

ANAM.

BY REV. ROBERT JAFFRAY.

The land of Anam lies on the southern extremity of the East Coast of Asia, being bounded on the North, by the Chinese provinces of Kwong Si and Yunnan and on the West by the Kingdom of Siam and Cambodia. Its divisions are two—Tong King and Cochin China (or Anam proper).

The former, to the North, is a high land and fairly healthy climate, not unlike that of South China, though warmer; while the latter, to the South, is a low, swampy stretch of country, made very malarious and unhealthy for Europeans, on account of alluvial deposits. The condition, however, of open ports, is no doubt much improved in the past years.

The principal cities of Anam are: Haiphong, Hanoi, Hue, and Saigon.

Anam is not to be considered a fruitful land; especially the southern division is a poor country. Its products are chiefly rice (from Tong King, though not in large quantities), cotton, sugarcane, spices, indigo, and silk. The forest yields several kinds of timbers for building, and animal skins. Its fruits are bananas, guavas, oranges, coconuts and a superior quality of cinnamon.

Of the mineral wealth of the country, it is hard to speak with certainty, because, though bright prospects have been entertained by the French, comparatively little has yet been produced. Gold, silver, brass, zinc, tin, lead, antimony and iron are said to exist to greater or less extent.

The population of Tong King is from ten to twelve millions and including Cochin China the whole country of Anam has a population of about twenty millions of people.

THE PEOPLE OF ANAM.

are similar in many respects to the Chinese of whom they were formerly a tribe called "Kanchi" by which name they are still commonly called by the Chinese.

The name has a singular significance, and arose from an ancient peculiarity of the race, namely that the great toe of the foot, is separated from the rest to an extreme degree. This is not the case now however, or at least cases are rare I looked carefully during my days in Tong King and only saw one old man bearing this noble feature.

They differ from the Chinese, however, inasmuch as they have no queue and do not shave the head, but do their hair up in a roll on the top of their heads and wrap a piece of cloth tightly around it. Their dress too differs slightly from the Chinese and is in fact, only old fashioned Chinese costumes; being that used during the previous dynasty.

The Anamese are not by any means a beautiful people, and have perhaps, justly been called the ugliest of all Indo-China races. They are darker and shorter

than the Chinese; flat face, low forehead, nose flat and small, large mouth, thick lips, and with the addition of their curious practice of blackening their teeth with some indelible powder, their appearance is not a charming one.

Their occupation is largely agricultural. They are rather an indolent race, not nearly as industrious or enterprising as the Chinese people. This will be seen from the fact that the Chinese have always carried on the large proportion of the business of Anam. The opium habit has spread extensively through the country and all the sins common to man are rife among them. A strange, filthy habit is prevalent, especially among the women—namely, the eating of the beetle nut. It reminds one of the tobacco chewers at home, only their mouths are made even more filthy. The beetle nut has too, to some extent, an intoxicating effect.

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Their language is but another dialect of Chinese, though the difference is a great deal more distinct than between the dialects of China proper. They use the Chinese characters, with the addition

of some colloquial characters of their own. The books of Confucius are read in their schools, and Chinese literature is current among the student class.

The religion of the people is chiefly Buddhism and Confucianism, with some additions to suit their own taste. The Roman Catholic Church have also many converts of which we shall speak later. The Anamese people, it is said, are not an extremely religious race however. Protestant Christianity has, of course, never been introduced among the Anamese; it speaks to the shame of the Church.

THE FRENCH IN ANAM.

The first treaty between France and the Kingdom of Anam dates back as far as 1787. Gradually the French have crept in, until sixteen years ago they took the whole northern portion also:—viz. Tong King, from the Chinese. Since that time there have been continual uprisings of the people, on account of levied taxes. The last rebellion was in December 1897 on account of the salt tax. This was put down and many of the leaders were executed.

The past years have seen much improvement in the land, making of roads, introducing of railroads, steamboats, etc., by the French. And though the poor natives are continually complaining of oppression, and one can scarcely help but sympathize, yet there is no room for doubt that their condition, and the condition of their land, is much improved under French government. French rule ought to elevate them and give them at least some ambition to improve their state. The treatment of the native by the French resident is generally good I think. In fact, the law attempts, at least, to give the Anamese equal rights with the French.

There is a comparatively large population of French residents in Tong King, besides several thousand soldiers. They have all come for this world's gain. I asked a French merchant in Hanoi, who had been there for twelve years, how he found business in Tong King. He replied significantly, "It is good, when one has a position, and a large salary in the railroad contract!"

France is well-pleased with her little plot and is making the most she can of it; is jealously guarding it; and is in strong hopes of soon getting another slice as is manifest by their proposed railroads into South China, to Lung Chow, Nam Ning Fu, and Kan Chow.

THE CHINESE IN ANAM.

The world renowned Cantonese merchants are scattered all through Anam, and are carrying on lively business. The French are, however, decidedly partial to the Anamese and the Chinese is not possessed of the privileges which the Anamese have. They are made distinctly to realize that they are visitors and have to pay entrance tax to do business in the country. There is, therefore, a good deal of feeling, and complaint, against the French Government on the part of the Chinese. A good many Chinese, however, are engaged by the French in the construction of the railroads, steamboat lines, etc. But the general feeling of the Chinese in Anam is well embodied in our expression, "Sour grapes". For instance: riding on the railroad a Chinese after some conversation, said to me in a contemptuous tone, "Who but the French, would want such a land as this?"

There is not the best feeling, either, between the Chinese and the Anamese. Though the latter always recognize the former as their superior, and call them "A Shank" (Uncle), yet they often take meanadvantages of the French protection and the poor Chinese suffer injustice.

ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN ANAM.

Before the French came into Tong King Spanish priests of the Roman Catholic Church had begun mission work among the natives; and this work is still largely in their hands today, though there are also some French priests in Anam. These Spanish priests are not at all popular among the French people. In fact Rev. Mr. Richemond, Protestant pastor at Hanoi, states that there seems to be but very little religious feeling at all among the French people. He is well received, and highly respected among them.

The Roman Catholic religion is widely spread among the natives and churches and converts are to be found almost everywhere. Their system of "making converts" is a wholesale one. Whole villages enter the Roman Catholic Church at once. The plan is this; The priests lend money to the people of a certain village. After a few years, it is demanded back. The poor people are unable to pay. But you must and a lance. But we have nothing with which to repay you. Then the only way is to conform to the rules and conditions of our Church. Thus scores and hundreds of "converts" are enrolled. They may still use the "joss" sticks, etc. only the image of the Virgin, and the crucifix are set up in place of

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their previous idols. This I have on reliable authority. It is also a fact, the so-called "converts" of the Roman Catholic Church, are generally regarded by the French people as the least desirable for family servants—the heathen, as a rule, being far more trustworthy. In fact "converts" too often prove "convicts".

One is not surprised at such results, when such broad methods of missionary work are adopted. It is the old story of the awful shadows of Romanism which have cursed South America, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. The poison has begun its deadly work in Anam also. Opposition, if any, to Protestant missionary work, will come from these unscrupulous priests.

THE PROSPECTS OF PROTESTANT
MISSIONARY WORK IN
ANAM.

We have come to Kadesh. Our report is: There be "giants in the land," there are many adversaries stronger than we. But bless God, though the natural prospects may be dark, yet silver linings shine on God's side of the cloud, and greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. The faith rooted in God knows no defeat and cannot be daunted by any difficulty. Let us, therefore, say with Caleb of old, "Let us go at once, and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it." Oh let us, brethren, "wholly follow the Lord." Others are going to fields more open; let us take to the "wooded country" (Josh. xvii. 17-18). Let us choose the hard and neglected field. The one that holds forth the least invitation; the hard and stony way. Let us enter this open door in His name!

God's time is now. Beware of the warning:

"On the morrow they would have entered,
But God had shut the gate;
They wept, they rashly ventured,
But alas! it was too late!"

Today is the day of opportunity. Harden not your heart with unbelief, but go forward! Anam is one of the few remaining portions of the globe, where the Gospel sound has not yet been heard.

"Nothing is too hard for Jesus,
The walls of this Jericho shall fall."

Oh, people of God! Give money, send men, men full of God, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, to enter Anam. French missionaries would of course be more acceptable and less open to suspicion and

opposition, but let the Lord send by the hand of him whom He would. Who will accept this high calling, this holy privilege, and speed the Lord's return? Oh, for the love of His appearing, heed the cry of these perishing souls!

The above article by our dear brother, Mr. Jaffray, opens to our hopes and prayers a great field of missionary possibility. The empire of Anam is rapidly becoming a French colonial possession and under the energetic rule of France its natural resources will be steadily developed until it shall become one of the most important regions of Southeastern Asia. We have already seen what British enterprise has done in Hong Kong, and the Strait's Settlement with their limited area and population. It has long been a crying shame that there is no representative of Protestant missions in the whole of Anam. Mr. Jaffray and some of his fellow laborers have had this great field on their hearts ever since the opening up of southern China. God has at length permitted him to realize his deep desire so far as to visit this field. His personal investigations have been upon the whole most encouraging. The coming of Protestant chaplains to some of the settlements sent from the French churches has introduced the thin edge of the wedge of Protestant evangelism and rendered it tolerably certain that Protestant missionaries will be accepted. This is a work that needs careful preparation and we would earnestly lay it upon the hearts of the friends of missions to pray and prepare in due time to take up this great trust of giving the Gospel to Anam.

One of the prerequisites for missions in this field is, of course, a thorough knowledge of the French language. Another is a victorious hold of God for the health and strength necessary for the trying climate, and a third, special fortitude and courage to face the difficulty of a field where Romanism is paramount, and where a degraded population, and a rather effeminate race are not even desiring the message we bring.

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