gold which are known to abound there. This belief has, however, proved fallacious. The upper course of the stream is constantly impeded by rapids, the lowest being about 30 miles above Hung-hoa. Beyond this point navi­gation is impracticable during the dry season, and at all other times of the year goods have to be there transferred into flat-bottomed boats built for the purpose. Within the limits of Yun-nan the navigation is still more difficult. Near Sontay the Song-koi receives the waters of the Black river, the Clear river, and other streams, and from that point divides into a network of waterways which empty themselves by countless outlets into the sea.

Hanoi, the capital, is a fine city, and stands on the right bank of the Song-koi, at a distance of 80 miles from the sea. The commercial town extends along the water face for a distance of a mile and a half, while behind it stands the citadel, which encloses within its walls the palace, the treasury, the court of justice, the royal pagoda, the prison, the barracks, public offices, and official residences. Em­broidery and mother-of-pearl work are the principal in­dustries of Hanoi, which never has been and probably never will be a great commercial centre. But, notwithstanding this, the population is said formerly to have numbered 150,000, a number which has of late years probably been reduced by at least one-third.

Next in importance to Hanoi is Nam-Dinh, on one of the lower branches of the Song-koi. It is the centre of an extremely rich silk and rice district, and was before the war a great resort of Chinese merchants. But the chief place of trade is Hai-phong, on the Song-tam-bac Canal, 14 miles from the sea. This is the port of Tong-king, and its trade represents the foreign commerce of the country. In 1880, the last year of anything like normal trade, goods were imported to the value of 5,467,315 francs, and the exports amounted to 7,507,528 francs. Of the imports 34 per cent. consisted of English cotton goods and yarn, 21 per cent. of opium, 11 per cent. of Chinese medi­cines, 9 per cent. of Chinese water-pipe tobacco, 5 per cent. of tea, and 20 per cent. of miscellaneous goods. From 97 to 98 per cent. of these goods came from Hong-Kong. Saigon furnished about ½ per cent., and rather more than 2 per cent. represented the trade from Annam and else­where. The exports were in the following proportions :— rice, 39 per cent.; raw silk and silk piece goods, 21 ; tin, 16; lacquer oil, 6; and miscellaneous goods, 18. Of these 79 per cent. were shipped to Hong-Kong, 16 per cent. went to Saigon, and the remaining 5 per cent. were distributed among the coast ports.

The mineral wealth of the country is doubtless con­siderable, though so little has been done in the direction of working it that it is impossible to form any idea of its richness. According to Major-General Mesny, there are flourishing gold-fields in seventeen districts, while silver and copper mining occupies a great deal of native and Chinese labour. Only very small quantities of these min­erals, however, are produced in evidence.

The population of Tong-king is estimated at about 12,000,000, and consists of Tong-kingese, Chinese, and an admixture of Lao from beyond the western frontier. The Tong-kingese belong to the Indo-Chinese stock. They are taller and a finer people than the Annamese, and they are more frivolous and excitable than their northern neigh­bours, the Chinese. Their intelligence is, generally speak­ing, of a very low order ; they are dirty in their habits ; and their natural timidity serves to make them deceitful. As traders they show little enterprise, and are quite unable to compete with the Chinese, into whose hands the com­merce had, before the arrival of the French, entirely fallen. Their spoken language is allied to the Cambodian, while Chinese forms the medium of literary communication.

The Chinese records carry the history of Tong-king as far back as the 22d century B. c., but, as the data are neither well authenti­cated nor particularly interesting, we need not dwell upon them. There is, however, one mention of Tong-king, or Yueh, as it was then called, in the 12th century B.c., which acquires importance from the fact that ambassadors from that country are said to have arrived at the Chinese court, bringing with them “south-pointing chariots.” These are supposed by some to have been mariner’s compasses, but it is difficult to pronounce any opinion on a state­ment so obscure. During the reign of Che Hwang-te (218 B.c.), the emperor who made himself famous by building the Great Wall of China and burning the books, a Chinese army invaded Tong-king and captured tho town of Luliang, possibly the modern Hanoi. The occupation, however, was only temporary, and it was not until the rise to power of the Han dynasty that any serious attempt was made to subjugate the country. At that time a Chinese general, Chaou T’o, who had established a principality consisting of the two modern provinces of Kwang-tung and Kwang-se, with his capital at Canton, invaded Tong-king, but was defeated and driven out of the country by the ruler, An-yang, whose victories were achieved mainly by the help of a foreign “divine mechanic.” This man, whoever he may have been, seems to have been thrown aside after serving his immediate purpose ; and, having thus deprived himself of his right hand, An-yang fell an easy victim when attacked by a second army sent by Chaou T’o. On the subjugation of the empire by the Han sovereign, Chaou T’o’s principality was absorbed with the rest, and in 116 B.c. Tong-king became a dependency of China.

But this connexion brought no peace to the country, and for centuries rebellion followed on rebellion. A particular uprising in the 1st century is noticeable from two sisters, Chêng Tsêh and Chêng Urh, leading the rebel forces against the Chinese garrisons, with such success that the celebrated Ma Yuen had to be sent against the malcontents. After an arduous campaign Ma dis­persed the rebels and captured and executed the two sisters, thus putting an end to the rebellion. The next fourteen centuries fur­nish a perpetual record of wars and rumours of wars, the discon­nected narrative of which is generally uninteresting and sometimes unintelligible. In 1427 Li Loi acquired the throne, as so many of his predecessors had done, by violent means, but, unlike them, he established some degree of peace and order in the land. In the following century, however, the spirit of revolt broke out, and one of his successors owed the maintenance of his throne to the skill of his general Nguyen Dzo, on whom the title of hereditary viceroy was consequently conferred. This viceroy gradually assumed the supreme authority in the district under his control and virtually separated Tong-king from Annam, holding the first under his own sway and leaving the southern portion of the country to the roi fainéant. In this disunited condition the two countries remained during the 17th century and part of the 18th, till a successor of Nguyen invaded Annam, captured the imperial city of Hué, and dethroned the king, Gia Long, who fled to Siam. The Siamese sovereign entertained the fugitive with hospitality, but declined to help him to recover his throne. It happened, however, that at this time (1787) the Jesuit establishment of Bangkok was presided over by Bishop Pigneaux de Betaine, who thought he saw in the political condition of Annam a means of establishing the power of France in the eastern portion of Indo-China. With this object he proposed to Gia Long that he should accompany him to Paris to enlist the aid of Louis XVI. for the recovery of his throne. This the king declined to do, but as a compromise he sent his eldest son. The young prince was cordially received by Louis, before whom the bishop laid the following reasons for the interference of France on behalf of Gia Long. “ The balance of political power in India appears at the present moment to be largely in favour of the English, and one may be justified in looking upon it as a matter of no little difficulty to restore the equilibrium. In my opinion the establish­ment of a French colony in Cochin-China will be the surest and most efficacious means to the end. . . . The most certain way of damaging the English in India is to ruin, or at any rate to weaken, her commerce in time of peace. Being situated nearer to China, we should undoubtedly absorb much of her trade. ... In time of war it would be still more easy to stop all commerce between China and any hostile nation. . . . From such a coign of vantage it would be easy to interfere with the designs which the English evi­dently have of extending their frontier more to the east. ”

The embassy resulted in a treaty with Gia Long, by which the French king engaged to restore that monarch to his throne on con­dition that he accepted the virtual protectorship of France over Annam. But even before the initial steps towards the fulfilment of this contract could be carried out, the political uprising which finally brought the French king to the scaffold made all interference in the East impossible. In these circumstances the bishop deter­mined to raise a sufficient force from the French and other adven­turers who then frequented India and the neighbouring countries, and, with an army so recruited, he landed in Annam. The Anna­mese resistance was of the feeblest kind ; the usurper’s power was