

"Mandarin gave orders to have the spot they lay on stricken three times—the dust was made to fly, and we resumed our march.

"On the road I had a favourable opportunity to examine the soldiers by whom I was surrounded. Their uniforms are of coarse cloth of European manufacture; made in the same fashion as the dress worn by the common people; but the sleeves are of a different colour from the rest of the dress; the facings are much the same as those of the uniforms of Europe; bands and cinctures of some showy colour complete this motley dress. Their head dress consists, like that of other Annamites, of a turban, with this difference, that they wear over it a little pointed cap, not unlike a sugar loaf. Their trousers are so short, that their black legs and feet are left entirely exposed. As they always lie on the ground and never undress, they are excessively filthy: what with their clothes hanging in shreds about them, or mended with patches of every colour, it is not possible to imagine any thing more grotesque. In fine, without uniformity in their dresses, they do not even observe the slightest order in marching: they are, however, distinguished from each other, less by the particular colour of each battalion, than by the arms they bear. Some have a musket with bayonet, others pikes eight feet long, pointed with a piece of iron six inches in length; some are armed with lances, the tops of which are made in

the form of a cutlass; whilst a sword and shield are the only arms borne by others. I should suppose that in battle, they who carry muskets are separated from those who are otherwise armed, but when marching they are all confounded together. The Tong-King army possesses no cavalry; and as for cannon, the field-pieces are so small that they are carried by the soldiers. Such was the cortege in the midst of which I reached the seat of Government of the western province, called Doai, through which five years before I passed in the disguise of a Chinese.

"When I was introduced to the Government residence, immense crowds were collected from all sides. It is like a fortified camp, surrounded with a moat; it is about half a league in circumference, and serves at once as residence for the Mandarins, as Court-house, barracks, prison, and public granary. The ramparts, raised about twenty feet, are formed of bricks made of clay dried and hardened in the sun; those bricks are less solid than stone; but, considering the feebleness of the means of attack in this country, they are sufficient for the purposes of defence: the interior of this fortified camp is divided into many enclosures. I was laid down in front of the Governor's house: he is a man about fifty years' old, of fine figure, without beard, and of a fairness of complexion not often seen in Tong-King. With an air of gravity he glanced at me and my trap-