbour of YU-LIN-KAN on the south coast seems to be very fine, but there would probably be little but timber and forest produce to export from it. It was used by the East India Company during the last and early part of the present centuries as a place for laying up and repairing ships. It seems also, for a longer or shorter time, to have been occupied by the French during the allied war with China. In the foreign cemetery at YU LIN KAN are buried several old East India Company servants. Many of the Chinese here and at the neighbouring village of SAMAN are Mohammedans, and there is a mosque and Sorri, or *Mallah* school, overlooking the beautiful bay, but the people have a very bad name for blackguardism.

Mr. Jordan's report on the foreign trade at the treaty port during the year 1883 shows that both the export and import trade are making steady advances. The total value of the trade during the year 1883 rose to

a little over half a million sterling (Haikwan taels, 2,042,385), the imports having a slight advantage over the exports (Haikwan taels, 1,074,060, to Haikwan taels, 968,325).

Opium constitutes 41 per cent. of the total value of the import trade. Since the Tongking disturbances have diverted the Yunnan trade down the West River and to PAKHOI, at the head of the Tongking gulf, a certain amount of the drug from that province has found its way to Hoihow, where its cheapness may prove an attraction to the poor people. Next to opium come cotton goods, mostly English drills, handkerchiefs, and muslins, and cotton yarns and thread, the amount of the latter imported having trebled during the year. The natives seem to prefer to get the raw material and spin their own cloth. Large quantities of Indian cotton, Kerosene oil, cloves and spices, and flint stones are also imported. Kerosene is ousting the native peanut product, but care is always taken to burn the latter oil in the immediate presence of the presiding deities, though every temple of any respectability has its gaudy chandelier.

The export for 1883 was the largest on record, but it seems rather to point to an abundant harvest and the transference to steamers, owing to low freights, of a portion of what was formerly junk-borne produce, than to an increase of the area under cultivation. Sugar, white and brown, formed a large portion of this; but the most astonishing increase was in the number of pigs, eggs, and poultry: 35,343 pigs, 41,799 head of poultry, and 8,584,066 eggs form the contribution which Hainan sent in 1883 to the colonial market. Bullocks are also exported in increasing numbers. Grass cloth and wild raw silk, besides the peculiar filigree work, are

other exports which promise much. The fragrant wood of Hainan has a reputation extending back over many centuries. The natives say that it is procured from the core of a decayed tree found in the Li territory. Some eighty-five catties two hundred and eighty odd pounds are sent annually for the use of the Imperial Court most of which furnishes the material for incense-offering at the Temple of Heaven.

Five hundred and thirty-eight steamers entered and cleared during the year, two hundred and eighty-two of which flew the British flag. The best suited for the trade are steamers ranging from three hundred to five hundred tons burden, which arrive one day, work all night, and leave the following morning. Larger vessels run the chance of being detained too long before they can fill up, and detention is injurious to Hoikow cargo, which generally consists largely of live stock, eggs, and other perishable produce for the Hong Kong market.

On the whole the island is certainly one which can be largely developed, and promises much interest to the traveller and the scientific investigator, whether he studies man or nature. The French can very easily take the Chinese part of the island, notwithstanding the strong Chinese garrison drafted in; but it is probable that the acquisition would be a most costly one for them. They can barely keep the timid Annamese and Tongkinese peaceable. In Hainan, with a proud and sturdy hill people, who would not brook the stern French administrative system, they would have another Acheen on their hands, involving a large garrison and constant reliefs. They have enough of that before them in Tongking and Annam. Two such burdens would be more than their exchequer can stand, notwithstanding the hope to raise a rival port to Hong Kong in the China Sea.



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PROPOSED KRA CANAL.

TO attack the Kra Canal scheme may perhaps be considered slaying the slain. This, however, is not so. When the French Government Survey Expedition in 1888 was understood to have reported against the project, France was only established in Cochin China. All the trade that might have come from Saigon and Bangkok would have returned but a fractional interest on the outlay, and very little of the China and Indian trade could have been expected to pass through. Now, however, that France has practically annexed Camboja, and will, at the proper time, do the like with Annam and Tonking, not to mention the slow progress westward which may confidently be anticipated, it seems worth while discussing the chances and difficulties of the proposition to make a short cut to the *France Nouvelle* of the future, the great Indo Chinese Empire, which is to include Cochin China, Camboja, Annam, Tongking, Laos, and Siam, and is to balance the English power in India.

Commander Loftus went as Commissioner for His Majesty the King of Siam, along with the French

Government survey party that examined the route of the proposed canal in the months of January, February, and March, 1883, and has published his conclusions at Singapore in a small brochure. The party was under the command of Lieutenant Paul Bollion of the French navy, and consisted of five gentlemen besides the commandant and Captain Loftus. Very conflicting accounts have been given of the French opinion as to the result of their investigations, and the official report has not yet and possibly never may be published, but Captain Loftus has no doubts whatever on the matter. He pronounces the canal to be quite impracticable. M. de Lesseps is of a diametrically opposite opinion; but M. de Lesseps has not been on the ground. He founds his conclusions on a perusal of the engineering studies of M. Deloncle, a gentleman who examined the isthmus a couple of years ago. M. de Lesseps says tranquilly, "*Ce sera l'affaire d'un coup de drague.*" That it is not only not mere dredger work, but that it is a very arduous undertaking, Captain Loftus gives us abundant reasons for believing.

The isthmus is situated a little less than half-way down² the Malay Peninsula, at the point where the last offshoots of the Himalayan range fall away, and the mountain backbone of the peninsula begins. The northern shore of the Bay of Bengal entrance to the proposed canal is British territory, MALAWOON being the southernmost district of British BIRMA. The fact that we have territory, police stations, tin mines, as well as forest land along part of the canal route gives us a special interest in the French proposal, apart altogether from a consideration of the influence such a canal might have on the trade of Singapore. Otherwise it is Siam that has most say in the matter, or would have a say

if she were not afraid to hint anything that might give the French grounds, even the faintest, for a quarrel

The KRA route passes through a hilly district some twenty miles or so across before it opens out into the low country. The whole distance between the river CHUM-PON, flowing into the China Sea and the mouth of the river PAKCHAN on the west, is twenty seven miles as the crow flies, but the jungle track now existing is very tortuous and uneven. The highest point to be passed is two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea, and the average height of the hilly strip is a hundred and thirty feet. Thirty feet added to this for the depth of the canal would give us a hundred and sixty feet as the average depth of the necessary cutting. •

It will be noticed that this offhand calculation of Captain Loftus is a much more favourable estimate of the amount of excavation to be done than those who actually might have to dig the canal would find it to be. Taking this, however, as a basis, and assuming the breadth of the canal at the bottom to be seventy seven feet, granting also that the sides of the cutting were at the very moderate angle of twenty degrees, the width of the canal at the top would be a hundred and ninety-one feet. From these data it is a mere matter of figures to show that the amount of material to be excavated and carried off would be in round numbers eighty four millions of cubic yards.

Moreover, this huge cutting would be for the greater part of the distance through rock, which is hard to cut, and yet not rock that will stand weathering and last like the sides of the Panama Canal. Assuming that this prodigious amount of earth and stone can be taken out, there comes a new difficulty in the question, what is to be done with it. It cannot be shot in any part of

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the hilly country. It would therefore be necessary to carry it miles away into the open plains. Captain Loftus hardly exaggerates when he asserts that "it would require the wealth of a nation and a century to accomplish."

As if these difficulties were not sufficient, we find others rising up in every quarter. The Bay of CHUMPON is very small. It is quite open, and the strong east-north east winds which prevail in the Gulf of Siam during the north-east monsoon blow dead in on its western shore. Not only is the bay very shoal, but it is known to have silted up very considerably during the last few years. The wind opposes the freshets of the two rivers that flow into the sea here, and the suspended sedimentary matter is therefore prevented from going out to sea. The river CHUMPON itself winds about a great deal, some of the bends being very sharp. The bed is shoal, full of sandbanks, and snags in the shape of sunken trees from the frequent landslips.

On the western side the channels at the entrance of the PAKONAN river are extremely intricate. The alluvial deposits from the river, combined with the action of the south-west monsoon, have thrown up an extensive bar of sand and mud in front of both the alternative entrances. Moreover, before the entrance to the KENONG river, as it is frequently called from the Siamese mining town of the name, is reached, vessels would have to thread their way through the difficult and dangerous islands of the Meigui Archipelago. A south-west squall hides the larger islands like St Matthew's, which lies right abreast of the river mouth, and simply blots out the smaller "birds' nests" and the numerous bare rocks.

Though the channel would have to be dug through hard rock, no corresponding advantage would be returned

for this labour. The rock is of a very unsatisfactory character. Captains Fraser and Forlong, who surveyed the isthmus in 1863, with a view to the construction of a ship tramway (and who declared that a canal was an impossibility), state that the rocks across the pass are mostly of a quartz on sandstone. Drs Helfer and Oldham, who also examined the district in the course of drawing up a report on the TENASSERIM coal fields, say that there is a great accumulation of beds of a pseudo porphyritic rock, resting on beds of granite and highly metamorphic rocks. Imbedded crystalline fragments of felspar, which weather out freely and become whitened on exposure, give the appearance of porphyry, from which the name is derived. In their normal character these beds, though highly indurated, are earthy, with the small, irregular bits of felspar disseminated in them. They form, in fact, what is commonly called disintegrated granite, passing, on the one hand, into hard, earthy, slaty masses, and, on the other, into "grits," often very coarse and highly conglomerate.

Landships are very common on all the rivers. They would be equally common on the canal unless the banks were made at a very obtuse angle, or regularly walled up. Even then there would be continuous labour and expense in keeping the channel free, not only in the rivers, but in the canal itself. It would be a very prolonged *coup de drague*. In addition there would be the expense of numerous lights on the western approach, for the Mergui Archipelago intricate and dangerous even in the daytime during the thick and stormy weather so common all through the south-west monsoon would be absolutely impassible at night without such beacons.

Finally, supposing the canal constructed, what are the advantages to the world's commerce? Captain Loftus

thus states the distance that would be saved, and points out the accompanying disadvantages :

“ 1st. The difference in nautical miles between the proposed KRA route and the present Malacca Straits route of English mail and other steamers, passing through the Suez Canal and bound to China, is 256 miles. This measurement has been carefully made from a point off DUNDRA Head, on the south coast of Ceylon, to a converging point in the China Sea, from which all steamers by either route would have to steer the same course to Hong Kong.

“ 2nd. The difference in distance between the afore said routes for the French mail steamers calling in at Saigon and bound to China is 383 miles, measuring from the same position off DUNDRA Head.

“ 3rd. The difference between the aforesaid routes for steamers bound from Calcutta to Hong Kong is 471 miles.

“ 4th. The difference between the aforesaid routes for steamers from Madras to China is 381 miles.’

From this it is evident that no saving in time could be effected, as from one to two days’ detention would almost certainly be incurred in the canal before a steamer could pass from one sea to the other. Independently of this there is the risky navigation alluded to above, with heavy canal expenses, pilotage, and lights into the bargain.

To outside nations, therefore, it is palpable that the KRA Canal offers no special advantages or attractions. There are none but the French interested in the matter, for the fact that the site of the canal is to be in Siamese territory means nothing. The Siamese Government is too timid and alarmed at the idea of offending the French to offer any serious opposition if

the Republic really sets its mind on having the canal. The question is whether it is worth the trouble for France to undertake the task for herself alone. Notwithstanding the vast expense which it will be, there are many Frenchmen who think that it will offer compensating advantages to the great Indo-Chinese Empire to be formed. Already there is talk of running a railway from Saigon up to Tongking, and from Tongking into Yunnan. There is already a line from Saigon to MYTIO, and it is proposed to prolong this up to PNOM-PENH, the capital of Camboja, and thence, at some future date, through BATTAMBONG over to Bangkok. In that case, with Bangkok and QUANG-YEN[^] in Tongking for her chief ports, and railways bringing down vast stores of produce timber and minerals to her coasts, it is just possible that a canal through the Isthmus of KRA might seem desirable. But it will be a terribly costly undertaking, even if a more feasible line than that surveyed in 1883 is discovered. That route is impossible except to contractors sitting in their offices.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INDO CHINESE EMPIRE.

FROM the geographical point of view Indo-China is divided by nature into three distinct regions. The first of these opens on the east of the Bay of Bengal, and has three great rivers, the IRRAWADDY, the SITTANG, and the SALWEEN. The second is drained by the MENAM and the MLKONG into the Gulf of Siam. The third basin has for its main water way the Song-*coi*, and opens upon the Gulf of Tongking and the China Sea. These three physical divisions correspond pretty accurately with the political situation. The rivers all come from the same neighbourhood, the Eastern Himalayas. The peoples are all more or less ethnologically allied. The countries have a strong resemblance in physical character and fertility.

The French contention is that they should all belong to the same power. In the dim past a united Mongoloid race may have possessed them. In the not distant future they should be reunited under a stronger governing people. The French are content to leave Burma to us, chiefly perhaps because we have the greater part of

it already, but also, to put it more graciously, because the natural outlet of the country is the Bay of Bengal. The other two regions, however, they maintain, belong to the holders of Saigon.

During the last year events have progressed rapidly towards the realization of this ambitious scheme. There now only remains Siam as a serious power to stand in the way of this Indo Chinese Empire. Annam has been roughly brought to a knowledge of the fact that she is a mere geographical expression, and that eventually, like Camboja, she must become a mere province of the Empire, with or without a figure head in the shape of a so called king. The process is accomplished in various ways. Intestine quarrels brought about the tutelage of King NORÔDOM. In Annam a treaty in the nature of a catch-bargain served the purpose of having a say in the country. The failure of the Annamese to read between the lines of this document led to the war in Tongking, and to the usual protectorate at Hué. The country (on the maps and in French books) opens its arms to receive the French. It seems, however (off the map and in reality), that the people are not quite so enthusiastic, and that the arms are the octopus tentacles of China. These are being detached one by one, but the slowness of the process is somewhat irritating to French ambition, and will materially retard the development of designs to the westward.

Nevertheless, matters are in train there too. The Saigon papers discuss, in the most cynical and matter-of-fact way, how the theory is to be developed into reality. The fact that Siam must be protected or annexed, certainly eventually annexed, is not supposed to be open to question at all. It is a simple axiom. Still modern European squeamishness stipulates that

frontiers, however absurdly drawn, should be respected. It is therefore necessary to find some excuse for virtuous ambition. The project is no more new than the conveying of Tongking. Things have not run so smoothly, that is all.

A trap was laid years ago, but Siam was too timid or too wary to fall into it. Camboja was once 'as much a Siamese dependency as Tongking is Annamese. In 1868 the country was taken under French control, and Siam had not a word to say. It is this meek submission of Siam that irritates the Saigonnais and at the same time whets his appetite. There ought to have been protests and intervention by Siam on behalf of her vassal. Camboja itself, in the person of King Norôdon, made no resistance at all. That sorry potentate was only too glad to get any one, no matter on what conditions, to keep him on a throne from which he would otherwise righteously have been expelled. He therefore was most complaisant in the matter of a treaty. Siam had no army and no arms at the time, and therefore perforce acquiesced peaceably and silently in the spoliation of her own territory, to the scarcely concealed irritation of France. Cochin China, however, now comforts itself with the reflection that Siam is its natural enemy, and that conflict must come some day.

There are a variety of ways of bringing it about, but the favourite scheme, and one more than ever easy now that Tongking is in French hands, is through the medium of the Shan States. This conglomeration of small principalities has been for ages a subject of dispute between Burma and Siam. The mountain chieftains never at any time, and less than ever to-day, paid much tribute or respect to anybody. The question of the suzerainty over them was, however, always excuse

enough for a fight when there was a warlike king in the one kingdom or the other. The French have not neglected to read the old chronicles. If the King of Siam should gibe at an awkward moment, it would be easy enough to occupy his hands by stirring up trouble with Burma in the matter of the northern SIAM States.

When, on the other hand, the time comes when it is convenient and desirable to progress towards the Protectorate over the MENAM valley, all that has to be done is to raise mischief in the States tributary to Siam. When Siam proceeds to assert her authority France will intervene to protect the "just rights" of territories with which commercial relations, present or prospective, are maintained. Such a policy may seem incredible in these days, but it is not only discussed regularly in the Colonial papers, but is also calmly set forth in such books as Raoul Postel's, *L'Extrême Orient*.

These considerations explain the otherwise singular interest which France takes in Mandalay affairs. The Rangoon papers have long puzzled over the matter without coming to any more satisfactory conclusion than that France wants to keep King THEEDAU as much at enmity with us as possible. But that is too crude and harmless a policy for our quick witted neighbours. The treaty concluded in 1888 of friendship and alliance between France and Burma will be kept warm for other and more far-seeing matters.

This, however, is only one of the schemes meditated. It is probable that a much more direct and speedy plan will be adopted when matters in Tongking have been tidied up. The way has been prepared for it by the flight of many Chinese and others from SONTAY, HUNG-HOA, and other Tongking towns. These new arrivals, called HORS by the Siamese, HAWS by the French, are

far from peaceable. During the summer of 1884 they have penetrated down to LUANG PRABANG, and even farther south to the Mékong, where it makes its huge bend to the east past PON PISSAY. Siamese troops have been sent northward to expel them, or at any rate to prevent them from ravaging the country, and at any time news of a conflict may be expected.

Here is an ideal opening for French protecting genius, and there is no straining of conscience in the matter, for it was the French action in Tongking which drove the Chinamen into searching for fresh fields and pastures new, and it seems only reasonable enough that the French should set themselves to protect peoples who are victimized through French doings elsewhere. The opportunity is quite charming, and it had been foreseen, so that everything might be done, if possible, still more decently and in order.

DR. PAUL NEIS is a Frenchman who is well known for his interesting studies among the Moïs; Moï is simply a local name, like MUONG on the Tongking frontier, for the different Laos tribes. Dr. NEIS has studied the language and customs of the Moïs in the Mékong river valley before. In the spring of 1884 he went there again, and got as far as LUANG-PRABANG on the upper Mékong. He also travelled through a great part of the country to the east and south east of that town. He was on a Government mission, still to find out the ways and legends of these charming Moïs, as well as to make inquiries concerning the route, known to exist, but unknown to Europeans, from the Laos principality over to Tongking.

But whether from pure patriotism, or in accordance with secret instructions, the doctor took up the Moïs in an altogether unexpected way. To the east of LUANG-

PRABANG, and more especially southwards along the Annam frontier, there are a number of small tribal chiefs, whom the French *savant* has visited, whom he has induced to sign treaties declaring a strong desire to place themselves under French protection, and to whom he has given French flags quite in the *do Brazza* fashion. It must, however, be remembered that these LAOS peoples are very much higher in the scale of civilization than the Africans who used M. *do Brazza's* flags for pocket handkerchiefs, and put them to other purposes. They may not know all that their signatures imply, or all that French protection means, but they are not fools, and they are high-spirited. When they find that French protection means the collaring of their revenues they will fight, and there are Siamese troops, if not actually in their territory, yet close at hand.

The country is a very fine one. It appears, from the surveys of Messrs Macarthey and Leonowens, *employés* of the Siamese Government, as well as from information collected by Mr. Holt Hallett during his journey in the early part of 1884 through the SHAN States, that the idea conveyed of this part of Indo-China by Garnier's work on the MUKONG exploration is quite misleading. Along the river itself the country indeed seems barren and thinly populated, but a very little distance farther to the east a very fine region is come upon. There are magnificently fertile plains and river valleys with a large and industrious population. With the assistance of the Siamese troops, or with their own unaided resources, they will probably be able to settle issues with the "HAWKS," for they are a stalwart, warlike people, very different from the Tongkinese. If the French come over and claim execution of the treaties, and wish to establish custom house officers and *directeurs des*

affaires indigènes, there will be fighting. The French will get the footing they want, and it will go hard if they do not fasten a quarrel on Siam.

This is somewhat serious, although not a little of it is ludicrous. The signing of voluntary documents savours too much of over-scrupulous formality. It is protesting too much. It is not even original. A great majority of the states in this part of Indo China have paid tribute at one time or other to Annam, and it may be asserted that others were tributary to the old KHMER kingdom. Camboja and Annam are now equally looked upon as French territory. France is bound to protect all their tributaries, and Dr. NEIS has studied the local histories with a philanthropic desire that none who have any claim to come under the protecting wing of France should lose that boon. The matter is therefore all cut and dried as far as this border country is concerned.

But read in the light of the new information which Mr. Hallett gives us of the configuration of the SHAN country, this advance of French customs and French officials in Indo China is a much more serious matter. Mr. Hallett tells us that the basin drained by the MUKONG extends very much farther west than has hitherto been imagined. For the sake of peace and security, and the necessity of having a frontier, the French will find it imperative to protect the whole MUKONG valley. The turbulent SHANS and the ferocious Siamese might otherwise keep them in constant fear and danger. This will take them close up to the north of Zimmè (CHIENG MAI), and farther west even than this, to the "Burmese" Shan States of THEIN-NEE and MONAY, and will cut off the chieftain of the KIANG TUNG plateau from the suzerain, under whom he now wishes to place himself.

The annexation of Camboja—for it is little short of that—may bring up at any moment the question of the rightful ownership of the Siamese provinces of BATTAMBONG and KORAT. The commission of 1866 decided that these two districts belonged to Siam, and not to Camboja. The officials told off to protect King NORÔDOM at PNOM-PENH have ever since been grumbling at this decision. Now that Camboja is French the matter will be viewed in an entirely new light. French students will be moved to adopt entirely new views from a fuller acquaintance with old Cambojan and Siamese chronicles. Even now a gentleman, M. Aymonier, who is the great authority on Camboja, is in Bangkok finding startling things in ancient inscriptions. To back up the decipherers of old tombstones and tumble down monuments will come the military men with their views of the absolute necessity of having a frontier which will guarantee them a reasonable amount of safety from their dangerous neighbours.

These are no mere alarmist statements. They may be heard discussed openly in Saigon, and they are to be read between the lines of every Frenchman that has written of Cochin China or Tongking. Some are cynically outspoken, some are naively candid; all recognize the fact that Siam may very well some day become French.

Whatever ignorant statesmen in England and *laissez-faire* officials in India may think on the matter, Siam herself has no doubt. She watches every movement of France in the East with feverish anxiety, and is afraid to make any change, even for the good of the country, in case it might offend the Governor at Saigon. The terror of irritating the French is well shown in the case of a proposed line of steamers between Saigon and

Bangkok. There is no trade whatever between the two ports, and there are not the slightest signs that any such trade is likely to spring up. Saigon knows this perfectly well, and Siam knows it too. Yet the French not only propose that this line should be established, but suggest that the Siamese Government should subsidize it. When there is hesitation and demurring over this, the French Consul General storms at the Siamese Ministry for their "suspicions." What right, what cause had they to be suspicious of the great Republic? These suspicions were degrading, they were insulting; if they were continued the matter would have to be seen to. No such line of steamers has yet been established, but the Siamese Government has never yet mustered up courage to say that it will not support it if it should be established.

Now from a purely philosophical and outside point of view it might be all the better for the people of Siam if she were annexed by the French. The civilization introduced by the French in her colonies is not altogether an unmixed blessing, but at any rate it is better than Siamese government, even under the present intelligent and well meaning young king. But the presence of French on our Burmese frontiers is a contingency which would be very far from desirable and would be certain to lead to quarrels and embitterments. The treaty of commerce and friendship with King THEEDAU of Independent Burma would then assume an altogether different complexion from its present Platonic character. It is not at all a question as to who is to have Siam; we would much rather be without it. What would suit us best would be that the country should be independent and firmly established, not wavering and shivering with every fit of indigestion of a Bangkok Consul-General or

every utterance of a Saigon Governor. We have no inconsiderable commercial interests in the country. Unless, however, these are increased, and German and other foreign trading firms established in the country, Siam is doomed. The king himself acknowledges it. Prince DEVAWONGSE, his right hand man, is anxious to see these measures the only salvation of the country accomplished. All that is wanted is a little encouragement from the Government of India. But the Government of India is as cold and apathetic as if Siam was ten thousand miles away, or in another sphere altogether.

No better instance of the utterly callous stolidity of the Indian Council can be adduced than their attitude with regard to the Bangkok-Tavoy telegraph line. It was long before they could be brought to see the advantage of such a line at all. Then they made an utter mess of it. The Siamese Government wanted the line to go by way of RAHENG to MAULMAIN, on account of the traffic with both these towns, and because the Tavoy route was known to be so unhealthy, that even the natives made a long *détour* to avoid it at certain seasons of the year. A glance at the map will show that, while the RAHENG line would have cost the Siamese very much more, the expense to India must have been practically the same. But the Indian "telegraphs" were stubborn. They would have the Tavoy line or nothing. The Siamese gave way, and the line was finished. What has been the result? Everything has turned out exactly as the Siamese had anticipated. Three English inspectors and a very large number of subordinates died. Then the Government of India summarily closed their part of the line. It is in working order up to the Siamese frontier from Bangkok, and there it stops, to the simple

dead loss of Siam. It will be acknowledged that this is very hard, and is little likely to draw the Siamese Government into any closer relations with India. In the dry season it is proposed to run a telegraph wire from Bangkok up to CHIENG-MAI in the hope that the Government of India will join on to the line at RAHENG, according to the original suggestion. Common justice demands that this should be done at once.

The same callousness prevails with regard to the Burma Siam railway project. A word from SIMLA to say that the line was viewed with favour or even with interest would be enough to decide Siam. The Government would set about the construction of the line to CHIENG-MAI at once, and the magnificent tracts of fertile country thus brought into communication with the world would ensure the speedy introduction of European capital, and therefore the stability of Siam. As it is, the Siamese are afraid to stir, lest they should offend France, and have no one to back them. Yet the railway is a magnificent scheme in itself. Dr. McGilvary, an American missionary, who has long resided in Laos, writes of it: "Considering its prospective influence on the civilization and development of the whole of South-eastern Asia, and its probable, if not certain, extension into China, I verily believe it may be classed with the Suez Canal and the great American Pacific Railway as one of the grand works of the century."

It cannot be too strongly urged that the whole French procedure with regard to Siam is as scientifically mapped out as a game at draughts. Every counter move has been calculated and provided for, and we are no disinterested spectators. It cannot be too strongly urged that we do not want Siam, and have no particular hankering after the SIAM States, but we do want to

keep France out of them. Even with the Channel, the silver streak, between us, we find them troublesome enough neighbours at home, and if we had them on our Burmese frontier they would be simply unendurable, and there could be but one issue to the situation. War with France is an eventuality which it is not pleasant for us to contemplate, but it would be practicably inevitable. There is only one means of avoiding the danger, and fortunately it is one which ought to be easily enough effected. We must bind Siam to us, and, through Siam, the SHAN States. It is not at all necessary for this purpose that we should follow the French "Protectorate" system; in fact it would be dangerous even to hint at such a thing. A railway connecting MAULMEIN with CHIENG-MAI, and CHIENG-MAI with Bangkok, would supply all that is wanted. Siam would then be connected with us so directly, and so much capital would be involved, that she would cease to be the safe quarry she now is for sinister French designs. The SHAN States, to a certain extent, would necessarily follow the suzerain power, if, indeed, branch lines to the eastward did not connect them with us independently.

There is great danger that France may try a bribe. She may offer us the Siamese States of the Malay Peninsula in return for unopposed acquisition of Siam itself. That would be very dangerous; for the Indian Council, though it is crass, is very greedy, and statesmen at home are hopelessly ignorant of the risks. But it would not get over the probability of frontier troubles. On the contrary, it would increase them. The French are quite scientific in these matters, and our Burma borderers are somewhat of a turbulent, unscrupulous lot.

If anything is to be done, it must be done at once. France is rapidly formulating projects hitherto inchoate.

In a year or two Siam will be so surrounded that she will be unable to stir. The policy of indecision which has led us into such trouble in Afghanistan and in Egypt will be equally fatal here. Action now while France is engaged elsewhere will ensure the safety of Siam and a vast new market to our manufactures, to say nothing of a new path into China. Vacillation may bring about danger to India in the not distant future.

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4. The Children of Wrath.	20 The Sin of Death.
5. Abraham	21 Child of the Devil or Child of God
6. Religion and Reward.	22 The Mission of Christ
7. The City of the Soul.	23 Destruction from the Face of the Lord
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9. The Law of Retribution	25 The Sin of Iscariot
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