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THE DAWN OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS
IN ANNAM.

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Early in the morning of the 25th of May, 1911, the little steamer Matilde dropped anchor in the beautiful Bay of Tourane. I was awakened by the morning light and the movements of the crew. I stepped out to the side of the ship and looked over the quiet waters of the Bay. My eye was first arrested by the large foreign buildings of this quiet port, but soon I stood gazing out across the sandy plain to the hills in the distance. The many cocoa trees and palms and other rich vegetation revealed that we were now in the tropics. For some time Messrs. Jaffray, Hughes and I had been looking forward to this trip and now we stood at the very threshold. At 8 o'clock we passed customs and quarantine and were invited to go ashore in the Government launch. Upon landing we engaged rickshas (pousse-pousse) and set out to find the residence of M. Bonnet, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. After being twice taken to the wrong house and after a few painful but humorous attempts at speaking French, all three of us arrived at the home of our good friend M. Bonnet, and were soon busily engaged in conversation regarding mission work. We truly praise God for His guiding hand on this trip, for it was quite evident that He had gone before and prepared

the way. We had expected to meet opposition and distrust, but in this we were disappointed, for we were most favorably received and reassured that there was no objection to our proposed work. We had not been in Tourane twenty-four hours before we felt sure that we had come to the right place in which to begin our labors.

The city of Tourane, in the northeastern part of Quang-Nam, is situated midway between Haiphong and Saigon near 16 deg. N. latitude. It has a French population of 400, while the entire Tourane district has a native population of 15,000. This quiet French center has been well laid out and the inhabitants are quite zealous in planting trees, palms and gardens to cover the barrenness of the waste sandy soil. The streets are macadamized and lined on either side with trees or palms. Some of these roads run far into the country and one military road has been built as far north as Hue.

Tourane enjoys a healthful climate and is a most ideal place in which to become acclimated. Being right on the

coast a good sea breeze prevails most of the year. While the summers are hot and trying the winters are cool and refreshing. There is not much sickness in this locality and cases of fever and dysentery are very rare.

The accompanying photo gives a view of the Tourane river, which has its rise far away in the mountains near the Laos country. As it nears the coast it divides into many branches, forming a wide, fertile delta. This river is affected by the tide for a great distance and is navigable for many miles with native sampans or a small motor boat. The province of Quang-nam, which includes this great river valley, has a population of 800,000, while the total of all the eleven provinces of Annam is 6,000,000; Tonkin 12,000,000; Cambodia 4,000,000.

The Annamites are descended from the Giao-Chi, who once inhabited the south of China, and may be traced back to the remotest antiquity. Nearly 3,000 years before our era they occupied Yunnan, Kwong-Si, Kwong-Tong and Tonkin. The word Giao-Chi means "separated-big-toe," and this peculiarity the Annamites still retain. The Annamites or the Annamese are the most numerous race in Indo-China, but are not as aggressive as their Chinese neighbors, for whom they have great respect, calling them uncles (Chai-Chu). Annam is said to be the only country

in the world where the men and women dress alike. Both sexes wear trousers and long tunics, while the coarse black hair is twisted into a chignon or top-knot. After living among them for some time one can notice that the women have the chignon higher on the head, wear longer tunics and usually have ear-rings.

Their lips are red-brown and swollen with chewing the betel, and the custom of blackening their teeth renders their mouths repulsive.

The Annamese belong to the Mongolian race and like the Chinese are strong and have great powers of endurance. In many other ways they resemble the Chinese and this is, no doubt, due to the fact that at different times in their history they have been in subjection to the Chinese. The first Chinese dynasty began in the year 111 B.C. and continued until the year 968 A.D. Although under the Chinese rule for over a thousand years, their national spirit was still alive, as was evidenced by the fact of the repeated rebellions, China has exerted a strong influence upon Annamite life and customs while the literature and moral code of Confucius gave definite shape to Annamite thought and religion.

In education, as in most other things, the Annamese are behind the Chinese. Each hamlet has its own school and here the boys are instructed in the venerated precepts of the ancient past. While they have studied the Chinese classics for centuries they cannot boast of a great literary class like China.

The various religions of the East are recognized in Annam. An Annamite may worship indifferently at a Buddhist or Taoist pagoda and at the same altar may be seen the images of Buddha, Confucius and Laotseu, the founder of the Taoist faith. The worship of these religions may be only ignorant veneration, but it is the worship of the various spirits and genii which control the whole life of the Annamese. In this sense superstition may be said to be one of their religions. The authoress of, "On and Off Duty in Annam," says, "Religion and superstition are so intermingled in the mind of the Annamite and in his performance of all rites and ceremonies that it is impossible to speak of the one without the other." These spirits or genii, which the Annamese worship, are divided into three classes, namely, the Celestials or genii of the heavens, the genii of the waters and the genii of the earth. To each class belongs some special power of blessing or protection to the faithful worshipper.

Ancestral-worship is another form of religion and to this the worship of all gods and genii is subordinate. The morals and customs of the people are founded upon it and all social and domestic life is governed thereby. Truly, "The dead rule the living."

FRENCH COLONIZATION IN ANNAM.

It is more than one hundred years since Annam came into contact with France.

It was in the reign of Louis XVI in 1787 that Gialong, of the dynasty of the Nguyen was desperately struggling to recover his crown, usurped by the three brothers of Tay Son. Not being successful he was advised by the Bishop of Adran to seek protection and aid from France. With the assistance of some French officers King Gialong reconquered his lands, but his successor, Ming Mang, broke off his alliance with Europe in order to gain the support of China, from whom he had accepted investiture.

The massacre of some Catholic missionaries in 1857 again called for active intervention by the French and Spanish. Tourane was captured in 1858 and Saigon was taken in 1861. Cochin-China was ceded to France by the treaties of 1862 and 1867, while King Norodon, of Cambodia, placed himself under the protection of France in 1863.

The conquest of Tonkin was a more arduous task than the subjugation of the southern part of the peninsula. Tonkin was strengthened by an alliance with China, while the French operations were hampered by the uncertain and confused political situation in France. After war had been declared on China the French fleet bombarded Foo Chow and later attempted to take Formosa but only succeeded in forming a blockade. The fortunes of the army were as varied as those of the navy. Several times the French troops in Tonkin had defeated the Annamese and Chinese troops, but every expedition failed to gain a decisive victory through want of support at the right moment.

Finally Chinese interference was ended and peace se-

cured by the treaties of 1884 and 1886. The French protectorate now extended from Cambodia over Annam and Tonkin. The union of these various states of French Indo-China was effected by Governor Paul Doumer, and then began the era of great public works and commercial development. The roads and public works are a credit to the French and might excite the envy of some American cities. Water works, filtering plants and other public works are established on a large scale. A railroad has been proposed from the extreme northern border to Saigon in the south. Much of the line has been surveyed and the road is in operation from Nam-Kwan, on the Chinese border, as far south as Tourane with the exception of a stretch between Vinh and Quang-Tri in Annam. The railroads belong to the Government, and, like most of their enterprises here, are a source of financial worry. There are only a few exports and the French have been slow in developing the hinterland. A rather exclusive policy has been adopted by the French against other Europeans in the shipping trade. In spite of this the Germans have secured a large share of the trade. There is also a law for the exclusion of the Chinese which places them at a decided disadvantage, but regardless of such legislation they are the best shopkeepers and merchants in Annam and are more than holding their own with their cousins of the South. While Indo-China

is the richest of all the French colonial possessions its financial problem is a source of anxiety and the cause of many a heated debate in the Chamber of Deputies. It is most difficult to make a colony like that of Indo-China productive of revenues unless it has unusual resources. The fact that there is no vast hinterland awaiting development seriously hinders this colony from exerting a great influence upon the affairs of the East.

At one time the withdrawing from Tonkin-Annam was brought before the French Parliament but was defeated by a majority of four votes.

PRESENT OUTLOOK FOR MISSIONS.

At the present time there is a most remarkable opening for the preaching of the Gospel in Annam. Not for years has there been such favorable inducements to lead the Church to enter as now. The reason for this favorable condition of affairs is threefold, namely, (1) the political situation; (2) the disestablishment of the Catholic Church in France; (3) the colportage work of M. Bonnet.

The French have been desirous of restoring peace in Indo-China and in Annam, particularly, the people have accepted the protectorate of France, and without a doubt their earthly lot is far better than in former years, when they were at war among themselves and the various tribes of Laos. There is now no objection to a foreigner living in Annam and carrying on any legitimate trade or vocation. It is understood, however, that such persons must conform to the French regulations and not disturb public tranquility. The Resident at Tourane has already assured us of his friendship and by courtesy and prudence we can strengthen our position with him and the Government.

The disestablishment of the Church in France has put the Catholics at somewhat of a disadvantage in Annam. They had long enjoyed a strong position here because of their service to the Government. That their influence is diminishing is due partly, no doubt, to some of their questionable methods among the natives. After many years of persecution the position of the French Protestants is now regarded as being more consistent than that of the Catholics. Considering the attitude of the Church of Rome in the past, we gratefully praise God that such a hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel is being removed.

The third factor helping to bring about this great change is the colportage work of M. Bonnet, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who has labored in this district for eight years and has been the means in the hand of God, of opening up this vast region to the Gospel. In this period of time M. Bonnet has scattered abroad thousands of Bibles and Scripture portions. He has been stationed all this time at Tourane and has worked chiefly in the *central* parts of Annam and specially in the province of Quang-Nam. The waterways and good roads in this province make it easy for the missionary to reach hundreds of thousands of souls, and to establish central stations from which to work the outlying districts. In this province the Catholics are not numerous and the officials not unfavorable, so that these things, taken together with the pioneer work of M. Bonnet and his assistants, offer to us a wonderful opportunity to establish our work at a strategic point, from which we could reach out to the other ten provinces of Annam.

In the light of this great need, the favorable circumstances and the urgency of Christ's command, we are constrained to believe this is surely God's answer to His people who for years have prayed that this destitute field might be thrown open to missionary endeavor. Then if God has indeed harkened to our prayer and answered, it surely means that we are called upon to meet this obligation' with the talents and resources which the Lord has bestowed upon