

by a terrible epidemic. The Captain of the vessel attempted to prevent his landing, but in vain. He landed, but only to witness the death of the first three missionaries who had set their foot on the fatal shore in the previous year. Within three weeks the venerable prelate and the six newcomers had all paid with their lives for the zeal they had displayed in bringing assistance to the numerous native sufferers from the plague. Pere Planque continued the work of organizing new expeditions and seeking for new recruits for the missionary army to fill up the gaps which death was continually creating in its ranks. At present there are upward of one hundred missionaries engaged in the work, and as many have perished in the few years since the missions have been in operation. Dahomey is naturally the country which demands and receives most victims. The population over which the mission of Dahomey extends is estimated at twenty millions, divided into several kingdoms, and the Fathers can boast of having made 25,000 converts from barbarism.

The people of this vast region are models of beauty in ebony. They are well-made, physically very strong, but undisciplined to labor. Two distinct races can clearly be traced, named respectively the Nagos and the Djedji. The former are more robust; the latter are more intelligent. Each of these main stocks is subdivided into tribes, and each tribe dwells in its own villages, and is under the rule of its own king. They are usually known by the names of their kingdoms or of the principal villages, as Houssa, Nufi, Ornago, Eko, Lagos, Egbas, Yabou and Dahomey. Each tribe has a kind of tattooing peculiar to itself, by which its members can be at once recognised. The members of the tribe of Haoussa are tattooed round the head, with