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VOYAGE

FROM

FRANCE TO COCHIN-CHINA;

&c. &c.

WHEN in Cochin-China, on a preceding voyage, I was commissioned, on the part of the sovereign, to convey to him from France various articles, in particular fire-arms, for his military service. The whole being provided and embarked at Bordeaux, in the ship Henry, we sailed from the Garonne on the 3d February, 1819, to return to Cochin-China.

The voyage as far as the strait of Sunda, between Sumatra and Java, produced no occurrence worthy of notice, excepting our putting into Port Praga, in St. Jago, one of the Cape Verd islands, where we arrived on the 26th February. On our former voyage we had carried into that port a small vessel belonging to the islands, which we found deserted at sea: we were now therefore received by the commandant, Don Juan De Lancaste, as old friends, and treated by him and by the governor-general with every mark of kindness. In Port Praga we laid in a stock of poultry, pigs, kids, and vegetables of various sorts; all furnished in great abundance, and at a very low price, when compared with their value in France. On the 2d June, the hundred and ninth day of our voyage, we came to anchor abreast of the Dutch fort of Angier, on the coast of Java, in the strait of Sunda, where we were liberally supplied by the natives with necessaries of all kinds. In return, the surgeon of the Henry furnished advice and medicines to the commandant, who stood in need of several articles of the *materia medica*, not to be found at his station. Getting again under way on the 5th, we on the 7th passed near the two pretty little islands called the Two Sisters. The wind coming con-

trary, we had abundance of opportunities to sound, as we approached Chabendeao, a dangerous shoal on the west of those islands. The least depth we found at the distance of three one-third miles, (geographical or nautical) in that direction was four fathoms English, (four and half *brasses* French). No appearance on the water indicated that we were on a bank: but the weather and the sea were then indeed very calm. The south-east winds having just set in, we had more difficulty than on the former voyage to make Clement strait. For two nights together we had dreadful thunder-storms, rolling and bursting over our heads. Several times I observed the lightning in ascent, not far from the vessel: but these discharges had no echo, resembling the single report of a cannon; while the descending lightning was always followed by continued tremendous reverberation. During the thunder the rain poured down in torrents; the current set so strong to the south-west and the winds were so variable, that we had no choice left but to come to anchor until the storm abated. On the 9th, at seven A. M. we passed within pistol-shot of the Fairlie rock: the sea breaking over it in such a way, that it might be seen at the distance of three miles. When we were the nearest to it, on the north-east quarter, the soundings were six one-sixth fathoms English, (seven *brasses* French). We could distinctly observe the extent of the rock; and its position agreed with that laid down by Horsburgh. From thence the depth gradually increased, until we came abreast of Shoal-water islands. At ten A. M. ran through Clement strait. Near Gaspar spoke with a French ship from China, for Europe, and learned that the Bordelais, out two years from France, had passed the strait of Carimate, on her way home, to complete her circumnavigation of the globe. On the 17th ran along close on the east of the islands Pulo Condor; and on the 19th, in the morning, came within sight of the coast of Cochin-China, bearing from west-north-west to north-east: a-head we saw the point of Kega. We had steered so as to pass ten miles to the eastward of the north-east extremity of the bank of Matthew-Brito: but we observed no circumstance to indicate its position or distance.

My business in this voyage being with the government of the country alone, we steered directly for Tourane; keeping close by the land, which I found to be correctly laid down in the chart of M. Dayot: but he goes no farther than Pulo Canton. The bay of Tourane is given in Lord Macartney's *Voyage to China in 1792*: but my stay in the country enabled me to make a draught still more correct; and I added the line of coast from the river of Fay-Fo, on to Tiger-island: I also

laid down the river of Hué.* Coming to anchor on the 24th of June in the bay of Tourane, our salute of the fort was returned; and soon afterwards the Fantou, or mandarin-of-war came on-board the Henry. Recollecting us all, he called us by our names, and informed us that the Emperor, impatient to hear of our arrival, had dispatched messengers to different parts of the coast, to enquire whether we had been seen. After a short visit he went on shore, to give notice to the Emperor of our safe arrival: he also took charge of my letters for the French mandarins at court. I was naturally anxious to know the posture of affairs there before I should proceed to the capital: but five days passed away before my letters were answered. The interval we employed in visiting various points of the magnificent bay in which we lay, and in renewing our acquaintance with many of the inhabitants; by which we were more and more confirmed in the opinion we had formed of the affable and hospitable dispositions of the people. Several officers of the Henry passed days and nights, not in the villages on the coast only, but in detached houses in the

* The names of many nations, countries, towns, &c. of the east have been, and still are, strangely corrupted or otherwise altered by Europeans. Thus the vast Asiatic empire which we call *China* is, in Asia, called *Catay*, a name formerly employed in the language of poetry in Europe. The peninsula on which Europeans land, on their commercial voyages to China, at the entrance of the river of Canton, we call *Macao*, but the Chinese *Gaumin*. The proper name of *Canton* itself ought to be *Quan-Doung*. The *Japan* islands are called *Ziendri*. The kingdom of *Siam* is *Menang-Tai*, that is to say, the free independent kingdom: the capital, which we call *Siam*, is *Si-hé-thi-ya*. The proper name of the *Maldive* islands, near the great southern promontory of India, is *Malereque*. *Persia*, since the extension of its dominions, is called *Iram*; *Syria*, now *Sham*; and the *Tartars* of the northern regions of Asia, as if a race of their atrocious reputation among their enemies must have proceeded from *Tartarus* itself, are still termed *Tartars*.

The name of *Tunkin* is not more correct, for the country is, by the inhabitants, called *Nuok-Anam*, i. e. the kingdom of *Anam*. Under this general denomination are comprehended not *Tunkin* only, but also *Cochin-China*, (originally a dismemberment of *Tunkin*), for distinction-sake termed *Dang-Trong*, the inner kingdom, while *Tunkin* Proper is called *Dang-Nguy*, the outer kingdom. The error has been produced by ascribing to the whole country the name of the capital once named *Dong-Kinh*. For in a great part of Asia the letter *d* being sounded as *t*, strangers have imitated the name in *Tunkin*. *Dong* signifies the east, and *Kinh* a community of men in civilized society. Since the extension of the empire of *Tunkin*, the ancient capital, being situated to the northward of the principal states, has been styled *Bac-Kinh*, the city of the north. *Cambogia*, or *Cambaja*, is the proper name of that country in the east, as well as in Europe: but *Triampa*, is by the people termed *Binh-Tuam*. The finest bay and harbour of all *Cochin-China*, called by Europeans *Tourane*, is by the inhabitants called *Han* or *Cua-Han*, the port of *Han*.

country, without encountering the slightest offence or affront; they were on the contrary received and treated with the most friendly cordiality.

On the 29th June, letters from court informed me that I was at liberty to remain in the bay of Tourane, or to carry the ship into the river of Hué the capital; and that, in either case, every assistance would be afforded to unload her. Ambitious that the Henry should be the first European vessel to enter the port of the capital, we weighed from Tourane at noon, and next morning at 6 A. M. we dropped our anchor a mile north-east from the fort, at the entrance of the river Hué. There we found another French ship, the Rose, which had arrived a few days before, and had begun to discharge her cargo. Having saluted the fort, the Fantou or military commandant, and the Thoughou or mandarin of justice, visited us on-board, bringing a present of fresh fish and fruit. Our corresponding present was reserved for another occasion. The captain of the Rose came also on-board the Henry; and I could discover that he was not over satisfied with the progress of his affairs with the government: but he had a supercargo in the capital, who alone conducted all the business of the enterprise. My case was different; for I was sole master of my transactions; and being anxious to conduct myself so as not only to promote my own personal interest, but those also of my nation and countrymen in general, in future times, I resolved to commence no mercantile intercourse until I should consult the two French mandarins settled in the country, and in favour at court. From those gentlemen I learned that the difficulties arisen in the business of the Rose related to the value to be given by the government for the fire-arms she had brought out. Without presuming to decide on which side the blame lay, I would just recommend to all who go to Cochin-China to provide themselves with a most accurate and retentive memory, unless their transactions be conducted by pen and paper.

The two French gentlemen created mandarins by the emperor, Messrs. Vanier and Chaigneau, carried me in their galley up to Hué the capital, where, before my visit of ceremony to the mandarin of strangers, I communicated by letter the principles on which my business would be conducted. The minister's answer, professing the utmost fairness on the part of government, was perfectly satisfactory. In my audience of that minister, on the 4th July, I presented, according to custom, a few European articles, more of curiosity than of intrinsic value; observing distinctly at the time, that such a present was to be considered, not as a tribute of obligation,

but as a token of amity on my part, and of anticipatory gratitude for the favours which we should receive. The observation was perfectly understood, and suitably and readily answered. I then informed the minister that, besides the articles commissioned by the government, I had on-board models of a variety of machines, which might be useful in the country, and which I wished to present to the emperor; and desired to know where they could be deposited.

At this time was in Hué, a Portuguese, the owner of a small vessel, which, through the ignorance of the master, had been obliged to put into Cochin-China, after he had been three months at sea, on his way from Manilla only to Siam. He applied to me for assistance, to enable him to return to Manilla, and informed me that, having disposed to government of a part of his cargo, the second mandarin of shipping, the interpreter, and other persons, threw difficulties in the way of his payment; in the hope of appropriating to themselves a portion of what was due to him. A Portuguese and a worthy man, at such a distance from Europe, was to me as a countryman: his case besides might soon be my own. On this business, representation was therefore made, at my request, by the French mandarins to the emperor. The Portuguese owner was paid; and four mandarins received the honours of the pillory and the bamboo. The minister of foreign affairs affected to thank me, for bringing forward conduct so nefarious; but my eye pierced deeper than his countenance. It has been observed by many travellers of understanding, that among the Chinese you gain much more by spirit and intimidation, than by pusillanimity and deference: the remark may be extended to the Cochin-Chinese.

On the 6th July, the mechanical models were conveyed to the *guyado* or arsenal, where they were examined by the hereditary prince, who directed the most expert artificers to be admitted, while they were putting in order, to learn their uses. Two days afterwards, the emperor himself repaired to the arsenal, and seemed much gratified when the several machines were explained to him. The hydraulic-press and ram, the model of a powder-mill, and the flattening-mill for copper, more particularly attracted his attention. On my former voyage, I had expatiated largely on the wonderful powers and uses of the steam-engine; but my stay in France, on my return, was too short to permit a small steam-boat for the emperor to be finished; and the disappointment was sensibly felt.

Having hired a warehouse, the goods brought out for general sale were there displayed: but they seemed to excite

little curiosity among the people. Looking-glasses, and other glass-works, engravings, and arms, seemed to be the chief objects of attraction. Out of ostentation, a few trifles were purchased by the mandarins: but the fact is, that the people are not yet arrived at that point of civilization and wealth, either to be able to purchase or even to relish many articles of industry and ingenuity, which in Europe are regarded as indispensable in comfortable life. The government will, however, always have occasion for a sufficient quantity of different articles, to relieve us from the necessity of paying in specie for such commodities as we may procure in the country.

By the help of the imperial barges, our ship discharged her whole cargo in one day, and permission was granted to carry her up the river to the capital; to the great joy of the emperor, who wished much to exhibit to his court an European ship. At the entrance of the river of Hué is a bar of sand, from nine to ten fathoms broad. At low water, the depth on it is only twelve and-a-quarter English feet; and the increase is only one and-a-half foot at spring-tides. The *Henry* drew twelve feet; taking the advantage, therefore, of very smooth water, we were soon towed over the bar into four and-a-half fathoms, the depth found also on the outside of the bar. Thus at noon, the French flag was first displayed before the ramparts of the capital of Cochin-China, where we lay as snugly as in a bason, within speech of a village, furnished with every necessary; a situation peculiarly fortunate, on account of the heavy gales from the north-west, which prevail at that time of the year, and are very dangerous on the outside of the bar.

The two officers commanding in the port were always ready to serve us: one of them would positively learn our language, and had made considerable progress during our stay in the river. Hearing we had on-board two apprentices, who had been drummers in the army, the emperor sent us from twenty to thirty of his drummers, to learn our practice.

The examination of the ten thousand stand of arms landed for the government, as there were few native artificers capable of doing it properly, allowed me abundance of time to survey the capital, which was a heap of ruins when I was formerly in the country. In the course of two years it had been completely renewed, and was now converted into a very regular fortress. The emperor having caused the best French works on the military art to be translated for his use, has introduced Vauban into Cochin-China; and has constructed, beyond controversy, the most regular fortress in the east. Fort William of Calcutta, and Fort George of Madras, although constructed by the British, are not equal to it.

Hué, the name by which we denote the capital, is properly that of the province in which it is situated: the town is usually called Kigue, that is to say, the residence of the emperor, or the court. It is placed on an island, formed by canals or branches of the river. The plan of the fortification is quadrilateral, flanked by four bastions on each face, with four covert-ways and four gates. The ramparts are of stone in the foundations and the ditch; then of brick and earth for two toises above the surface of the ground. The ditch is in breadth thirty toises, and in depth three. Each face of the fortification is in length three miles, containing five hundred embrasures: the whole circuit mounting two thousand pieces of cannon: the arsenals within the works contain four thousand pieces, from four-pounders up to sixty-nine pounders French; all brass and capitally mounted. The pieces for the ramparts are twenty-four and thirty-six pounders. Nine sixty-nine pounders are intended for a cavalier fronting the palace, which itself forms a spacious internal fortress, inclosed with a wall and ditch. The barracks are adapted for thirty thousand men. Within the inclosure of the palace are various buildings for the use of the emperor; and round it, on the outside, are lodged the princes, the principal mandarins, and the foreign ministers. Then come the arsenals, store-houses for rice, the bazars, and the houses of the town. The streets are all straight, sanded and bordered with trees: their breadth sixty feet. The eight principal streets terminate at the sixteen opposite gates: the city is also traversed by four canals navigable for barges. Such was the project for the town: but much remained to be done when we left the country.

According to the best information to be obtained in the capital, the Cochin-Chinese carry back their history only about six hundred years. Prior to that period the country is supposed to have been occupied by a number of independent tribes, generally at war among themselves, but all tributary to Tunkin, which was itself tributary to the vast empire of China. When Tunkin revolted from China, the Cochin-Chinese asserted also their independence, under Nguyen, a prince whom they invested with absolute power.

After many revolutions and continued wars, internal and foreign, three brothers, Gn-yac, at the head of a body of freebooters, called the Taysons, (mountaineers from the southern province of Siampa) expelling the sovereign of the family of Nguyen, divided the country among them. In 1776, one of the brothers abdicated his throne, and the eldest chose the southern portion of Cochin-China, the northern falling to the youngest, who annexed the kingdom of Tunkin, after expell-

ing an immense Chinese force sent thither to oppose him. But in 1779, hostilities breaking out between the brother usurpers, the present sovereign, Gia-Long, a lineal descendant of the ancient family of Nguyen, defeating his opponents in 1806, gained possession of the throne of Cochin-China, to which he has annexed Tunkin, together with Dung-Nay, the northern portion of the kingdom of Cambogia. Gia-Long is the father of the young prince, who, in 1788, repaired to France, under the care of the Bishop of Adran, a French missionary, long established in Cochin-China, to solicit aid for the restoration of his father to the throne. One unfortunate sovereign thus addressed himself to another at that moment on the eve of becoming the most unfortunate of men. The accumulating disasters of Lewis XVI. soon drove from the consideration of the French ministers those of Gia-Long.

The present government of Cochin-China is essentially absolute and despotic; in this respect second to none in the vast continent of Asia; a region in which the terms freedom and constitution have, from the very origin of history, been utterly unknown. The Mandarins possess the same power and authority as in China itself. They are styled in the country *Cuang*, which signifies lord or master, and the epithet *Long* is employed to denote a minister, or a noble of the first class. The term mandarin applied by us Europeans to the men of rank or office in Cochin-China, as well as in China itself, is Portuguese, and signifies a person of authority or command.

Gia-Long, a man not more remarkable for the vicissitudes of his fortunes than for his genius and moral qualities, has always been desirous to introduce reform and improvement into the administration of public affairs. Fearful, however, of alienating the minds of the great, by his concessions to the body of the people, he has been compelled to stop far short of his projected alterations. Educated in the school of adversity he possesses information on various subjects much beyond what usually falls to the lot of the princes of the east. He is, consequently, no stranger to the state of his people, and to their fitness for that system of government which he wishes to introduce. For this reason, in nominating his successor to the throne, he has selected, not his eldest son, but him whom he knew to possess the greatest ability and firmness, him whom he knew (to use his own expression) "to be able to wield the rod, and to apply it when requisite indiscriminately to all ranks of his subjects, great and small." "Whom he loveth he chasteneth," is a venerable saying: but in Cochin-China the sentiment is reversed. Here the subject seems to say to

his ruler, "if thou wouldest have me respect thee, love thee, then chastise me." To love and to fear are synonymous terms in the mouth of a Cochin-Chinese, who says indifferently, "I fear you," or "I respect you."

The code of civil laws, borrowed from the great empire (the common appellation of China) established in Cochin-China, is beyond measure prolix. The interpretation of the laws is so difficult, that, until a change be adopted in the mode of writing them, they never can be understood, excepting by a very small number of the learned. Hence are law-suits endless: hence, when a question of any importance is to be determined, the decision of the ordinary judge is submitted to the imperial council, by them to be confirmed or reversed. It commonly happens, however, that the council requires farther information on the affair. By this mode of proceeding the claimant sees no end of his trouble and expense; unless the governor-in-chief of the province, or the emperor himself inquire into the business in the first instance.

The administration of criminal law is much better arranged and conducted. In every village are judges who decide in the first instance; and from them the cause, with all the documents relating to it, is laid before the grand council, where the whole case is re-examined. For any defect in the forms of justice the first judge is fined; and the emperor himself is required to examine, at three separate periods, the sentence pronounced by the council. That sentence he may modify, but only in favour of the condemned; in no way can he aggravate the sentence; and the three separate revisals afford him time to arrive at a proper judgment on the whole circumstances of the case before him. This regulation was introduced by Gia-Long himself, during the civil war, that he might guard against injustice or prejudice in determining in cases relative to subjects who were or had very lately been his political enemies: a regulation still unknown in the jurisprudence of the most enlightened Christian nations of Europe. He is in the habit also of pardoning criminals, on thrice repeated applications for favour, from persons of known judgment and probity. "For," said he, on more than one occasion, to the Bishop of Adran, whom he always styled his illustrious master; "such is your friendship for me, that you will never suffer me to authorise judgments of excessive severity. It will, besides, be a manifest proof that I am in error, if you shall thrice return to solicit pardon for an offender."

The present viceroy of Tunkin was formerly at the head of the army of the enemies of Gia-Long. Passing over to the emperor's camp, he requested to be either punished as a

rebel, or suffered to serve as a soldier in his army. He was entrusted with an important command. In April 1803 he was the first to mount to the assault of Kigue, the capital of the Taysons, then defended by the usurper. Him he made prisoner, but suffered him afterwards to escape, warning him in future to keep out of his way. Repairing immediately to Gia-Long, "Sire," said he, "for ten years together did I eat the bread of that person, before I entered into your service: was it possible for me to put him to death?"—"In your place," replied the emperor, "I would have done the same thing."

The military force of Cochîn-China comprises at present 160,000 men; but in time of war the number may be doubled. In this account are included 30,000 men employed in the navy. The whole land-troops are on foot; not from the scarcity of horses, but because the country being either intersected with canals, or roughened with hills, cavalry could be of very little service. The greater part of the army are armed and disciplined in the European manner. But Gia-Long deserves to be imitated by many an other sovereign, in another quarter of the world. Gia-Long maintains no idle soldiers. In the time of peace his troops are constantly employed as artificers and work-men of every description, and in all other kinds of labour. By this system roads and canals have been opened or repaired; towns and villages have been rebuilt or restored; and many other works have been executed, which had become necessary, in consequence of the late desolating civil war.

The Cochîn-Chinese conceive themselves, and I think with good reason, to be superior to their neighbours of the great empire, in various respects. One advantage of the first importance the Cochîn-Chinese certainly possess: they are not restrained from improving in any art or trade, in which imagination or invention may be requisite to bring it to perfection. Hence they eagerly adopt improvements and instructions from other nations. Hence, in naval affairs, their progress is truly great. Many of the emperor's ships are constructed on the French model. Roman characters in writing are used by almost every Christian in the country, and by even many of the Pagans. Their deficiency in science is owing to the want of teachers, and not to a defect of capacity or of desire to learn.

On the 22d July, the emperor announced his intention to proceed to Koua-Han, (the port) to sacrifice to his deities for the safe arrival of the fleet from Tunkin, bringing the annual tribute; and next morning at ten o'clock, the drums, tam-tams, gongs, &c. proclaimed his departure. For some time past the emperor had occupied a floating palace, that in the city being under repair. The structure consisted of two stories,

erected on a flat-bottomed vessel of very large dimensions, and containing accommodation for the whole imperial family, and attendants, in all about three hundred persons. At noon the procession appeared; first came twenty galleys in two rows, each of sixty oars, with flag and uniform of the rowers blue; then other twenty of the same sort, with flag and uniform yellow. Four galleys of one hundred and twenty oars, flag and uniform red, with a canopy, under which sat the princes. Next came twelve galleys richly gilded, carrying the imperial guards, followed by ten others, towing the floating palace, dressed out with flags; and the procession was closed by an escort of ten armed galleys. Multitudes of vessels followed, belonging to the mandarins, and a body of two thousand troops kept pace with the galleys down the river-side. When the emperor had passed we fired our salute, and soon afterwards an officer came on-board to apologize for its not being returned. The emperor remained to the third day down the river, on account of the rain, and was at last obliged to return to the capital, without being able to offer the sacrifice.

Some years ago, when a fleet was preparing for Tunkin, the emperor ordered the customary conjurations prescribed by his religion to be performed, to discover the favoured time for putting to sea; this he did in compliance with the vulgar superstition. The doctors, who were to consult the will of their deities, gave an answer contrary to the emperor's wish, but the convoy left the port, and two days afterwards a tempest destroyed 150 vessels out of the 180 of which the convoy consisted. The bamboo was liberally applied to every one of the prognosticators, with a declaration, that not a head should be left in its place among the whole fraternity, unless they found heaven always to favour the day which he should appoint for the sailing of all future expeditions.

Gia-Long is now fifty-nine years old, but the severe fatigue and misfortunes he underwent, before he came to the throne, have greatly enfeebled his constitution. Still he gives every day public audience, and instructs his apparent successor in the art of government. The young prince is about thirty years old; he is well educated, and has the rank of first man of letters in the empire. With geometry, astronomy, and geography, he is well acquainted. He occasionally employs the Roman character in writing, but he refuses to know any language but his own. Many European works of utility have been translated for his use; and from one of the French mandarins, he has learned to ascertain the longitude of a place by the lunar observation. The emperor has also employed a native mandarin, who studied under the missionaries in

China, to compute astronomical tables, said to be extremely accurate.

The month of September, when the alteration of the monsoon takes place, was now at hand; after which it is very difficult for shipping to go down the river Hué. Every preparation was therefore made for our departure, the day before which, the 25th of August, the festival of our good king Louis XVIII. was celebrated by an entertainment on-board the *Henry*, at which were present not only all our countrymen in the capital, but also the mandarins of our acquaintance, and (which was still more remarkable) their ladies. One of the toasts drank by all the guests was *moun, moun thoé boua-Falanca, boua-Anam*; that is to say, "a long reign to the kings of France and Anam."

The country of Cochin-China, just emerging from the disorders and devastations of civil dissention and warfare, possessed but little ground in cultivation; for exportation, therefore, it furnished little else than rice, tobacco, and areca; the Chinese carried off also cargoes of sugar, when areca was not to be procured. The soil of the country is naturally very fertile, and, with little labour, produces plentifully whatever is required. It affords likewise the commodities of the Philippine islands and of Bengal. Chinese goods may also be obtained in Cochin-China cheaper than at Canton itself; being carried thither by Chinese junks, which are not subject to the same heavy duties with foreign vessels.

The Cochin-Chinese are naturally mild, affable, polite, and intelligent. The lower classes are superior to those of China, and even to those of Europe, in respect of morals and goodness of disposition. Polygamy is general in the country; but one wife alone is always mistress of the house, and the others are her servants; nor do the children of these last inherit the property of the father, who provides for them in his life-time. Divorce is also practised by mutual consent, and the children are divided between the parents. Polygamy and divorce are the chief obstacles which the missionaries have to surmount, in the propagation of the Christian religion in the country. Conjugal infidelity is punished with the death of both the offenders.

The ladies of the middling and higher classes of Cochin-China are very reserved, and sometimes handsome, particularly in the northern provinces, where, the climate being the most temperate, their complexion is fairer than in the southern parts. They are all, however, (unfortunately as we Europeans think) addicted to the use of betel and areca, mixed with the lime of shells, which reddens the mouth as if it bled. The dress of the men is composed of long and wide pantaloons,

fastened by a girdle, with under and upper waistcoats; the latter of silk or linen of different colours. When dressed for ceremony to go before a grandee or mandarin, they wear one or two gowns falling to the ground, with a piece of black crape round the head like a turban, to cover the hair; but the ears are uncovered. The dress of the women consists of long wide silk pantaloons, like those of the men, covered by a succession of loose gowns down to the ground; the sleeves of great length and width. Both sexes carry bags of satin or other stuffs, in which they place their betel and areca when they go abroad: but in the presence of a superior the bag or purse must not be exhibited, nor must the head be covered. The turban is never worn out of doors, unless it be white, which indicates mourning: but in this part of dress no one ever appears before a mandarin. How unfavourable to elegance of shape must be the habiliments of the Cochin-Chinese ladies may easily be imagined. In one particular, however, they act much more wisely than their neighbour dames of China: their feet are never put to the torture in their shoes. Ladies of rank indeed wear only loose slippers, and that without stockings. In paying visits, they are carried in palanquins, which completely conceal them. The women of low rank keep off the sun by broad-brimmed hats, ingeniously worked with straw. Some females are employed in merchandize, and display in their business ability superior to the men: but it is a mistake to say, as some writers have said, that they are also employed in labouring the ground. They are generally treated with respect and tenderness by their husbands: so much so that in many cases, to use the vulgar phrase, "the grey mare is the better horse."

On the 28th of August, the weather being favourable, by the friendly aid of the commanders by sea and land, we passed down the river, and were just able to clear the bar; coming to anchor in seven fathoms water, ground fine sand, a mile north-east from the fort at the entrance. Returning to the capital to terminate my business, a disagreeable adventure occurred, which may perhaps furnish a lesson to other persons in a similar situation. A confidential attendant of the emperor's second son came to our warehouse on shore, saying he wanted several articles for his master, which were given to him. At the end of a fortnight he brought them back all broken and useless, with a message, that the prince would not have one of them. The manager in the warehouse represented that every thing, glasses, watches, fowling-pieces, &c. had been delivered in perfect condition, and that of course his highness would certainly pay for what was destroyed. The other answered, that as the

articles were not wanted, they would positively not be paid for: employing at the same time very offensive language to our nation. The cause of all this conduct I concluded to be the prince's anger, because I refused to give him an European dog, which I had carried out for another person. Seeing no end of this man's insolence and threats, I caused him to be arrested by the soldiers placed in my service; and throwing into the river every thing he had brought back, desired a messenger of the heir of the throne, who happened to be present, to inform that prince of the business; stating, that unless the man was immediately punished, and my goods were paid for, the whole should be laid before the emperor. In a very short time I was desired to go to the mandarin of strangers, who endeavoured to apologise for what had happened: but at last seeing me resolute, the attendant was punished, the goods were paid for; and all matters were amicably adjusted.

On the 4th of September, having embarked whatever was wanted in the capital, I went on-board with two other French captains, returning to their ships lying in Tourane bay. Getting under way at eleven A. M. we anchored in the bay at the same hour next day. There learning that the governor of the province of Quan-Nam desired to see me at his residence in Chou-Couy, two leagues from the city of Fay-Fo, where I had business, I set out on my journey, escorted by six soldiers, with a set of carriers for my palanquin. Mr. Treillard, the surgeon of the *Henry*, went also, but he preferred a passage up the canals. The distance we had to go, from the village Ton-Han to Fay-Fo, was reckoned a day's journey, about nine road-leagues or hours' travelling. The road was excellent; but the bridges constructed with bamboos were very insecure. No carriages, however, being used in the country, they answer well enough for men and horses. The elephants always ford or swim across the rivers and canals; and goods are often transported on foot by women as well as men.

Proceeding to the residence of the governor, I found his house or palace inclosed with walls, like that of the emperor. Within were barracks, pagodas, and apartments for his numerous attendants. The innermost of all is the abode of the master, who, like Dionysius of Syracuse, is not to be seen until you have passed the examination of his people. He accepted my present of cut-glass, and promised to do every thing in his power to favour my countrymen who should come within his jurisdiction.

Fay-Fo is what is in India called a great bazaar. The city consists of one street of great length, the houses of brick, one story high, wholly adapted for traders, who have their

shops and warehouses towards the street. The inhabitants are reckoned to amount to 60,000, of whom one-third part are Chinese. Several commercial canals communicate with the town, and the river is navigable like that of Hué. Large Chinese vessels, called *sommes*, of 600 tons burthen, arrive at Fay-Fo yearly. The river divides itself into three branches; one goes directly to the sea in front of Cham-collao, another to the bay of Tourane, and the third to the southern extremity of the province, opposite to Pulo-Canton: but the two last are navigable for small boats only.

Setting out on our return to Tourane, we arrived at one in the morning of a very dark night; but owing to the excellence of the police, we met with no interruption of any kind. The road is lined with houses almost the whole way; and at all times the stranger may apply for assistance or hospitality, and be received with a cordiality which does honour to the people.*

Returning once more to the capital, I visited some remarkable objects in the environs. The first was the hill on which the usurpers of the throne used to offer sacrifice; a hill which, although artificial, rises to the height of above 600 yards. In shape it resembles a truncated cone, and is situated south-south-east from the city. On his restoration, Gia-Long destroyed the pagoda and the altar erected on the summit; and once had thoughts of levelling the whole hill; but he soon discovered more useful employment for his people and his money. On the east of this spot is a regular oblong natural hill, a little higher, planted all over with firs, a tree as great a rarity, and as much prized in Cochin-China, as any of their curious vegetable productions would be in Europe. The place of sacrifice chosen by the present emperor is not far from the conical hill, but in the plain, and regularly planted with firs.

The most striking ceremony in Cochin-China is a funeral; and it is no uncommon thing for surviving relations almost

* M. le Poivre, who visited Cochin-China fifty years ago, tells us that a traveller, who has not money sufficient to defray his expences in an inn, enters the first house of the town or village he arrives at; nobody inquires his business; he speaks to nobody, but waits in silence the hour of dinner. As soon as the rice is served up, he modestly approaches, places himself at table with the family, eats, drinks, and departs without uttering a single word, or any one's putting to him a single question. It was enough that he was a human being, a brother in distress; they wanted no farther information.

to ruin themselves in celebrating the obsequies of a parent. Not only the higher classes, but the emperor himself, steps aside to make room for a funeral or a wedding procession of whatever kind it may be. A curious feature of the economical policy of Gia-Long is this, that certain high dignities are not conferred until after the death of the persons to be honoured with them. Thus many families preserve with care the brevet of a general or an admiral, in the name of a deceased relative, who was only a subaltern officer. Distinction of rank and title is not hereditary in the country: these posthumous honours, therefore, entail no burthen on the nation; they are, consequently, in themselves the more honourable.

Respect for the dead is the same as in China, and the sentiment would do credit to the people, were it not combined with a multitude of superstitious and contemptible ceremonies. A belief in a good and an evil principle is the foundation of their religion: to the former are entrusted their ancestors; and to the latter are offered a regular course of sacrifices and prayers, that they may not disturb the repose of the deceased. But this superstition is wholly free of enthusiasm: neither sentiments, however, are found among the grandees and men of letters. The emperor has often reproved his courtiers addressing him as the son of heaven. "I am, my friends, but the son of a very humble subject of the king of heaven, of the master of the universe, who bestowed on me parents of this earth, as he did to all other men." The bonzes, or pagan priests, are but little favoured by the government; they are, consequently, neither numerous nor rich, but live very moderately in common like monks; there are also communities or convents of bonzesses. All professions of religion are tolerated in Cochin-China; the number of Christians, according to the titular Bishop of Verrenne, apostolic-vicar in the country, may be about 60,000.

All our business in the capital being finished, we set out on our return to the ship in Tourane Bay by land, on the 4th of November. M. Chaigneau, one of the French mandarins, having obtained leave of absence for three years, after a residence of six and twenty years, and many important services as a commander by both sea and land, took his passage to Europe in our ship. Our company, including the soldiers of our escort, and the bearers of our palanquins amount to about 200 persons. We proceed on the new canal, which opens into the great lake; our project being to take the diversion of hunting on the way. Early next morning we landed at the village Koua-

Hay, where we mounted our palanquins, as the road led across several marshes. But the country appearing very agreeable, we followed our hunting expedition round the hills, which abound in game of all sorts. In the vicinity of certain villages, and at the end of every five or six miles, are established along the great roads post-houses, in which travellers of distinction may lodge, under the inspection of an imperial officer, who has also the command of all the unemployed military of his district. At night we lodged at the foot of the great pass over the hills. All along the foot of the hills is a vast lagoon, separated from the sea by a natural bank of sand, in breadth about 100 fathoms, and in length sixteen miles. This lagoon communicates with the sea by a very narrow opening, of about twenty fathoms in breadth; but so obstructed by rocks as to be practicable by only the smallest boats. The lagoon itself is very deep, and would form an admirable haven, if a proper entry were formed. But nature has already been so liberal in harbours to the Cochin-Chinese, that they feel no desire or necessity to form others by art and labour. The lagoon or salt lake abounds in fish, which produce great profits to the numerous villages on its banks.

Next morning early we began to ascend the pass before-mentioned, of Taysons, and before we reached the breakfasting-place we had killed a hundred monkeys, of a large species, peculiar to the country. Desirous to procure living specimens of this animal to carry to France, it was with great difficulty that I succeeded. In this operation many of them fell; for the more that were wounded the more collected around them; endeavouring to carry off to the woods the dead as well as the wounded. The three young ones we took held so fast round the dead body of their dam, that it required no small labour to detach them. This species of monkey greatly resembles the oran-outang in his stature and inoffensive manners, inhabiting the mountains and the tops of the loftiest trees, living on their fruit. The similarity of this creature to man is strikingly mortifying. His fur is exceedingly fine: the hands and feet are black, the shoulders and legs deep red, the belly white, and the back gray; the face flat and white, the cheeks red, the eyes large and black; some males measured on their hind-legs four feet four inches in height. In the country they are called *venan*, i. e. men of the wood.

In crossing the hills we saw many marks of the wild elephants, and crossing a number of rapid torrents arrived at the summit of the pass at one in the afternoon, being almost always on an ascent. On our way we remarked several large rocks, surmounted by heaps of small stones securing pieces of gilt.

paper. These were monuments of the gratitude of porters employed in carrying heavy burthens across the mountain, in consequence of vows to the guardian spirits of the place, who had assisted them in accomplishing their task. Halting to take some refreshment in the guard-house on the summit, we there enjoyed a magnificent view of the bay of Tourane under our feet, where our ships looked like walnut-shells.

Resting for an hour and a-half we began to descend, advancing at times faster than we intended; and the road being much obstructed by rocks and stones, we were more fatigued in going down than we had been in going up. At five o'clock we arrived at the guard-house on the sea-shore, where our dinner was ready prepared. When the sun began to disappear behind the hills, we began to shoot the peacocks which are there very numerous. We fell in with very recent tracks of tigers; and we learned from the people of a neighbouring village, that for some time past those animals frequently appeared in that quarter. Snares had been set for them, and three had been sent to the emperor. Fortunately we received this information; otherwise our surgeon would have been caught in a tiger-trap, being drawn towards it by the barking of a dog placed in it to inveigle the tigers. In constructing this trap a double hut is erected, open on all sides, having one entrance closed by a swing-gate, which shuts of itself from within. When the tiger hears the barking of the dog he enters the outer hut, and the gate closes behind him; but he finds the dog in the centre to be still cut off from him by an inner inclosure. The dog trained for this business keeps up a continual noise, until the tiger be within the trap, and then holds his tongue: then the people assemble to kill or secure the ferocious intruder. The tiger of Cochin-China is of the same kind with the royal tiger of Bengal. The forests shelter many different animals, in particular the wild bull, the object of grand hunting parties for the court. Deer, white-horned goats, the rhinoceros, wild-boar, and the elephant, are also very numerous: but the most formidable of all is the tiger, which attacks both man and beast. The only animal he fears, it is said, is the rhinoceros; and in the battles between them, sometimes exhibited in the capital, the rhinoceros is almost always the conqueror. Once a-year a general tiger-hunt takes place, in which more men are killed and wounded, as I was told, than in some of their late battles. The emperor maintains a large body of elephants, to be employed in these hunts as well as in war. Our peacock-shooting was not very successful, for we killed but one; and next morning renewing our operations, we fell in with very fresh marks of tigers:

but we were too numerous to have much to apprehend from their attack. Two men armed, the one with a sabre and the other with a short spear, seldom fail to overcome that terrible animal without any injury. Two men are also sufficient to overcome the elephant, when found at a distance from the flock, as frequently happens, when he is feeding at the roots of the hills. The two hunters, armed with guns of large bore, advance towards the elephant, from opposite points, to within thirty paces of him. Then making the concerted signal, one of them sets up a shout: the elephant, without seeming to be alarmed, raises his head, and looks steadily at the shouter, who fires at his forehead. If the animal neither fall nor be at all wounded, he makes after the hunter, who with great agility escapes. The other hunter, who has followed the elephant, then fires at him behind; the animal turning round at the shot, receives another from the first man. By this reciprocal attack the poor elephant is in time mortally wounded, which often happens at the second or third shot: for the boldness and dexterity of the Cochinese hunter in this exercise is surprising. The flesh of the elephant is eaten in the country. The trunk and the feet are esteemed peculiar delicacies, and as such are sent to the princes and other great men. I ate of those parts at the table of the mandarin of strangers, and found them pretty good.

Cochin-China is rich in minerals; but only two mines are worked, both for the emperor's account; it being a capital crime to open any other, or even to speak on the subject. I understood, however, that near Phuyenne are some gold mines, so rich that four or five pounds of ore would yield twenty ounces of pure metal. But the government, dreading the effects of European covetousness, employs every method to conceal the situation of the mines.

Returning on-board our ship in the morning, we again went on-shore, to lodgings prepared for us by the Fantou, at Ton-Han. Our next excursion was to the marble rocks and quarries, situated eight miles off in the south-south-east part of the bay. Shooting as we went along, we visited the very curious and beautiful grottos, the work of nature and time. These rocks are not far from the sea, which, it is highly probable, at some remote epoch, covered the whole, although they now rise two hundred fathoms above the water. These rocks are however erroneously named; for they consist not of marble, but of bastard alabaster (*pseudalabastrites*) a translucent gypseous stone, of a very inferior consistency to marble; and it is dressed into different shapes by the inhabitants of the environs. At these rocks, among some bushes, I for the first

time saw two humming-birds, whirling about with prodigious rapidity, coming very close to me and uttering a shrill cry, from which I concluded their nest to be near at hand: but we could not discover it. There also I saw what is called the wild cock, certainly the most beautiful bird I had ever seen, and of the same kind with that stated to be found in Pulo Condor and Sumatra. I was unluckily too far off to hit the bird, nor with all my endeavours was it ever in my power to procure one to carry home. In Cochin-China, however, exists another bird, still more extraordinary than the wild cock, unknown I apprehend to all ornithologists, and of which I never saw but a single feather. The emperor himself has not been more fortunate. According to the popular account, this extraordinary creature inhabits the inaccessible mountains of Phuyenne. They call it *kinntrey*, or the genius. It is of the size of a pigeon, having the beak red, the head black, the neck white, the wings a golden yellow, the belly and tail ash-colour. The most remarkable peculiarity is the tail, which is in length above eight feet: the feather which I saw, although the end had been cut off, measured five feet six inches English. Of this bird many marvellous stories are related by the peasants, which must be set down to ignorance and imagination, as well as the report of a race of men with tails, in the southern country of Siampa. Of these extraordinary beings, called *moys* or wild men, the mandarin of the strangers himself gave me an account from his own ocular examination, while commanding a corps of elephants in that province. One of them he carried to the capital and presented him to the emperor, who sent him back to his own country with many rich presents. My respectable friends the French mandarins had never seen these extraordinary creatures; but they had so often heard their existence affirmed by men of character and probity, that they knew not how to disbelieve the report. The tail was said to be in length about eight inches and a half. Although endowed with speech, as well as with the human figure, the mandarin seemed, I thought, to conceive them to be only irrational animals.

Cochin-China possesses abundance of animals of various sorts, but with the foregoing exceptions, none probably which may not be found in the adjoining countries in the internal parts: for it is naturally but a long narrow range of land, bounded by the sea on the east, and by chains of hills on the west. A skilful naturalist might there probably discover many curious and rare animals, but none of an unknown class. To the botanist a spacious field would be laid open hitherto unexplored; but in the present state and dispositions of the

government towards strangers, particularly towards the French, with some precautions easily accessible for men of science. A stranger to botany myself, I have not ventured to enter on what belongs to that subject: I know, however, that the Cochin-Chinese possess various plants, which they employ with success in medicine.

I had the fortune to be in Fay-Fo at the reception of candidates for degrees in learning; for in all the cities of the empire, Gia-Long has established public schools divided into two classes. To the first, all parents are required to send their children as soon as they are seven years of age, to learn to read and write. In the second class, are instructed those destined to follow the profession of letters, who apply to the history of China, as well as to that of their own country; for the two are inseparably connected together: they study also the principles of the philosophy of Confucius, of natural history, and of medicine. At the end of every period of five years, these second schools furnish a certain number of candidates, who repair to the capital, to be examined and admitted into the order of the lettered, by the prince-premier himself, who, as the most learned man in the nation, (in fact probably as much as in rank,) presides in the examination and awards the several prizes. The province of Quan-Nam, in which Fay-Fo is situated, had no fewer than five successful candidates on the occasion, and preparations were making to celebrate by public rejoicings so honourable an event. A feast and a play were to be provided for the visitors, who were to appear in garlands, and the dresses appropriated to their several ranks in letters. Business, however, prevented me from witnessing the whole of the ceremonies. The emperor, besides, had sent for our surgeon to attend one of his daughters, the ninth, who had on one of her hands a swelling which baffled the skill of all the medical men of the court. Since our arrival in the country, our surgeon had vaccinated about fifty children, with virus brought from France between two pieces of glass. The air had however had access to it, and his operations unfortunately took no effect; a disappointment the more distressing, as the small-pox often causes dreadful ravages among the Cochin-Chinese.

At an entertainment in Fay-Fo, given by one of the principal persons of the town, where a number of ladies were present, several widows and young damsels came up to me in succession; offering me their betel to chew. This ceremony I afterwards understood to be the most cordial compliment that could be offered, denoting the readiness of those ladies to enter into holy matrimony with me, without farther investiga-

tion of my situation or character. To their compliments, unfortunately lost on me, I made returns by little presents of various articles of French manufacture, handsome if possible, but always of intelligible utility. By this reciprocal gallantry all parties seemed to be quite contented.

Amidst a multitude of agreeable occurrences in Cochin-China, we were exposed to one of a very opposite character. When landing the muskets for the use of government, one of our officers was always present on-shore, by the desire of the mandarins appointed to receive the arms, to see every thing done in order. The examination of the pieces went on satisfactorily, and out of 10,000 only twenty-five were rejected. But those received remained still to be proved, although, through his confidence in us, the emperor had already ordered the whole value to be paid. The proof had gone on for some time, when I was informed that a great number of pieces had burst in the operation. This accident we soon discovered to have been produced by the mode of proof, and not by the quality of the barrels; for in each, the Cochin-Chinese had put an ounce and-a-half of powder, covered by five ounces of moist earth, rammed down with a hammer. By this absurd process, the earth was in fact much more able to resist the explosive force of the powder than any barrel could be. Having pointed out to the proof-men their error, I informed the minister also; offering, at the same time, to make the proper abatement of price for the pieces destroyed, and declaring that it was far from our intention to attempt any deception on the government. The emperor, when acquainted with the business, directed the minister to express his conviction that no imposition had been meditated; that he was satisfied with the explanation given of the accident; and that, as a proof of it, he would intrust me with all his future commissions for France.

According to the old system, all ships from Macao; and all other foreign vessels trading in the ports of Cochin-China, were subject to certain fixed duties, without the least regard to their several sizes and burthen. To do away this practice, equally unjust and absurd, Gia-Long, in the ninth moon of the seventeenth year of his reign, corresponding to October, 1818, issued a regulation that all vessels coming into his ports should be measured. The length was to be taken, and in the middle of it the breadth; on these dimensions the duties were to be exacted. It was also enacted, that for elephants' teeth, rhinoceros' horns, cardamum, cinnamon, pepper, dyeing-woods, ebony, should be paid a duty of five per cent. on the value; eagle-wood and Kinam were not to be imported on any ac-

count; the introduction of rice was to be allowed or prohibited, as consumption required; but the exportation of gold, silver, and copper, was strictly forbidden. Timber for ship-building and masts was to pay ten per cent.; all duties were to be cleared before the ship began to take in her cargo, and the piastre was to be received by the government, at the rate of one quan five masses. Sugar was to be duty-free.

It was already mentioned, that one of the French mandarins in Cochin-China, M. Chaigneau, was to embark in the *Henry*, with his family for France. As a specimen of the dispositions and manner of acting of Gia-Long, may be here introduced an extract of the *shape*, or licence, to leave the country.

“The writing of the emperor, or king Gia-Long, addressed to M. Chaigneau, surnamed Thang, of the imperial family of Nguyen, mandarin of the second order, one of those who enjoy the privilege of penetrating into the inner apartments of the palace, and of approaching the sacred person of his majesty; commander of two ships of the line, of which the one is called *Thocie*, (the happy omen) and the other *Phung*, (the eagle.)

“M. Chaigneau having presented to us a request, stating, that having quitted France in the year 1791, he coasted along before a succession of ports, too numerous to be mentioned, and landed in the province of Gia-Ding, where we then resided, and offered to us his services, which we readily accepted. From that epoch, in all our campaigns, whether by sea or by land, he has always attended us with the greatest fidelity, and faced every sort of danger with unshaken fortitude.

“Now, that by special grace from above, we have triumphed over all our enemies, and enjoy profound peace in our dominions, we are desirous to bestow our highest favour on the same M. C. But as for the space of twenty-six years he has been removed far from his native land, separated from all who are naturally dear to him, and has now expressed his ardent desire once more to revisit his country and his friends; and has prayed us to permit him, with his wife and children, to embark on-board a merchant-ship ready to sail for France, we have acceded to his solicitation in itself so natural and laudable. He is, therefore, hereby authorized to absent himself from our dominions for the space of three years, that is to say, from 1819 to 1821. He is also authorized to embark, for his return to our dominions, 3,000 pieces of merchandize; for which all duties shall be remitted to him, as a token of our more special favour.

“Over and above ~~all these~~ favours, we hereby grant and confirm to him his ordinary emoluments for the ensuing year, in order to prove how highly we value, and how worthily we

reward, those strangers who come from quarters far remote, to devote themselves to our service. By so doing they will understand that, in whatever part of the world they may dwell, they are never to forget that we are always their good and kind sovereign, as in times preceding. Thus will they make a due return for the sentiments of love and affection towards them, with which our heart is filled."

Our departure from the bay of Tourane being fixed for the 13th of November, and M. Chaigneau and family being properly accommodated on-board the *Henry*, we weighed anchor and stood out to sea. The whole ship's company, notwithstanding the unhealthy season of heat and rain, were in perfect health. It is, however, to be understood, that the climate is there not unhealthy; and masters of ships, desirous to maintain their men in good condition may, by a little pains, preserve good health on-board. The slightest indisposition must never, therefore, be neglected, but treated as if it were already a serious illness.

Proceeding on our voyage, we repassed the strait of Sunda, on the 3d of December, having passed by that of Gaspar. We observed the dangerous place, on the north of that island, discovered by the American ship *Magdalen*. After her no other vessel seems to have observed it, although it lies precisely in the fair-way passage of those coming from the northward; and although several English vessels have purposely searched for it without success. Having had the good fortune to fall in with that dangerous spot, without any accident, we had opportunity to satisfy ourselves of its real existence, and to ascertain its position. That spot then consists of two patches of coral, having only from nine to twelve feet French of water on them, on an extent of 170 toises (182 fathoms) from north-east to south-west, by thirty toises (thirty-two fathoms) from north-west to south-east. Very near to those patches of coral the soundings give 17, 20, and 25 brasses (15, 18, 22 fathoms) of water. When on the spot the peak of Gaspar bears south 8 deg. east by compass, distant eight leagues and one-third.

The correct latitude of the shoal is 1 deg. 58 min. south, and its longitude 104 deg. 4 min. 30 sec. east from Paris, (106 deg. 24 min. 30 sec. east from Greenwich.) We put in at the isle of Bourbon, and continued our voyage on the 8th of January, 1820: on the 14th of the following April we entered the river of Bordeaux.
