JOURNEYS IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA (TONGKING, ANNAM, COCHIN CHINA, CAMBODIA).

By the Hon. GEORGE N. CURZON, M.P.

(Conclusion.*)

(2) PEOPLE, FLORA AND FAUNA.

Having now described the main external features of Annamite scenery and life, I pass to the people themselves. The first point to notice is the general uniformity of type throughout the whole Annamite dominions, i.e., in Tongking, Annam Proper, and Cochin China. Writers with a political aim have endeavoured to draw a distinction between these three populations, with the view of suggesting their sub-division into different states. But the difference is no greater than might be expected from the diversity of latitude and climate; and the inhabitants of Hanoi, Hue and Saigon (where not crossed with foreign blood) are essentially the same race, possessing the same ethnological characteristics and the same social organisation. In the north they are better-looking and more robust; the ugliness seems to culminate between Thanh-hoa and Hue; at Saigon the type is more effeminate, the effect of the unbroken heat.

I have seen it stated that the Annamites are the most hideous of the Eastern races. This verdict, which was passed by a gold medallist of this Society, who had never been in Annam, is one with which I entirely disagree. The people are obviously of the Yellow or Chinese stock. The square jaw, sallow skin, prominent cheek bones, thick lips and oblique eyes, testify unmistakably to their origin, and completely discredit the theories, which have found exponents, of Malay or even of Japanese affinity. Compared with the Chinese, Cambodians, and

* The first part of this paper was published in the August number, pp. 97-111. Map, p. 288.

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Siamese, who are their next-door neighbours, the Annamites are very short of stature; but they are lithe, well-made, and have small hands and feet. A thin beard and moustache only spring into existence after the age of thirty, and are sedulously cultivated by the elders and Mandarins. There is some difficulty in ascertaining an Annamite's age, because he counts any fraction of a year as a whole year. Thus, a child born on December 31st, 1892, will be two years old by nightfall of January 1st, 1893. In infancy too, no family names are borne. A fancy name is perhaps given in order to forefend the evil spirits by hoodwinking them as to the identity of the infant; or the latter is simply called by his numerical position in the family, as e.g., Père VI., the Annamite priest and Mandarin before mentioned, who was the sixth child of his parents.

Both sexes have very black hair, which after childhood is never cut, but is coiled into a chignon at the back of the head. The bulk of the women whom one sees in travelling through any Oriental country (with the possible exception of Japan) are ugly, some would even say monstrous; nor can I claim an absolute immunity for the average Annamite woman from this melancholy law. Nevertheless, there is a softness and gentleness about her expression that redeems irregularity of feature; whilst a considerable minority of the young girls are positively pretty, and, if containing an admixture of foreign blood, whether Chinese or European, sometimes highly attractive. In travelling I have nowhere encountered a more gentle or amiable race. They have the submissiveness without the nerveless apathy of the Hindu; while they possess industrial aptitudes rendering them diligent workmen, and an artistic ingenuity—I do not say originality—which on the one hand makes them excellent cooks, on the other inspires the various artistic productions, such as inlaid work in mother-of-pearl, embroideries, wood-carving and jewellery, which are still sometimes procurable and are seldom absent from the houses of the wealthy Mandarins. Though not a courageous people in the sense of inviting or voluntarily meeting danger, they are very tenacious in resistance, and make capital soldiers against an Asiatic enemy. They are moreover hospitable, polite, lively, sentimental, and of easy temper. The women present two types, the wife or concubine who is merely the brainless instrument of her master's pleasure, and the active and business-like housewife, who toils hard either in the fields or at the oar, and who in the upper ranks of life frequently takes to business and manages all her husband's affairs. On the other hand, the Annamites have the faults inseparable from an Oriental race that has never been divorced from its own surroundings. They are tricky and deceitful, disposed to thieve when they get the chance, mendacious, and incurable gamblers. They will never lose an opportunity of throwing a die or casting a lot, and the financial embarrassments of the upper class.
are responsible for the transfer of so many elegant and antique objects to the cabinets of French collectors.

Polygamy is the custom of the country, there being no limit, beyond expense, to the number either of wives or of concubines that a man may take, although the first wife, not necessarily in chronological order, but in status, holds a position of recognised superiority. In a country where ancestral worship is the pivot of life, the necessity of male offspring is overpowering, and a sterile wife would be the first to suggest and even to furnish a substitute to her husband. Families are very large, the women being of remarkable fertility. Hardly a cottage but contains a swarm of black-eyed, half-naked urchins, a full quiver being a source not of encumbrance but of riches to the happy father, since at a very early age the child can be employed to tend the buffaloes or to pull an oar in the sampan. Though nubile at the age of twelve, the girls are not usually wedded quite so early, and child-marriages like those of India are rare.

In dress there is very little except the hat (which is frequently discarded) to mark the distinction between the two sexes, for both wear the same costume, effectively concealing the lines of the figure. It consists of a long loose tunic (cai ao), made of cotton, or in the upper classes, of silk, which comes close up round the throat, is fastened by little brass or amber buttons down the right side, has very narrow sleeves, and falls to the knees or even lower. In Tongking the pre-dominant colour of this tunic among the peasants is chocolate brown, in Annam blue, and in Saigon black. Under this the women wear a chemisette over the bosom, while the rich of both classes wear several light tunics one over the other. Below the tunic the universal garb is a pair of broad flapping cotton drawers (cai kwan), white for men, black for women. Both sexes have their legs and feet bare except among the upper classes, who wear socks and Chinese shoes. The Far East excels in astonishing hats, and Annam claims its share of the general credit. The commonest male headgear is the turban (cai khan) formed of a roll of cotton or crépon, dark green, blue, or brown, which is twisted round the head below the chignon, the ends standing out like horns on either side. But there is also a big conical straw hat for men (varnished over outside and terminating in a metallic cone) which is held on by a string underneath the chin; and at Saigon another variety of coarse fabric with a broader brim, a curving outline, and a lower apex. But the palm for originality (in more senses than one) is carried off by the headpiece of the woman, which is a marvellous circular structure, some 2 to 2½ feet in diameter, made of the leaf of the cai co, a plant of the palm tribe, and sometimes most exquisitely fabricated. It has a brim 4 inches deep, which instead of standing up is turned downwards; so that when the whole hat is inverted, it makes a most admirable and artistic tea-tray for a European boudoir. Inside the rim of the hat are fixed one or two
long black silk tassels, which hang down on either side of the wearer's face. With such a headpiece there is small chance of a sunstroke; for the shadow which it throws is more than sufficient to cover the slender periphery of the Annamite woman.

The men smoke minute cigarettes and the waterpipe. But the habitual and universal solace of both sexes is the areca nut and betel (the preparation consists of a piece of areca nut folded in a slice of betel leaf and flavoured with a dash of lime), which is rarely absent from the mouth of man or woman. Its disgusting external effects are well-known, for it blackens and corrodes the teeth, discours the lips and gums, and fills the mouth with a scarlet saliva that calls for constant ejection. To anticipate or to render more harmonious the effects of this practice, the women invariably lacquer their teeth in advance with a black preparation similar to that which used to be affected by the Japanese, and which makes an open mouth like a yawning sepulchre. Should they scrape off this coating, they lose caste. The men sometimes lacquer their teeth, but are usually satisfied with nature's discoloration. It is to the same practice that I suppose must be attributed the total absence in Annam of that agreeable mark of salutation which has been sanctified by the practice of so many ages, viz., the kiss. Lips so tainted could hardly embrace. Accordingly the only kiss of which the Annamite woman is cognisant is to place her nose against the man's cheek and to rub gently up and down, with a kind of canine sniff. Both classes have a peculiar gait, with the legs kept rather wide apart and the arms swinging; but it seems to be peculiarly affected by women and Mandarins. Children are carried astride upon the hips of their mothers —an attitude which is apt to produce bandy legs in later life. Burdens are borne at the ends of bamboo poles. When it rains all classes, from the official to the peasant, put on a cloak made of layers of palm-leaves sewn together and absolutely impervious even to a downpour. But they have nothing corresponding to the oiled waterproof paper of Korea, which is uniformly lighter and more serviceable, and can be used as a covering for baggage.

Rice is the staple food of the peasantry, being pounded by the women in mortars of stone or wood. The Annamites dispense with chopsticks and eat with their fingers; an immense amount of fish is also consumed, and its capture is the second great national industry. In many of the rivers, and also on the coast, traps are set by an intricate arrangement of light bamboo stakes and palisades. In Cochin China huge circular nets are let down from a projecting hole at the end of the sampan, and are seldom pulled up without some spoil. In the bacs of Annam I saw men prodding the bottom for shell-fish; in the Siem Reap River in Cambodia they were thrusting with spears under the trees. The Tale Sap or Great Lake and the Lower Mekong swarm with every variety of fish. At points along the Annamite coast oysters and lobsters are found;
prawns are universal, and at a fishing-village named Balong, near Thank-hoa, it was said that regularly every year a shoal of whales is expected in the month of March. The popular drink is weak tea, while the only intoxicant consumed on at all a large scale is arrack or brandy distilled from rice.

The vegetation of Indo-China is almost uniform from China to Siam. In the deltas and along the rivers there is a luxuriant growth of bamboos, bananas, and palm trees, chiefly the areca and coco-nut, but also lower and more stunted types. Among other fruit-trees are the jack fruit, mango, mulberry, tamarind, litchi, orange, lemon, pine-apple and bread fruit. Vegetables are represented chiefly by beans, onions, radishes, and sweet potatoes. Tobacco is grown for local consumption; cunao and indigo yield their respective dyes; cinnamon is exported in great quantity by the Chinese from Annam, Faifu, south of Turan, being the principal mart for this valuable product. A vegetable oil is extracted from several trees.

Game is abundant in Annam, and embraces many varieties from the most important large game, such as elephants and tigers, to the smallest water-fowl, such as snipe. The elephant is found in the provinces south of Hue. All those captured or killed by the natives belong of right to the Emperor, and a corps of royal hunters is maintained as in Korea, who pursue their illustrious quarry with huge matchlocks, and a bullet not much smaller than an orange. It may be judged that their annual bag is not very large. The tiger is exceedingly common in the mountains of Annam, and is regarded by the natives with so wholesome an awe that he is frequently worshipped as a god. Driven down to the plains in search of food, he sometimes attacks the tram-coolies and postal couriers when discharging their errands, and they have a particular and excusable aversion to going alone at night. The extermination of the beast is encouraged by a reward of 20 dollars, which is paid upon production of the pads, skin, and tail. It is a curious fact that the same spots are commonly frequented by the tiger and the wild peacock. Whether they have a similar eye for the beauties of nature, or whether the tiger enjoys lying down outside the peacock, I do not profess to determine. In the mountains may also be encountered wild oxen, wild buffalo, moufflon, and three varieties of deer, of which two resemble our red and fallow. Monkeys abound in parts, and on the peninsula of Tiencha, off Turan, there is a peculiar variety with grey skin, white face, legs and tail, a red beard and black paws. They are difficult to capture living, and not easy to bag dead, for as soon as one has been wounded or shot its comrades will pick up its body and carry it off. In the jungles the wild cock (the ancestor of the farmyard chanticleer) is found, also several species of pheasant, including a species of argus, and the English hare. Wild ducks and snipe abound, also herons and egrets, whose white plumes are exported to gratify the humour of ladies and the vanity of...
colonels. From some islands off the coast near Turan also comes the peculiar delicacy so much appreciated by the Chinese palate of swallows’ nests. The article consumed in the form of soup is a gelatinous secretion deposited by the saliva of the bird on the interior of the nest, and when properly flavoured is far from disagreeable to the taste. The commonest domestic animals are buffaloes, which are used everywhere for ploughing the rice-fields, and of which there are said to be over one million in Indo-China, and a species of pretty, meek-eyed, brown-skinned oxen; pigs and fowls are universal.

The French anticipate a great future for the coal-fields of Annam, though their roseate expectations fall unexpectedly short of the point of providing the capital requisite to work them. This accordingly is supplied by Hongkong financiers; and if ever it arises that Cardiff and Nagasaki are ousted from their command of the China Seas by Tongking and Annam, and that French men-of-war coal in French Asiatic harbours to molest British commerce, it will be to British investment that the result will be due. I visited myself the coal-mines of Hatu, near Hongai, on the Bay of Along, which have so far produced the best results; as also the more recently opened galleries of the mines of Nongson in the mountains, at a day’s journey by river south-west of Turan. Opinions have hitherto differed somewhat as to the value of this coal as fuel for steamers, some ships’ captains having reported most favourably, while others have rejected it after trial. It would appear that the best quality burns well, being a fine bituminous coal; but that the coarser samples require a greater draught than most grates admit of, and also crumble easily to coal-dust. To utilise this residuum a briquette factory is about to be established at Hongai. One phenomenon these mines present, which I imagine must be unique in the world. At Hatu I saw a solid seam of black coal 180 feet in depth, exposed down the entire front of a hill; nor had the bottom of the seam yet been ascertained. Coal also exists, and is worked, at Nagotna, near Hongai, at Kamfa and Kebao on the same south littoral of Tongking, and has been discovered in large quantities in the interior at Yenbái, Laokai, and Kwangyen.

As regards the best season for travelling in Indo-China, the geographical conditions of the three territories result in very marked differences of climate; for whereas in the two deltas of the Red River and Mekong, the seasons, regulated by the north-east and the south-west monsoon, are rainy from the month of May to August, and intolerable because of the intense heat, while the months from October to April contain the more agreeable weather—in Annam, where the Annamite Apennines, running parallel with the coast along its entire length, arrest the winds and condense the vapours raised by evaporation from the sea, the dry season is between January and September, and the wet season from September to December. The best season for visiting
Tongking and Cochin China is therefore between the months of November and January. Annam, on the other hand, is best in March. Europeans find life very hard in each of these territories in the hot season; and dysentery and fever are with difficulty avoided.

(3) Turan to Hue.

Before leaving the subject of Annam, I propose also to describe the route from Turan on the sea coast to Hue, since it is the road that nineteen persons out of twenty, bent on visiting the capital, will follow, and since no itinerary of it, so far as I know, exists in the English language. Steamers of the subsidised Messageries Maritimes Company touch fortnightly at the ports of Turan, Kwinhon, and Nia-trang, on their way from Haifong to Saigon, and vice-versa. A line of German merchant steamers also runs at irregular intervals from Hongkong direct to Turan. Access to Hue is more directly gained from Thuanan, a small French post at the mouth of the Hue River, distant by water about 9 miles from the capital; but the steamers do not stop there—very wisely, since, during at least a third of the year, while the north-east monsoon is blowing, the bar is impracticable for any kind of boat. Whilst I was in the neighbourhood not a single craft had crossed it for five or six weeks; and the breakers were a gruesome spectacle. The distance between Turan and Hue is 100 kilometres, or 63 miles, and it is usually accomplished, in a chair carried by coolies, in two short days. I made the journey twice, once in each direction; but the conditions on one occasion were so unfavourable, the entire country being inundated, and every species of misadventure befalling me, that I took a much longer time. The intervening stages and distances are as follows:

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From the little settlement of Turan, lying at the south side of the bay of the same name, the imposing mass of a transverse ridge, projecting from the main inland range, can be seen dominating the bay on its

* Tram.
northern side and terminating in a wooded cape in the sea. This range, which separates the provinces of Kwang Nam and Kwang Duk, has been the immemorial defence of the capital; since it requires to be crossed by any enemy advancing from the south. Its highest peaks are between 2000 and 3000 feet above the sea; but the saddle by which it is crossed, and which the French call the Col des Nuages, is 1550 feet in elevation.

Leaving Turan, the route for some time skirts the sea-shore, then crosses a bac, spreading out into a river, up which fishing-boats sail across a bar from the sea, and arrives (two and three quarter hours) at the first tram of Namo, where coolies are changed. This is a pretty little village, with a single street, situated near a wooded knoll on the banks of a river whose waters spread themselves out into one of those lagoons which I have described in the opening section of this paper, one of its two marine outlets beings already choked. Two branches of this river require to be crossed in ferry-boats, and we then arrive at Lien Kiu (one hour). Shortly after commences the ascent of the main ridge by the new road, which has been constructed by the French since their occupation of the capital. Passing the hamlet of Nam Chon, where Captain Besson and six men were murdered by Annamite coolies while building the road as lately as 1888, we mount by easy gradients, till after climbing a final steep slope, we arrive at the Col des Nuages (two hours). Here is a tram and the second change of coolies. The saddle between the two peaks was formerly entirely built across, and occupied by a walled enclosure with two gates, one of entrance, the other of exit. This was defended by cannon and by a garrison of fifty soldiers, and effectually commanded the pass. Now the wall is broken down, and the road skirts the fort without entering it. In the interior I found a number of rusty iron carronades under a shed, and a fine bronze cannon, with an inscription showing that it was presented by Spain to the King of Cochin China in 1689. On a clear day the two-fold view from the Col des Nuages (sometimes also called the Iron Gates, and by the Annamites Haiven Kwang) is one of the most beautiful in the far East. The retrospect to Turan embraces the curving outline of the bay far below, the wooded peninsula of Tiencha by which it is closed on the south, the white line of Turan, the Marble Mountains protruding their contorted heads from the sand dunes beyond, and inland a panorama of mountains enclosing the plain. On the north side the eye wanders over the superbly wooded slopes of the ridge, where mountain streams are heard rushing through the foliage, and waterfalls throw a fleecy scarf against the sombre background, and rests upon the glassy surface of a distant lagoon, separated from the sea by a glittering sandspit, upon which the breakers are plunging in yellow foam.

Descending we pass in a few minutes the little hamlet of Dien, then
JOURNEYS IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA (TONGKING, (fifty minutes) the hamlet of Bon Nhi on the banks of a stream; later (forty minutes) a gate-tower with an inscription in three tablets, formerly occupied by a road-guard to command the approach to the main pass. We are now on the lower slopes of the ridge, from which we presently descend by a very steep declivity to the maritime exit of the big lagoon (two and a half hours after leaving the col). Here we have to cross the channel by a ferry, and may once again observe the phenomenon of a lagoon whose sea-mouth is in rapid process of being silted up by the action of the winds and tides.

Upon the far side of the bac is situated the picturesque village of Leng-ko, with a cluster of coco-nut palms, an avenue of oil trees, numerous pigs, and a population that subsists upon fishing. At the tram here called Thua Fuok, we take on the third relay. Thence the road continues along the narrow sandspit that separates the still waters of the lagoon from the booming sea. There is a smell of rotting vegetation in the air, and the physical features—the lagoon, the sandspit, and the breakers—suggest an irresistible reminder of the murdabs or “dead waters” in the Persian provinces on the south shore of the Caspian Sea. In summer the sand is sometimes so hot that the coolies cannot tread upon it with bare feet. In the low scrub, with which it is overgrown, may be seen circular mounds of glittering white sand, the last resting-places of former inhabitants of Leng-ko. A march of one hour and a half brings us to the extremity of the lagoon, where is the tiny village of Kenang. Climbing a steep saddle by steps partly fashioned, partly hewn in the natural rock, from the top we discover a new outlook over a plain, across which the track is seen running to the base of a single wooded hill. In an hour we reach the village of Nuok Ngok, lying in the middle of a soaking plain, where brown buffaloes are wallowing in the marshes, green turtle-doves flit from tree to tree, and white egrets fish lazily in the swamps. Continuing we arrive (one hour forty minutes) at the base of a third pass or col known as Fong Luong or Cholmai (lit. Thua-mai), climbing and descending which we pass (fifteen minutes) the village of Kwang Rap, and (thirty minutes) reach the larger village of Kohai (lit. Thua-hoa), where also is a tram.

From this spot there are three ways of proceeding to Hue, or vice versa. (1) Continuing by land along the Mandarins’ Road, a distance of 25 miles, which is bisected by the tram of Thua-nong; (2) by a steam launch up the lagoon of Kohai to Thuanan, and thence to the capital; and (3) a route sometimes adopted on the return journey from Hue, whence a sampan can be taken at nightfall by the traveller, who sleeps while the boat is propelled along a canal leading into the Fu-kam River, which debouches into the lagoon of Kohai, where he arrives in the early morning. I unfortunately adopted the second of these routes on the upward journey, with disastrous results. The whole country was under water owing to torrential and incessant rains, and there were no-
means of distinguishing the lagoon from inundated rice-fields. Accordingly the steam launch ran aground, lost its way, ran short of fuel, and committed every possible transgression, compelling me to pass one night in a miserable fishing-boat, and the next in a native hamlet on the shore of the lagoon. The latter runs northwards, parallel with the sea coast, from which it is separated only by a line of sand dunes, and leads into the mouth of the Hue River at Thuanan. At the latter place are a small French garrison, signal-station, and custom house. On the broad surface of the combined river and lagoon are dotted several islets, formerly occupied by Annamite forts, which little more than ten years ago disputed the passage of the river with the French. A line of sunken junks also blocked and still obstruct the channel. Two hours steaming up the Hue River, whose banks are adorned by delicious and smiling verdure, at last deposits us, after a journey, however accidenté, of surpassing natural beauty, at the capital of Annam.

(4). Hue

Originally chosen as a Royal residence in the middle of the 16th century by one of the Nguyen family, who established a sort of Shogunate in the southern part of the dominions of a fainéant Emperor of Annam, Hue only received its present form at the beginning of the present century, when, after a period of rebellion, it fell into the hands of the last surviving descendant of that dynasty, the monarch who assumed the ruling title of Gia Long, and was the Louis XIV. of his country's fortunes. He built the Citadel, an immense enceinte on the Vauban plan, with the aid of the French officers who had entered his service and had assisted to place him upon the throne. He laid out and adorned the Palace; and any work of distinction in the capital or neighbourhood is attributed to him with as unfailing regularity as to Shah Abbas in the kingdom of Iran. The Hue River, flowing down from picturesque mountains that raise their wooded cones at a distance of only a few miles from the walls, leaves the city and citadel (which is further surrounded by a broad moat) on the south side, and separates by over 1 mile of water the native quarter from the French Residency. The town itself consists, as I have said of all Annamite cities, of two parts; the Citadel, which is the seat of government, royal or provincial, and a cluster of native villages assembled within its shade. Before Hue was known the fancy of writers raised the numbers of this aggregation to a total of 150,000 inhabitants. Even now French books record 50,000, but I should be disposed to place 12 to 15,000 as an outside limit, although the extraordinary size of Annamite families may perhaps justify a higher estimate. The citadel consists of a bastioned quadrilateral 2000 yards in length on each face, entered by ten gates with lofty, two-storeyed towers, over stone bridges across a moat 40 yards
wide. Four hundred guns originally defended the embrasures, but are now for the most part consigned to a prudent seclusion. In the heart of this great and utterly indefensible enclosure, over which houses are scattered at irregular intervals, and much of which consists of unoccupied gardens or grounds, is a second walled enceinte, 800 yards square, containing the Royal Palace. This is exclusively peopled by women and eunuchs, with the exception of the sovereign; the royal guards, ministers, and Mandarins, having their residences outside. A fortified redoubt called the Mong-Ka on the eastern face of the citadel was ceded to the French in absolute possession in 1884, and contains the French garrison composed of the Marine Infantry, only 200 strong. A canal, the Dong-ba, crossed by two wooden bridges, separates these official and military quarters from the native town. Occupying a flat position the city presents no salient features upon approach, little being visible beyond the walls of the Citadel, and a pentagonal structure or tower inside it, which supports the Royal standard.

Nothing more pretty than the environs of Hue can well be conceived. On the banks of the river elegant and fanciful pagodas peep from behind a screen of palms and bamboos. Native villages are buried in depths of waving green. The lowlands, where not partitioned in rice-plots, are overgrown by a wealth of flowering and prickly plants. The mountains are wooded to their summits with pines and banians—a junction of Scotland and the Tropics. At a little distance up the river is an arena, or circular structure—now disused—where combats of wild animals were held as late as the days of Tu Duk. But the most remarkable of the environs of Hue are unquestionably the Tombs of the sovereigns of the reigning dynasty, from Gia Long to the last Emperor Dong Khanh, which are situated at a distance of some miles from the capital in wooded valleys on either bank of the river. The scheme of the finest of these structures, upon which tens of thousands of labourers were employed for years, consists of gardens, lakes, and summer-houses, whither the Emperor could retire for recreation in the summer, and where a memorial hall or sanctuary received the furniture of his apartments, the altar containing his tablet, and his principal surviving wives, after his death; and of a vast enclosure, usually elevated upon successive terraces, rising from the banks of serpentine ponds, and culminating either in a timbered mound or in a walled enclosure, wherein some hidden nook, disclosed to none but a select few, conceals the royal corpse. Every year the reigning monarch must visit each of these tombs, offer sacrifice, and perform his lais, or obeisance, before the spirits of his ancestors. It would appear from the character of the landscape-gardening, with which these tombs have been adorned, so un-Oriental in type, that the earlier sovereigns of the dynasty must have received from the French officers in their employ the plans of French gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—of Fontainebleau and Versailles. With the accession of Tu Duk a
more strictly native style was pursued; and the tombs of that monarch and Dong Khanh have in them nothing of the French. Amid these gracious and ornamental surroundings of pinewood and winding lake, the sepulanches of Annamite sovereignty are worthy of comparison with any royal tombs in the world.

Of the native government in Annam this is not the place to speak; but I may say that it possesses five main characteristics: (1) The throne is invested with a sanctity peculiar to China and its once dependent states, whose sovereigns are one and all regarded as the sons of Heaven; (2) it has won and retains this prestige independently of the ordinary supports to a powerful throne—viz., a hereditary aristocracy and a priesthood, neither of which exists in Annam; (3) the official ranks are recruited by an educational test which is genuine, though straitened, and is therefore democratic in its operation; (4) Annam exhibits the spectacle, unique in the East, of a complete decentralisation of administrative and executive authority, due to the institution of a communal system, which is enshrined in the customs of the people, and has long familiarised them with the liberties of self-government to which Europe is now returning; (5) the durability of the native régime, which is unsustained by military force, and incapable of withstanding a serious attack from without, will depend less upon the Annamite Court than upon the humour of the French, who are now tardily, but wisely, adopting the policy of ruling through the natives, and who, if well-advised, will endeavour to convert Annam into a sort of Indian feudatory state.

IV.—Travel in Cambodia.

(1) Saigon to Pnompenh and Angkor Wat.

Travel in Cambodia will, in the case of most voyagers, take the form of a visit to the capital Pnompenh, and to the famous Khmer ruins of Angkor. Since the latter are deserving of a far more widespread attention than they have yet received at English hands, and since they are likely to be increasingly visited by Englishmen in the future, it may be useful to append some reliable information as to the means of reaching Angkor. Geographically these are two. The ruins are situated at a distance of about 12 miles inland from the north-west extremity of the Talé Sap or Inland Sea, whose waters and coasts are divided between Cambodia and Siam. The entire lake, which is a comparatively late creation, synchronous with the formation of the present Mekong delta, and fills the site once occupied by the sea-margin, appertained to Cambodia, until the wars at the end of the last century transferred the provinces of Angkor, or Siem Reap, and of Battambang on its north and south shores to Siam. The latter has remained in possession of them ever since, and has been confirmed in her ownership.
by a treaty concluded in 1867 with the French, after the latter had assumed the protectorate of Cambodia. Though Cambodian in historic association and surroundings, the ruins of Angkor are therefore now in Siamese territory—a source of great annoyance to the French, and of some mortification to the Cambodians. It will be accordingly either from French or from Siamese territory, i.e., from Saigon, or from Bangkok, that the traveller will start as a base, making the journey in the one case, with considerable ease, at certain periods of the year, by water; in the other case, with greater difficulty, but at nearly any season of the year, by land. I will briefly indicate both routes.

Excellent river steamers connect Saigon with Pnompenh, the modern capital of Cambodia, and the residence both of the King, and of the French Resident Superior—performing the ascent in two nights and one day, and the descent in a less time. The city is situated at a point on the Mekong, called by the French Quatre Bras, because the river is there divided in the form of a X, two streams which flow from the north-east and to the north-west respectively, uniting opposite the town and being again split up into two channels, flowing south-west and south-east. From Pnompenh, in the months from August to the middle of January, a subsidiary service runs once a week to the Talé Sap, touching on the following day at the mouth of the Siem Reap River on the north shore of the lake for Siem Reap and Angkor, and at a similar spot for Bat-tambang on the south shore. After the middle of January the waters of the Mekong, and the lake which it feeds, sink too low to admit of steam navigation, and a traveller making the ascent from Cochin China would then have a long and tedious ascent of the river and lake in a native sampan. The French company (Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales) advertise an arrangement by which they undertake with their steamers to convey the traveller to the mouth of the Siem Reap River, conduct him thence to Angkor, show him the ruins, arrange for his accommodation and subsistence while there for a period of three days, and bring him back to Saigon twelve days after his original departure—all this for 50 dollars a head. I do not advise anyone to take advantage of this scheme, because instead of three days at Angkor he will find that he has less than one—and a man might as well try to see the ruins in one day as to see London in an hour—whilst he will spend two days of his twelve in waiting for a connection at Pnompenh. Let the stranger profit by the steamers for ascent and descent; but let him make independent arrangements for as long a stay at the ruins as he can devote thereto, and on no account endeavour to “rush” the expedition.

The north shore of the great lake of Talé Sap (called by the French, for what reason I do not know, Tonlé Sap), is one of the most peculiar in the world. Its only coast-line is the stems of trees, the greater part of whose height is immersed below the surface of the water, and is only entirely laid bare during the dry season. Through the upper branches
of these the river of Siem Reap lazily struggles to the lake. Embarking in a native sampan, the traveller proceeds for two hours and a quarter up the river, being alternately poled, pulled, or dragged through the shallow channel. It was the beginning of January when I made the ascent, and the water was already sinking rapidly. At a point whence it was impossible to continue further by the river, horses and oxen had been sent to meet me by the Siamese Governor of Siem Reap, who had been apprised of my arrival from Bangkok. A ride of one hour and a half, first through a jungly swamp and subsequently amid delicious scenery along the right bank of the Siem Reap River, which is here of larger dimensions, brought me to the town of that name, and capital of the province, administered by a governor subordinate to the Royal Commissioner at Battambang. The town consists of a few thousand people, and is a picturesque collection of successive hamlets of palm-leaf cottages built upon lofty piles in a shady grove, straggling for some miles along either bank of the river. There is an old-fashioned citadel with battlemented walls, bastions, and gate-towers, which contains the official buildings; but the governor prefers to reside in a private residence on the opposite bank. A sala, the Siamese expression for a rest-house, and substitute for the Annamite tram, is here placed at the disposal of strangers, but will not as a rule be occupied by anyone anxious to push on to Angkor. A further ride of about 3½ miles along an excellent path through beautiful jungle scenery, will bring him to the outer terrace of the great temple of Angkor Wat. I should add that all the ponies here seem to be the property of the Governor, and can only with difficulty be procured by strangers, who must ordinarily put up with rude springless carts drawn by oxen.

I can here embark upon no general description of the ruins of Angkor, a study which would befit an archaeological better than a geographical society. I will content myself with remarking, after a very careful study of all the remains, which cover an area of some 20 miles square; (1) as regards their purpose, that they were neither dedicated to snake worship, as imagined by Ferguson in his 'History of Architecture'; nor to Buddhism as supposed by Garnier, de Lagrée, and Mouhot; nor to a mixture of the two, as inferred by Vivien St. Martin; but to Brahmanism, pure and simple, upon which, at a later date, were grafted Buddhistic additions, the statues of Buddha in many cases, after the introduction and triumph of that faith, replacing the images of the Hindu deities in the niches and shrines; (2) as regards their origin, that they were constructed by a race, known as the Khmers, who came, in all probability overland, from India, conquered the country, and acquired its throne, but whose traces, except in so far as they are merged in the modern Cambodians, have entirely disappeared; (3) as regards their date—a matter in which we have received invaluable assistance from the inscriptions that have been deciphered by French scholars—that they
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were erected at different periods between 700 and 1100 A.D.; (4) as regards their material, that all the older buildings are constructed of two varieties of stone—a hard, fine-grained sandstone, invariably employed for the sculptures, and a coarse porous red stone for the substructures; but that the later buildings are made of well-burned and durable bricks; (5) as regards their architectural features, merits, and style, that they constitute on the whole the most remarkable body of ruins in the world, whether we regard the prodigious magnitude of the ground plan, the grandiose dimensions of the principal palaces and temples, or the artistic beauty and delicacy of the bas-reliefs and sculptures; (6) as regards their present condition, that, with the exception of the great temple of Angkor Wat, which is in its essential features comparatively well preserved, the buildings are fast tumbling to pieces, being buried in a deep jungle through which a path has often to be cut with a bill-hook in order to reach them, and whose trees and creepers, insinuating themselves between the stones, are rapidly causing them to fall into irretrievable ruin.

I may, however, opportunely add a word upon their geographical distribution. The remains practically consist of seven main groups, situated at wide distances apart and separated by obscure jungle paths. They are (1) the ruins of the hill of Pnom Krom and at Athvea, on the right bank of the Siem Reap River, near the lake. (2) The great temple of Angkor Wat, 3½ miles north-west of Siem Reap. (3) The hill of Bakheng, ¾ mile north-west of Angkor Wat, and the multitudinous ruins contained either inside or immediately outside the vast enclosure of Angkor Tom, the royal city, situated a little further in the same direction. (4) The great lake and summer palace of Barai Mebom, about 5 miles to the west. All these are on the right, or west bank of the river. Then on the other or east bank are (5) the group containing the ruins of Prasat Kao, Taprom, Kedei, and the artificial lake of Sra Sang; (6) to the south of these, the brick group of Bachum, Mabon, and Prea-rup and; (7) considerably to the south of these, and about 8 miles almost due east of Siem Reap, the brick group of Lelei, Pra-ko, and Bakong. It is only by visiting all of these remains that the visitor can form a fair idea, not merely of the scope and range of the Khmer architecture, but of the different features that marked its rise, culmination, and decline.

(2) Siem Reap to Bangkok.

The overland journey from Bangkok may be made by a traveller starting from that base for Cambodia, but will hardly repay any one who has already visited the ruins from Saigon. Nevertheless I append the stations and distances for the help of such as care to make the journey. It should be premised that careful preparations must be

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made in advance, and every article of food, drink, and bedding procured beforehand.

The parts of Siam traversed are very sparsely inhabited, and the people in the villages are terribly poor; consequently nothing can be bought but an occasional fowl and a few eggs. The water is unreliable, and a filter is a sine qua non. The means of locomotion are ramshackle wooden carts or wagons drawn by oxen, which only make about 2 to 2½ miles in the hour, and rarely more than a stage of 16 miles in the day. If fortunate, the traveller will procure ponies for himself and servant; but these are not invariably forthcoming, and even if they are, little beyond comfort is gained by their superior pace, since a halt has to be made to enable the baggage to come up every night. Some persons purchase their own oxen and ponies, take them right through, and sell them at the end; but it is preferable to travel, if possible, with the assistance of the local governors (set in motion by the kindly offices of the Siamese Government), who have it in their power to provide carts, oxen, and ponies at each stage, or sometimes elephants. The latter, however, furnish a slow and tedious instrument of advance; nor is the seat on a Siamese howdah particularly comfortable. At night the resting-place is a sala or open rest-house. Some of these are in a state of utter decay, and the traveller may require or prefer to sleep in the open air. The journey is an uninteresting one, inasmuch as three days are spent inside the forest, where nothing at all can be seen, and four days in traversing an open plain covered with grass, which grows higher than the head, and equally obscures the view. After twelve or thirteen days, the duration being dependent on the season of the year and the state of the tracks, a point is reached, either, if there is sufficient water, at Paknam Kabin, or if not, then further on at Pachim, where a native boat can be taken, and the descent made by river to Bangkok, a distance from Pachim of 70 miles. The duration of the entire journey from Siem Reap will probably be about fifteen days, and for its successful prosecution are required a guide, who knows the route, and can speak Siamese, a decent cook, and considerable patience. These desiderata not being always forthcoming, the traveller who is without any two of them had better leave Angkor as he approached it, viz., by water through Cochin China.

ROUTE FROM SIEM REAP TO BANGKOK.

Siem Reap to Banpuok, 13 miles; Pumentik, 14; Tuk-cho, 13; Fra Neat Fra, 15; Sesupon, 14; Arranh Kao, 18; Arranh, 17; Wattana, 14; Ansinla, 14 (or Srakao, 20); Dong Khanh, 16 (or Patrang, 15); Kabin, 16 (or Kabin, 12); Paknam Kabin, 6; and thence by boat to Bangkok—or Chantakam, 20; Pachim, 12—total, 196 miles; and thence by river to Bangkok, 70 miles.