REPORT

JOURNEY BY MR. CARLES

IN THE

NORTH OF COREA.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
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REPORT
OF A
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Of the two main roads running north and south in the northern provinces of Korea one follows the strip of land, seldom exceeding 40 miles in width, which lies between the Japan Sea and the range of mountains which traverse the whole length of Korea, and whose eastern face is bold, and in parts precipitous. The other road, which forms the chief line of communication between Korea and China, continues along the western coast, to which the mountains descend by a gradual slope extending over more than two-thirds of the breadth of the country. Though only once coming in sight of the sea, this road crosses the mountain spurs which lie in its path at an elevation seldom exceeding 300 or 400 feet.

The heart of the country is difficult to traverse, either from north to south or from east to west, but the valley of the Han and its large tributary, the Im-jin-gang, affords access to Söul from Gensang on the east coast, by a route which crosses the main chain, within sight of the Japan Sea, at a height of 2,000 feet.

Another link between the two coasts is formed by the mountain road which follows the course of the Yalu on the northern frontier, and, after crossing the water-shed of the Sam-su-gang at a height of over 6,000 feet, divides into two branches, the one leading to Tan-chhôn and the other to Ham-heung.

Leaving Söul on the 27th September I took the north-west route, the first large town on which is Kai-song, at a distance of 50 miles from the capital. The road to it crosses numerous low spurs of hills, on which there are frequent patches of woodland, and traverses several small valleys well planted with rice, millet, beans, sesameum, perilla, tobacco, cotton, chilies, cabbage, castor-oil, and turnips, and more rarely with the loose panicked millet, the egg-plant, and coix lacryma. Peach, plum, pear, persimmon, and chestnut trees grow on the slopes above the farms, and many cabins are scattered about in the more sheltered dells, while villages of thirty to forty houses are situated at intervals of 5 to 6 miles along the road side. This portion of the country has been recently described by Consul-General Aston, and there is consequently no occasion to refer to it again except to draw attention to the Im-jin-gang, a branch of the Han, as large as the main river, on the banks of which the remains of earth-works, made to resist Japanese invasion, are still to be seen.

Kai-song retains to this day much of the importance which it possessed 500 years ago as the capital of the country. The number of families in the town and suburbs is said to be 7,000, with 19,610 males and
10,260 females, exclusive of children under 15 years of age. As the number of persons in a family seems throughout Korea to average between five and six, the whole population of the town and suburbs may be estimated at about 40,000. A great disproportion between the number of males and females in favour of the males is characteristic of the whole of the north of Korea. In the large towns this is ascribed to the immense staffs attached to the officials, but in the villages there is no corresponding balance in favour of the females, and it is probable that an explanation accounting for the fact by a greater number of deaths among girls in infancy may be correct. Of female infanticide I was assured that there were not many instances, and I certainly saw no evidence of it.

The foundation of the old palace at Kai-sông, which was destroyed when the capital was removed to Sōul on the change of dynasty in 1392 A.D., lie at the foot of a range of high mountains running east to west. A stone causeway, 50 paces wide and 150 paces long, which, at the lower part, is shaped like a boot with the toe turned west, leads by terraces, on which the stone bases of pillars show the plan of the old buildings, to a moon-shaped hill at the back of the old palace gardens. On undulating ground on either side of the causeway are the sites of many smaller buildings, but almost the whole of the débris has been removed, and no sculpture nor inscriptions are visible.

Kai-sông owes its present importance in large measure to the cultivation and preparation of ginseng being confined to its neighbourhood, and the chief source of the Royal revenue is derived from the taxes imposed on the producer, manufacturer, and exporter of this medicinal root. The tax on the farmer is calculated by the number of screens, 18 feet long, under which the plants are grown, and is 150 cash per screen. The merchant, before he can purchase ginseng, has to obtain a licence from men called "Pao-tjang," to whom licences are sold in the capital for prices ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 cash, and by whom they are resold for about 1,900 cash a catty, the profit cleared being about as much as the original outlay, seeing that a licence covers rather more than 200 catties.

After being prepared for consumption, the ginseng, known in this condition as red seng, pays an export duty of 375 cash per catty before being taken to Kao-ly men in Chinese Manchuria, where it is sold for from 8,000 to 9,000 cash per catty, its preparation and carriage having by that time raised its actual cost to about 6,000 cash. In 1883 the year's crop is said to have been 10,000 catties of red seng, of which only one catty is obtained from 34 oz. of the white, the raw, seng.

Without data as to the extent of ground in cultivation or the cost of collection of taxes it is impossible to estimate the revenue derived by the King, but it is easy to see that his revenue would be immensely increased by selling licences direct to the merchant instead of through the medium of the Pao-tjang. These fortunate men, forty in number, reside in the capital or elsewhere, as is most convenient, and have no other work to perform than to make as large a profit as possible on the licences which they have for sale, and which in many cases have been given to them consequent on their recommendation to Royal favour by some patron who receives a very solid token of gratitude.

The figures given above are those ruling in 1883; a fall in value of 40 per cent. has taken place in the last ten years, partly due to the importation into China of American ginseng, which has greatly affected the profits of all concerned in the trade.

On leaving Kai-sông the country becomes much wilder, the valley being confined between high steep hills, and the woods on the high mountains to the east extending across the road to the hills opposite. Ten miles
from Kai-sông the valley begins to widen out, and patches of cultivated land are occasionally seen high up the hill-side. At Tenk-tjin Kow, 17 miles out, the country resumes its former character. The road there strikes in to the hills and continues along narrow valleys, until opposite Keum-chhōu, where a finely-built resting-place for the Chinese Ambassador is in marked contrast to the huts of the villagers. Immediately below Keum-chhōu, 20 li from the sea, two rivers are crossed, which unite 300 yards down. The farther of these, the Tao-tjoil, forms the boundary of the two provinces, Kyong-hwi Do and Hwang-hai Do. It is 150 yards wide, but in the autumn is only 4 feet deep, and is reported to be of no use for navigation on account of shallow.

Some fine hills stretch away to the south-east, and on the north bank of the river are low downs of gravel and pudding-stone, while to the east is a large well-cultivated plain some miles in extent, on which most of the crops had already been taken in, and the winter wheat was well above ground.

A long, gradual ascent leads to Phyong-san, a small town of no importance. On the hill facing it runs a stone wall 12 feet high, with a circuit of between 1½ and 2 miles, inclosing a wilderness of wood and brake, and two or three cottages. This is the "hill town" of Phyongsan, i.e., the fortress to which the people of the district flee in time of danger. All towns in this part of the country, if unprovided with walls, are supposed to be supplemented with a stronghold of this kind, well stockéd with rice and soy. As it is some 300 years, however, since the protection of such places has been sought, it may be presumed that the granaries are now empty, and that the soy has lost its flavour.

The road beyond Phyongsan is for the first 8 miles much like that to its south, but after crossing a stream which flows eastwards, and ascending its course for a few miles, the hills, apparently of limestone, narrow considerably, and at Chhong-su the scenery becomes very bold, with fine trees growing in every inequality on the face of the rocks. Tigers are said to be found in these mountains, though an occasional field of grain is to be seen almost at their summit. These hills are the eastern spur of a range which runs to the sea, and are said to be so steep that no road such as is shown in the maps exists across them from Phyongsan to Pong-san, but a detour to So-heung is necessary. Near Chhong-su and for miles onward the hill-sides are studded with dark upright rocks, which, from their height and shape, look like the headstones in a graveyard. Both colour and shape are evidently due to the action of water, but presumably not to that of torrents, as many of them are found on the summit of the hills near So-heung. A great deal of limestone rock lies to the west of Chhong-su, and there appear to be outcroppings of coal. The magistrate at So-heung was not aware, however, of its existence, and I was too weak that day from fever to leave the road to examine them.

From So-heung the road runs almost due west, twice crossing a stream which flows into the Yellow Sea, until within a few miles of Pong-san, where, on escaping from some spurs of a high range facing that of Chhong-su, a sudden turn is made into the hills to the north. At the point where the road turns the valley begins to open out to a width of two to three miles, but to the east the space available for cultivation is somewhat cramped. Three villages containing 200 to 300 houses, however, are passed on the road, the hills north of which are very bare of wood and herbage.

Pong-san, a town of 400 houses lying at the foot of a steep range of hills, is one of many prominent instances of extravagance in official expenditure in the western provinces. Apart from the magistrate's yamen, to which a staff of over 200 men is attached, and which contains
numerous Courts, in one of which I was most comfortably lodged, there are, as in all the towns, a temple to Confucius and a hall in honour of the King’s family, where homage is paid to the tablet of the reigning Sovereign.

In addition to these there is at Pong-san and some other places on the road a fine building destined for a resting-place for the Chinese Ambassador when he visits Sōul. These buildings are all solidly built and kept in fair repair, while the huts of the people are mere cabins of mud roofed with thatch, and entirely destitute of furniture, excepting such vessels as are necessary to cook their rice and serve it up in.

On leaving Pong-san the road strikes at once into the hills, and soon after crosses a pass 500 feet high, which is the stiffest piece of road between Wi-ju and Sōul. At its summit were several bullock carts, carrying tobacco-leaf from Wi-ju to the capital, which on account of the steep descent had been lightened of half their loads. As a rule the road north is very easy travelling, and kept in fair repair. Its width, which south of Phyong-yang is from 8 to 10 feet, is increased to 14 and 15 feet north of that town.

In the granite country, through which far the greater part of this road lies, the foundation is very good, and it is only in crossing the dips of the valleys that treacherous ground is met with. In summer rains must undoubtedly alter its condition, but the causeway is generally partially drained by ditches on either side, and a slight outlay on drain-pipes and brick culverts would, I should imagine, keep the road in working order throughout the year. At present, in autumn, carts are said to cover the 1,060 li from Wi-ju to Sōul in fourteen days.

The descent on the northern side of the pass lies through woods of oak, chestnut, maple, fir, acathopanax, rhus, and eunymus, which when I saw them were beautified with all the tints of autumn. The timber is not of very large growth, but the scenery owes an additional charm to this, as the view is the less restricted.

Facing the pass is a “hill city,” on the top of a high hill, whose base the road skirts, passing through a little village with a stone gateway, and mounting another ridge, from the summit of which is a view of the plain of Hwang-ju, stretching north-east towards some fine mountains. The plain, which is 5 miles broad, richly cultivated and well watered, is bounded on the north by the Nam-chhon, a river 130 yards wide, which flows immediately under Hwang-ju, and falls into the Ta-tung* 50 li lower down, at Nung-chiang.

A little distance below the ford, opposite the town, some small boats were lying at anchor, but the water is said to be very shallow, except when swollen by floods, against which the city walls are well guarded by stone embankments.

In the towns in the north of Corea the chief officer of the place is generally a military man, and this is the case at Hwang-ju, where the General in command of the troops of Hwang-hai Do is also the chief civil officer. The town and suburbs are said to hold 3,000 families, a large part of whom live outside the city wall, which is 3 miles in circumference, and extends to the summit of a hill at the back of the town, the greater portion of the higher ground remaining unoccupied, and covered with firs. The trade of the place is inconsiderable, and contains nothing of special interest; and the General in command at the time, who had served many years at different posts in this neighbourhood, assured me that no trade was done at the Nam-chhon’s junction with the Ta-tung.

* The Corean name of this river is “Tai-dong Gang.”
The country north of Hwang-ju is very remarkable, consisting of low downs of red soil many feet in depth, traversed by slow, muddy streams flowing between steep banks, and extending for miles right and left of the road. Fertile as the country appears it is not cultivated to its full extent, large patches of ground being left unbroken. The plain is about 10 miles wide, with but few trees going on it, and the houses are stowed away out of sight in little gullies sheltered from the wind. The high millet and beans, though not so far advanced as in the neighbourhood of Kai-sông, looked well, but the cotton, which was largely grown, had suffered from the rain.

Near Chung-chun a few miles of low hills interrupt the plain, which extends north of them as far as Phyong-yang, and appears to contain the richest soil in its northern division. The occurrence of this plain, which is almost entirely free from stones, is a very striking phenomenon in Corea, where so much of the ground is occupied by hills, and where the valleys are elsewhere drained by clear bright streams with stony beds. Its formation was accounted for by Dr. Götische, lately Professor of Geology at Tokio, whom I met at Phyong-yang, as due to the deposit of sediment by the Ta-tung, whose mouth, he considered, must formerly have been much farther inland. Whatever its origin this tract of land, which is some 20 miles wide, appears to be far the richest in the north of Corea, and is sufficiently raised above the level of the rivers to be safe from floods.

The approach to Phyong-yang lies for 4 or 5 miles between a thick hedge, mostly of gleditschia, mulberry, and sophara trees, amongst which are placed hundreds of tablets commemorating the good administration of different officers at Phyong-yang. As Phyong-yang is neared the tablets, many of which are protected by walls and tiled roofs, form almost a street; some are in stone, others in iron or copper, but in spite of their numbers and lasting materials, I saw none that dated back more than 250 years. These tablets, and the avenue in which they stand, are almost invariably to be found outside any town of official rank. The avenue, as a rule, is supposed to be 5 li long (31/2 miles), and where it is not, the conscience of the public is quieted by a mile-post at the extremity, stating that the distance to the Royal hall in the town, from which distances are measured, is 5 li. Originally, the tablets may have been erected only to those officials who deserved grateful recognition, but, the omission of their erection is so invidious that, latterly, only in flagrant cases of oppression has this honour been denied, and the construction and good repair of tablets and their little houses are more a sign of a good harvest, and consequent ability to afford this expense, than of gratitude felt by the people towards their magistrate.

The day happening to be the 15th of the eighth moon, numbers of people in their best clothes were visiting the graves of their relations, and the mixture of family picnics with wailing women was very striking.

The praise that has beenlavished on the picturesqueness of Phyong-yang is well deserved. Standing on the north bank of the Ta-tung the city walls keep parallel with its course for 2½ miles, topping escarped hills, and descending to a water-gate, almost on a level with the water. Beneath flows the river, on the upper part a clear bright stream 400 yards wide, between green banks, shallowing lower down and broadening out, with a large waste of sand on its south bank. Scores of fishing-boats were paddling about, either from curiosity, or to find some better spot for another cast of the net, and long ferry-boats, open at the stem to allow animals to embark more easily, were being poled backwards and forwards. A constant string of animals was passing to and fro across the sand, and underneath the city gate and on the walls were assembled a crowd of
people in holiday dress. The first impression of its picturesqueness is increased on ascending the hills inside the city, and looking either eastwards over the rich plain to the mountains, through which the river finds its way, or down the stream, or northwards to its confluent, whose valley forms the weakest side of the city; and down which there poured in 1593 the joint forces of Coreans and Chinese to recover the city when held by the Japanese. An earthen wall, barring the approach from this valley, shows where the earthworks lay in those days, and where the fighting took place. The city itself, with its large yamênus, public buildings, and suminous streets, with dark-roofed houses, relieved by the towers on the city gates, and a few clumps of trees on rising ground, is a pleasing change from the monotony of ordinary Corean towns.

The Province of Phyong-an, of which Phyong-yang is the capital, contains forty-four districts, and a population of 887,480, of whom 484,954 are males. According to the last census the number of families in this province was 219,569, a considerable decrease on 293,400, the number given by Mr. Griffiths, in "Corea, the Hermit Nation," as the population a few years since. The district of Phyong-yang holds 23,070 families, with 43,074 males and 32,864 females, while in the town and suburbs there are 6,500 families with 6,607 men and 4,109 women.

Phyong-yang's position is well calculated to secure it a more flourishing trade than it at present possesses, though it has been long since regarded as one of the chief commercial centres. To its south is the richest agricultural plain between the capital and the Chinese frontier; to the east lie the valleys of the two branches of the Tai-dong, reputed to be rich in silk and holding at least one extensive iron mine, to which there is access by water; to its north runs the main road for centuries of all trade between Corea and the outer world, and less than 40 miles to the west is the sea, with which there is communication by a river one-quarter of a mile wide, which flows under the walls of the town. Yet with all these natural advantages, Phyong-yang does not rise much above the level of an ordinary town, except in the number of buildings dedicated to Corean heroes of antiquity.

The greater part of the wares for sale are, as usual, exposed in booths and stalls lining the main streets. In them are to be found a mixed assortment of pipe-stems and bowls, Chinese dyes, tobacco in the leaf and cut, paper tobacco pouches, hempen cloth, English shirtings, Victoria lawns, handkerchiefs, paper, scissors, baskets, hats, locks, pieces of iron and copper, looking-glasses 3 inches square, glass bowls from Manchuria, shoes, sandals, bark, lacquer trays from Japan, lamp-oil bowls from Song-ch'iu, bars of iron, combs of satôtja wood from Chollado, cedar wood for incense, rice, millet, beans, Indian corn, safflower, "omi" (a seed used for fixing dyes), "hong-hoa" (the petals of a plant which are pressed and sold in strings as a dye), sophora flower (used as a yellow dye), xanthoxylum seeds (used for skin diseases), ginger from Chollado, sea-weed, salt fish, fungi, chestnuts, pears, windfall apples, "tarai" (a rich luscious fruit looking like a compromise between a gooseberry and a crushed greengage), dried persimmons, the Cape gooseberry, cone seeds, cabbages, and many other vegetable products.

It is only, however, after careful search that the few shops containing silks and piece-goods in any quantity are discovered. Iron pots and tools, copper utensils, hats, sandals and wicker baskets represent the chief manufactures, exclusive of those above-mentioned, and no porcelain, bronzes, or other works of art indicative of a higher state of civilization in former days are to be procured.

* Children of under 15 are probably not included in these Returns.
It is in towns such as Phyong-yang that the poverty of the country is fully realized. In the villages and mountains little sign of wealth is expected, and the clean outer clothing of the men and the good quality of their food foster an expectation in the traveller of finding thriving towns, bearing some evidence of comfort. The towns, however, are simply large villages, with streets of mud cottages, grouped around official residences, which, from the gateways leading to them and the numerous courtyards surrounded by substantial buildings well raised above the ground, have, by contrast with their surroundings, an air of almost palatial grandeur. The interior of the yamens is, however, almost as bare as that of the cottages. The furniture of a room consists in a folding-screen placed against the blank wall and mats on the floor; and it is only in the quality of the mats, the condition of the paper on the wall, the absence or presence of a screen, or the style of painting on its panels, that the grades of riches and poverty are detected. Even the appointments of the table differ but slightly. Each villager has a separate table, with a separate set of brass bowls, containing his portion of rice, soup, soy, in the same manner that the Governor of a province is served. The spoons and chopsticks are generally very simple, even among the higher classes, and the articles of food as well as the wine are in all cases almost invariably of local growth or manufacture.

It is hard to learn whether Phyong-yang is at all times accessible from the sea, from which it is said to be 110 li distant. In July 1866 the "General Sherman," an American schooner, came up to Phyong-yang, and, according to local evidence, it would always be possible for steamers of 10 to 12 feet draught to come up the river as far as the city during the summer floods, but at other times boatmen said sailing-vessels of more than 5 feet draught could not come up on account of shallows, except at high tide, when there are ten feet of water. A boatman, however, who knew the steam-ship "Nanzing," which has been trading to Chemulpo, said that she would be able to come up under conduct of a pilot at high tide. Sea-junks are in the habit of transferring cargo at Sam-hoa, at the mouth of the river, to smaller boats, which take three or four days coming up, and the transfer seems to be made more on account of the awkwardness of the sea-boats in a strong river than on account of the depth of water being insufficient for them. Forty-seven boats, ranging from 10 to 200 pieces capacity, were lying under the city walls, and the number of houses of entertainment in the neighbourhood (many of them of two stories, an unusual sight in Corea), testified to the presence of a strong sailor element, but the cargo at the time chiefly consisted of reeds, the stems of which are used for the manufacture of matting, and the flowers for short brooms. Another kind of matting is made of a grass, and a stronger kind, used for packing, of rice stalks. Ropes are made of hemp or human hair.

A trading Company of Phyong-yang men has a large branch in Chemulpo, the agent at which place had spoken to me very favourably of the trading capabilities of his native place, though he considered that its resources would take some little time for developing, as the people were

* The local account of the loss of this vessel differs in some respects from what has appeared in books. According to what I heard from several natives in the country and the city, when the schooner lay opposite the city presents of food were sent to her by the Governor, with a request that she would retire, and it was not until after ten days had elapsed and the "General Sherman," on finding permission to trade absolutely refused, had endeavoured to find a market by force, and had fired upon the city, that she was attacked. Being obliged to retreat she dropped down the river, and owing to a thick fog took the wrong passage round an island four miles below the city. While aground at this point she was burnt by fire-junks, with all her crew on board. On this last point every account agreed.
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ignorant of what kind of goods were sought by foreign merchants. On consulting the leading man in the Company at Phyong-yang, he informed me that some twenty men were partners in this business, in which they invested from 5,000 to 10,000 dollars a-piece, and that the branch at Chemulpo was becoming of great importance to them, as the opening of the ports had largely withdrawn trade from the overland route to China. He estimated the import of shirtings into Phyong-yang for the year at 3,000 pieces, of which only 300 came overland. The cost of carriage from Chemulpo was not great, the hire of a pony carrying 28 pieces being from 2.500 to 3,000 cash. Victoria lawns, handkerchiefs, dyes, and miscellaneous goods form the main imports, and the products of the country are raw silk (chiefly from Thai-chhôn, Yong-pyon, and Song-chhôn), hides (probably 10,000 annually), beans, cotton, silks, and cotton and hempen cloths. Safflower, sophora flower, and indigo were formerly used as dyes, but the introduction of aniline dyes has almost put a stop to the cultivation of the last named. Iron is found in large seams at Kai-chhôn, and bars weighing from 25 to 30 catties are sold in Phyong-yang for about 10 cash a catty, or 50 per cent. cheaper than the cost of iron in Hwang-hai Do, even at the place of production. Copper and lead come from Kap-san, in Ham-gyon Do, the best timber from across the frontier, and pottery from Son-chhôn.

Silkworms, he said, were fed solely on mulberry leaves—a statement which I found repeated throughout the whole of the north of Corea, though I am informed by gentlemen who have travelled in the early summer in Kang-won Do that they have seen worms fed on oak leaves—and the wild silkworm is unknown. White cocoons cost 600 cash per catty, the red being cheaper. Oil is made from perilla, sesamum, and the castor-oil plant, but the last-named, on account of its medicinal qualities, is only used for lighting purposes.

It would appear that the iron mines at Kai-chhôn are of considerable importance, a vein 14 feet deep being close to the river, and the only impediment to its working being the absence of coal.

Phyong-yang is rich in historical interest. Ki-tsze, who is reported to have emigrated from China in 1122 B.C., and to have founded a dynasty which lasted until the fourth century B.C., made this his capital, and his memory is still kept in the names of the different yaméns, while his grave is preserved with great respect, and a hall containing his portrait lies to the south of the city. In its immediate neighbourhood is the standard of land measurement introduced by him, which is illustrated by paths and ditches said to have been cut under his direction.

A hall also exists in honour of Dan-ku, the fabulous hero who founded the country in 2356 B.C.; and in the same place is a tablet to the first Prince of the Ku-kü-li race, who entered Corea about the beginning of the Christian era.

By far the most perfect building that I have seen in Corea is a little temple to the Chinese god of war, who “manifested himself” at Phyong-yang during the time of the Japanese invasion. Frescoes representing events in his lifetime cover the walls of some low buildings which form three sides of one of the courtyards, and the figures in the temple, with their trappings and sacrificial utensils, are all well designed and of a costly description. Among other ornaments are some Persian bronzes, a present from the Palace at Peking. The high flagstaffs at the temple gate are in themselves an object of curiosity to foreigners, as they do not touch the ground, and are held in position by two slabs of stone, to which they are fastened by wooden pins, the slabs themselves being sunk only 5 feet in the ground.

* At the end of September the dollar exchanged at Chemulpo for 1,200 cash. [134]
There is also an interesting temple in honour of the Corean General Kim-she-heung and the Chinese General Li-yo-sun, who, by a combined attack, which is represented in frescoes on the walls, recovered Phyong-yang from the Japanese in 1593.

The hats worn by the poor women in this town are baskets, 3½ feet long, 2½ feet wide, and 2½ feet deep, which conceal their faces as effectually as the white cloak worn by women of a better class over their heads. The men wear a basket of the same shape, but somewhat smaller. It, however, requires the use of both hands to keep it in place. A structure of a size but little larger which is used to cover fishing-boats suggests the advisability of converting the women's hats into coracles.

A considerable traffic exists on the road from Phyong-yang to Wi-ju, which is 16 feet wide and kept in good condition. On the part south of An-ju a considerable quantity of rice is grown, the valleys being frequently a mile in width, and watered by shallow streams 40 to 80 yards wide. Black rice is extensively grown, but otherwise the crops are the same as those in the neighbourhood of Seoul. On the sides of the hills, which are of disintegrated granite, is a sufficient growth of timber and brushwood to supply the needs of the villagers. But few fruit trees are to be seen, and the persimmon is not found far north of Seoul on the west coast.

It is difficult to calculate the Return given by the different crops on account of the uncertain modes of measurement in use. In good years a piece of ground which can be "ploughed by two bulls in a day" will yield, including straw—

15 to 20 loads of high millet, valued at 400 cash a load when threshed.

20 to 30 loads of small millet (of which one-half is straw), valued at 600 cash a bushel.*

50 loads of loose paniced millet, turning out 2 sheng a load, and valued at 55 cash a sheng.

30 loads of rice, turning out 5 sheng a load, valued at 80 cash a sheng.

15 loads of yellow beans, turning out 1 bushel a load, valued at 400 cash a bushel.

10 loads of green beans, turning out 1 bushel a load, valued at 550 cash a bushel.

The present year’s has been only a half crop, in consequence of heavy rains, which, as is generally the case in summer, had washed away many of the bridges. A few li beyond Sun-an a party of over 100 men were engaged in reconstrucliving a better bridge than usual, but of the usual design, consisting of wooden poles driven into the bed of the stream and connected by bars on which heavy logs are laid, with branches of trees and sods of earth stamped in to make a level surface. Nearer An-ju, in a stream which was evidently subject to heavy floods, but at other times held little more than a foot of water, a bridge was formed of large flat stones, wide enough for a cart to pass over, laid side by side, but offering so little resistance as to be undisturbed by a rise of water.

Permanent bridges are, however, very rare, though one of stone-work, with a key-stone arch, spans a small confluent on the left bank of the Ta-tung, near Phyong-yang. The repair of bridges and roads is one of the duties which devolve upon the country people, and it must be no small tax upon their time to repair the bridges in autumn, when their services are needed in the harvest field. There is, however, no reluctance apparent in any work which is engaged in by them when excited by the stir and the society of their fellows.

* 10 sheng equal 1 ton (or bushel).
Extensive gold washings are said to have existed formerly 5 miles south-east of Sun-an, but to have been closed of late years, as has also been the case to the east of Sok-chhön.

An-ju, a walled city of 3,000 families, stands on a hill overlooking the Chhông-chhôn Gang, and is of some importance, owing to its being the key to the road to Phyong-yang from the north. A garrison of 300 soldiers is stationed in it under the command of a general, and the militia are summoned there in autumn for their drill.

The quantity of sand brought down by the Chhông-chhôn Gang has impoverished a large portion of its valley, but at the time of my visit (8th October) there were only 4 feet of water in the river, which is not navigable, even by small boats, above a point 5 miles below the city. The river is divided into two branches, with a wide tract of sand between them, and is said to have a rise and fall of only 2 feet. As seen afterwards from a hill near Ka-san, there appear to be sandbanks of several miles in extent near its mouth.

Crossing the river bed and a small barren range of hills the road descends into a rich valley, in which stands Pak-chhôn, the commercial part of the town being situated on the left bank of the Tai-cheng Gang, and the official portion, as is often the case, at the foot of some hills more than a mile from the road. The river, which is 200 yards wide, has a rise and fall of 5 feet, but at low water there are only a few inches on some of the shallows below the town. Several junks, however, of 100 to 150 piculs capacity, were lying on the river bank.

At a fair held in the street some Victoria lawns, shirtings, hempen cloth, and coloured handkerchiefs, with a little iron, some earthenware pots, and dyes of various kinds were exposed for sale, but the cattle were very few, and the market, which presented the town at its best, gave but a poor promise of trade for a place of 1,000 families.

After crossing the river the road strikes a little north of west through very poor country to Ka-san, and thence follows the coast at a distance of from 10 to 20 miles to Wi-ju.

Ka-san numbers but 400 families, though over 200 men are attached to the local yamen, and has some wild country near it with thick cover, in which there are said to be tigers and other beasts of prey.

An evidence of Chinese trade in the coast existed in the presence of a Corean wearing the canque, who had been imprisoned for swindling the master of a Chinese junk that had put in near Ka-san, but frequent inquiry on the road as to Chinese traffic elicited only two other instances, one of them that of a deserter from Seoul, who had been arrested and was awaiting a guard to take him back for punishment.

About half-way between Ka-san and Chung-ju is a village called Nap-tjen, which showed signs of greater activity than is usual even in the large towns. Some fifty men are employed there in working up copper ore, brought from the north division of Kang-ge, and are said to be famous all over Corea for their skill as coppersmiths; they were quite unable to account for the existence of their industry so far (over 1,000 li) from the place of production, but as clay for their crucibles, sand for smelting, and a pine wood, whose smoke they said was necessary to impregnate the sand, are found in the neighbourhood, the existence of the furnaces may be due to their presence. I am entirely ignorant of what function the pine smoke is supposed to perform, but afterwards at Kang-ge I found the coppersmiths there also speaking of it as essential.

The rough copper pigs brought from Kang-ge are said to be the best in the country (that from Kap-san being its nearest rival), and sell at Nap-tjen at 150 small cash (equal to 25 cents) per catty. It is said to turn out 75 per cent. of pure copper.
Near Nap-tjen was a very fine specimen of a "Sao-tai-o," the monument which is erected on the grave of a "Chin-shih," a doctor of letters. It consisted of the stem of a tree painted like a barber's pole, some 30 feet up. The top and branches had been cut off, and on the summit rested a carved figure of slim proportion 20 feet long, and with a forked tail in imitation of a Corean dragon. From the head, which resembled that of an alligator, depended cords on which brass bells and a wooden fish were strung. These quaint monuments are frequently met with on the outskirts of villages in Kang-wen Do, but it is seldom that so fine a specimen is seen.

The hills between Ka-san and Chung-ju are chiefly of limestone, and a large part of their sides is covered with woods. There is little room for agriculture in the narrow valleys between them, but a little fertile ground lies near Chung-ju, a town very picturesquely placed on the side of a hill with a wall and gateways, that give an impression of a much larger place than it proves to be. A hundred head of cattle were tied up in the market outside the wall, but, otherwise, a fair which was taking place there was little better than that at Pak-chhun. Its trade, as well as that of Kwak-san, farther west, is said to consist largely of exchange. The large cash used in Sool until recently were not current north of Phyong-yang, except at Wi-ju, but their circulation seems to be gradually extending in this province, and has been assisted by an Edict ordering them to be accepted as the equivalent of 5 small cash, their proper rate. For the moment their value is very uncertain; apparently at Wi-ju they are worth 5 small cash, at some places they exchange for 2, and at Genean and in its neighbourhood no difference is made between them and the small cash, the large cash being often found in small quantities on a string of small cash.

The land between Chung-ju and Kwak-san continues very poor, and the population is scanty, the whole district of Kwak-san counting but 6,000 people. Sun-mi-tao, 60 li from Kwak-san, is the port to which junkies trading with it come, but their number is very small. A beacon to the south-east, and on the north-east Neung-ham-san, a bold hill 1,300 feet high, with a scarped face, and the remains of a "hill town" on its sea-front, mark the site of Kwak-san very distinctly from the sea. Outside the mud flats on the coast, which are said to be only a few li in extent, is a line of small islands sloping to the north, and with a vertical face to the south-east, "because," as the country people say, "they look towards the capital."

Sun-chhun, a town of 600 families, 50 li north-west of Kwak-san, is 15 miles from the sea, and prettily situated under wooded hills. The magistrate of the place was especially courteous, and had prepared some attractively clean-looking quarters, in which a night's rest would have been very welcome, as the vermin in most of the places on the road south of Wi-ju made sleep almost impossible.

A pretty pavilion stood outside the town facing the archery ground. Unfortunately no opportunity occurred, either here or elsewhere, of witnessing the archery practice. The short bow used at Sool, which has a double curve like Cupid's, has a light pull, but shoots well at 100 yards. A heavier bow is said to be used in war, while a bow only 18 to 20 inches long occasionally forms part of a dress uniform, and is carried in what at first sight looks like holsters for a horse pistol.

The road continues considerably north of west to Chhool-san, passing Tong-nin, a walled market-town, not marked in most maps, 25 li on.

The arable ground along the road-side is very limited, owing to the number of ranges of hills, which descend to the sea between An-ju and Wi-ju, and which do not at present repay cultivation. Of their capa-
bilities for timber growing a good example is seen in a fine belt of wood, two miles deep, running along the crest of the hills at the back of Tong-nim. This happens to be under the care of an official, and is consequently taken good care of; but, as a rule, except on those spots where clumps or groves of trees are preserved around a family burying-place, the wood is cut without any regard for the future, large tracts of ground being cleared of every stick, and no young trees being planted.

The result on a loose disintegrated granite soil is naturally not only that the soil on the spot is swept away, but that the lower grounds are injured by the rapid drainage of the heights above them. Between Sōul and Wi-ju there is, however, still a large quantity of small timber left, and four large woods, viz., near Kai-song, Pong-san, Tong-nim, and Wi-ju, contain a rich supply of maple, alder, small oak, ash, fir, and other woods, well adapted for furniture. At Sōul there are several cabinet-makers who employ these woods largely for veneering, but in the north little use is made of them except for the manufacture of travelling boxes and eating stools.

The latter are always on the same pattern, circular tops, 2½ feet in diameter, resting on a framework 18 inches high, part of which is cut away, in order not to interfere with the sight of the boy who carries it on his head; the stool serving both as a tray for the dishes from the kitchen and a table for the guest, each man having his portion of the meal served to him on a separate stool.

This part of Corea seems to draw its foreign supplies entirely from China, and many ponies and carts laden with English shirtings and German dyes were met on the road. Some few of the goods find their way, for want of a market, to Sōul, but, south of Phyong-yang, Chemulpo is the main source of supply. Manchurian cotton cloth, a very strong fabric, used for socks and trousers, pieces of which, 1½ hands wide and 56 feet long, cost 450 cash at Sun-an, seems for its special uses to be almost unaffected by foreign competition, and is to be bought at Chemulpo as well as at Wi-ju; the native cotton cloth, which is 2 hands wide and 66 feet long, the piece, is comparatively cheaper, costing 600 cash the piece. As a rough index of the value of these goods, it may be worth mentioning that foreign shirtings, presumably 10 lbs., cost 4,000 cash a-piece in the same place.

Though the traffic on approaching Wi-ju became gradually larger, it was throughout surprisingly small for the main road of communication between two countries. A string of fourteen carts laden with tobacco near Sun-an, and three others bringing copper from Kang-ge to Nap-tjen, were very noticeable phenomena. On some stages not fifty men were met in 50 li, and in the neighbourhood of towns vegetables and brush-wood accounted for the larger portion of the beasts of burden. Between Sōul and Phyong-yang foot passengers were more numerous, as candidates were on their way to a literary examination in the capital; but travellers on pony-back were not common, and they very rarely had so much as three ponies in attendance; chairs were even less frequently met with.

The official part of Chol-san stands 5 miles away from the road, and travellers, therefore, generally stop instead at a village by the road-side of some 200 houses. There appears to be a small iron industry in the place, the iron coming from Kai-chhôn, which place, with a small supplement from Tau-chhôn on the north-east coast supplies the whole of the north-west of Corea.

Sye-rim, a walled town of 100 houses, stands on the crest of a hill 5 miles out of Chhöl-san. The descent leads past Yông-chhôn, which also is at some distance from the road, through a stony valley into a wide extent of poor grounds, which reach up to the Ko-Jin-gang, a fine looking
stream 70 yards wide, but subject to floods, and not navigable above a point 10 miles lower down, which is 12 miles from the sea.

Yông-ch’ŏn is said to have a large manufacture of reed mats, and is the nearest point on the road to the mouth of the Yalu.

The country between it and the Ko Jin-gang has the nearest pretensions to ugliness of any part that I traversed, but after crossing the river the country is very pretty, and a wide belt of oak and maple woods, in all the beauty of their autumn tints, stretches for miles along the north face of a line of hills which run down to the sea. From their crest the first view of China is obtained, and after skirting the top of the hills on the opposite slope of the valley, the Yalu Valley opens to the view. Wi-ju, standing on a hill near the left bank, is approached by an avenue of trees 4 miles long, which crosses the valley at its centre. To right and left is a clear view along the river’s course; on its opposite bank are low hills, the monotony of which is relieved by one fine mountain, and behind are rich woods on the spurs of a fine mountain to the south-east.

The houses in the valley are widely scattered, but outside Wi-ju the road for a mile of its length is lined with houses of a poor class. Booths and stalls also encroach upon it, and an open market is kept in such ground as is left vacant.

The city wall runs along the crest of a low hill, of which one spur descends close to the river bank, and another forms the limit of the city to the east. Its circumference is said to be 15 li (5 miles), and much less of the space inclosed is left unoccupied than is generally the case. The figures given for the population varied from 10,000 to 40,000, but probably 30,000 is not far from the correct number. The yamen of the Lieutenant-Governor, the “pou youn,” is built, as is always the case with the official buildings in Corean towns, on rising ground behind the business portion of the place. The south gate of the city, and a pavilion built in Chinese style, from which there is an extensive view on all sides of the town, are the only other buildings of any size.

The river opposite Wi-ju has three branches of about the same width, 250 yards, the southernmost of which is very shallow, and separates the town from a low island of half-a-mile in width, on which there are but few houses, and the soil is sandy. Beyond it is the main channel, rather wider than the first, and 20 to 25 feet deep. On the farther bank is another island, which is Chinese soil, and is called in Chinese “Chung-chiang” (mid river), on which is a Chinese customs-house. On the far side of this island, which is about 1 mile wide, is another shallow channel near Chi-lien-ch’eng, the nearest station of Chinese trade, in which I counted with my field-glass some twenty-six substantial houses.

Formerly the whole trade between China and Corea was confined to three annual fairs held at Kao-li Men, 40 miles from Wi-ju, but in 1875 many of the restrictions were removed, consequent on the incorporation in China of the wide strip of land between the two countries, in which for centuries Coreans and Chinese alike had been forbidden to settle. This step has generally been represented as taken at the expense of Corea, but there is reason to believe that the border-land when first set apart belonged to China, and this belief is strengthened by a story, which is current among Coreans, that more than two centuries since Corea bought an island in the Yalu, a few miles below Wi-ju, and that the money paid for its purchase was actually sent to China, though lost on the way.

The present trade Regulations permit an open market to be held daily at Chung-chiang (mid river), and Coreans may purchase under pass whatever goods they desire in China. A corresponding privilege is not extended to Chinese, who are prohibited under a severe penalty from crossing the river into Corean territory. It is of course impossible that,
with only a river between them, communication should be closed by
an arbitrary rule, but the visits of Chinese to Korea are evidently very
rare, and do not extend far beyond the river bank. On the other hand,
Coreans avail themselves to a large extent of their privilege of travel in
China. The regulations, drawn up Li Hung-chang, and the Korean
Commissioner Yü, assert very prominently the sovereignty of China, and
claim for her the exclusive right of fishing in the Yalu but the condition
of trade which had existed for centuries, survive to some extent, and
the old Tariff is said to be still in force; while the monopoly of fishing
rights is not only not asserted by Chinese, but largely invaded by
Coreans, the more important river trade being almost entirely in the
hands of the Chinese. As access to China is prohibited, except by
Chung-chiang, a large traffic on that route would appear natural, and it
was a great disappointment, on looking across the river from the Wi-ju
hill, to see hardly any sign of trade. On crossing the river its absence
became still more noticeable. Only nineteen boats, the largest of which
 carried 10 piculs, lay on the river bank near the town of Wi-ju; a
man with a string of salt fish was coming away from the custom-house, to
which a few baskets of shrimps were being carried, and two porters with
loads of deehorns were crossing in the ferry-boat. The ferry-boat, with
its heavy round cars, which worked most clumsily on their pins, and the
narrow track across the island, which, narrow as it was, was not trodden
hard, were so many further evidences of the absence of commerce. In the
main channel were numerous Chinese boats, laden with salt and crockery,
making their way up stream; but they all kept to the Chinese shore,
as though Corean soil were infested with the plague. After waiting some
ten minutes at the second ferry, there were only three persons in the
boat besides my own servants.

The picture seems incredible, and the contrast formed by the reality
to the expectations formed on first viewing the valley of the Yalu, with
its magnificent stream, was most disheartening.

Chung-chiang consists of the customs officer’s residence and a small
warehouse. Traders are not permitted to remain there after nightfall,
and when I was there the men with the deehorns were the sole represen-
tatives of the trade of the two countries.

The usual difficulties raised by Chinese officials prevented a visit
to Chin-lien-chêng, the country round which is thickly dotted with Chinese
cottages, and has a far more well-to-do air than the Corean bank. On
returning to the Corean custom-house no information was gained as
to the receipts, amount of trade, or number of junks engaged in it.
Full reports on all such matters were said to be furnished to Sôul and to
the Lieutenant-Governor, but that official later on said that Sôul and the
superintendent of customs, who was absent, were the sole depositaries
of such information.

As far as could be gathered from the non-official class, who were
quite ready to speak when not under surveillance, duties are paid on
exports at the custom-house of the producing country, and no import
duty is paid except in the case of cattle and horses imported into China,
or of goods imported by Coreans from China.

The import duty on piece-goods is 350 large cash per piece; on lead,
iron, and copper, 3/2 cash per catty. On cattle there is an export duty of
600 cash paid to the Corean custom-house and of 2,000 cash to the
Chinese. There is an export duty of 4,000 cash on Chinese ponies,
on the exportation of which there are restrictions, if not a prohibition.
As Newehwang is only 480 li from Wi-ju, the country in its neighbour-
hood is supplied with foreign goods from that source, but they do not
penetrate farther south than An-ju.
Two years since, on the institution of new regulations for trade, the Corean Commissioner, who had negotiated them with Li Hung-chang, was sent to introduce them to Wi-ju, but the ad valorem duty which he endeavoured to establish was found so inconvenient that the old system was reverted to on his departure. A warehouse, built under his instructions, for the reception of Corean exports, which were to be cleared every five days, and which was to derive an income from the storage of goods during that time, was used for that purpose only for a short time, and goods are now cleared as soon as they are brought to the Corean custom-house. On crossing over to the Chinese frontier at Chung-chiang they are examined, and, if they tally with their description, are allowed to pass without further payment of duty. The income of the Corean Commissioner of Customs a few years since was about 10,000 strings of cash (say 8,200 dollars) in good years, and from it all expenses incurred by his establishment had to be defrayed, the minor officials receiving about ten strings each three times a year, viz., at the different fairs. The chief trade still continues to take place at the time of these fairs, though their importance has greatly decreased. The trade of Wi-ju has been very much prejudiced by the opening of ports in Corea to foreign trade, and the diminution in its volume is becoming steadily aggravated. Officials and non-officials alike concurred in the loss suffered by Wi-ju owing to this cause, and the merchants held that the abolition of restrictions on the frontier had also told upon them detrimentally, in that Chinese merchants possessed of capital were deferred from coming to buy Corean products by the doubt as to whether the supply would be adequate for their requirements. The export of furs, deerhorns, &c., was said to be entirely in the hands of factors, who travelled through Corea to buy them up, and exported them direct, there being no market for them in Wi-ju, which was looked upon as having no commercial importance except as a dépôt. The export of furs was estimated not to exceed 10,000 dollars in value, but as this number is commonly used to express the idea of vastness, I am not inclined to interpret this estimate literally.

The chief articles of trade are: shirtings, hides, paper, Manchurian cotton cloth and bêches-de-mer. Logs of timber 2½ feet in diameter and 8 to 10 feet long are easily procurable, but logs of greater length are very scarce. The cause of this is in great measure that timber of greater length is not portable by pack animals. It is said to be floated down the Yalu from the Corean bank, but the rarity of timber of this size on the south bank makes me doubt this statement.

A few miles below Wi-ju, on the Chinese side of the river, is An-tung-hsien, also called Sha-ho-tzu, a walled town of some few hundred houses, which is the place of transhipment of Chinese cargo. It is visible from Wi-ju, but the valley of the river is so wide that on walking 7 miles down its course no better view is obtained of the town. Some score of Chinese junkers were lying off it, and the number of Chinese boats which navigate the upper waters of the Yalu shows that its trade must be considerable. These boats are very narrow on account of the rapids, and as their crew consists of only two men, they generally sail in company, and when there is occasion for many trackers, the crews of five or six boats aid each other in towing the boats up singly past the awkward reaches. An ordinary boat, costing about 40 taels, carries from 60 to 100 piculs, and it is seldom that any reach of the river is seen without from eight to ten of these craft on its waters. The boatmen all come from Shan-tung.

Very great difficulty was experienced in learning anything about the mouth of the Yalu. After questioning nearly a score of men on the
subject, it appeared that there is no place of importance at the mouth or on the Korean side. The flotilla sent by Li Hung-chang in 1973 was said not to have come beyond Ta-ku-shan, which is some distance to the north of the mouth, and the entrance of the river appears to be barred by sand flats, said to be 30 li in extent. The larger sea-going junks are reported to discharge at Mil-ku-tjin, 20 miles lower down, where there is a rise and fall of tide of 20 feet (at Wi-ju the rise and fall is only a few inches). Ta-tung-kôn, a small place near Mil-ku-tjin, is said to be also visited occasionally by large junks. The difficulty of approaching the river's mouth from the land appears to be very great, and the absence of Korean passenger boats prevented me settling a question on which I could obtain no light from official sources.

The damage done this year by the Yalu below Wi-ju has been very great—the water is said to have stood 1 foot deep in the streets of An-tung; but even the immense rise needed to effect this in a valley 5 miles wide, where the water was in autumn 12 feet below the river bank, failed to convey such an impression of its immense volume in summer floods as was experienced later on, when, in gorges more than a mile wide, river drift was seen lying in trees 40 feet above the surface of the stream. In October the river was beautifully clear, with a current of 1½ to 2 knots, and tug-boats could probably be employed to great advantage between Wi-ju and Wi-wôn. The first rapid is a little below Chhbang-sông, but offers no serious obstacle to steamers.

The suspicion evidently entertained by the officials of the object of my visit prevented me from obtaining more than the most superficial information on matters of trade, and I am uncertain how far to trust the data which are given above respecting the working of the customs. Undoubtedly, at one time, there must have been considerable capital in Wi-ju, for the ginseng trade was entirely in the hands of Wi-ju merchants, but nothing could be learnt on the spot to justify such an opinion at present.

The road east from Wi-ju follows the valley of the Yalu with such detours as are necessitated by the hills which debouch upon it. The country is but thinly inhabited, and it is not therefore necessary to describe the route at great length. As a rule, the low land near the river is covered with stones or sand, and little woodland is left, except where steep banks flank the river, or near the crests of the ridges. Travelling east from Wi-ju the ridges increased in height, but so gradually that on topping them no extensive view was ever obtained, and it was not until the fifth day out that an ascent of over 2,000 feet occurred. The valleys, however, are very narrow, and the sides of the hills steep, with generally not more than 5 to 10 feet of level walking ground along their crests. The havoc that has been wrought by indiscriminate wood cutting, and by cultivation without terracing, is terrible to contemplate. Between Chhong-song and Chhbang-sông the courses of the mountain torrents show 15 to 25 feet of detritus, covered with barely 2 inches of soil, and in some places the yoke for a pair of bulls ploughing abreast was made wide enough to allow them to walk five furrows apart, that the ploughman might see what was ahead. On clearings where the recently blackened stumps of trees showed that not more than one crop had been gathered in the soil was already almost entirely washed away, and it was evident that cultivation of the hill-sides and summits denoted not an excess of population, but an endeavour to find on the high ground some soil to atone for the poorness of that which was lacking in the valleys, and neither the elevation nor the smallness of the plot prevented its cultivation, if soil were to be found there.

Owing to the exhaustion of the soil in the north of Korea, emigration
across the frontier has been steadily proceeding for years past. A Corean who had frequently travelled along the north bank of the Yalu asserted that as many as 50,000 families had taken up their residence there. For the most part they arrive perfectly destitute, but are taken in by their countrymen, whose hospitality in their new homes is greatly extolled, and receive from them assistance in building a house and sowing crops for the next year, and such is the fertility of the new soil that after the first harvest has been reaped the new immigrant is independent. Since the incorporation in China of this rich territory it has been divided into four districts, An-tung, Kuan-tien, Huai-yuan, and Tung-hua, and placed under the government of Chinese officials. The Coreans have in some degree adapted themselves to their new country by changes in their dress, and devote themselves to agriculture, timber cutting, and gold washing. In the Tung-hua district there is said to be coal, which is burnt by the natives in the form of coke. From the quantity of timber and brushwood on the north of the Yalu it would seem that the coal must be very abundant to make it worth the people's while to use it rather than wood for fuel.

The crops grown between Wi-ju and Kang-ge are much the same as along the west coast, excepting that there is less rice land and more Indian corn, and that the yield is, of course, inferior; rice, however, seemed to do better than was probable in such unfavourable circumstances, but though the grain was ripe there was no sign of activity in the fields. The men for the most part were in their houses smoking tobacco, and the harvest seemed to be left to take care of itself. It was a constant puzzle to me how the rice and beans were cut and carried. Now and again a small party of people were seen at work, and the tobacco had been cut and was hanging up on strings under high frames to dry, but the excitement of harvest time in Europe was completely absent. It was no uncommon thing, on inquiring at a house for the road, to find half-a-dozen men inside doing nothing. Farther east all the work appeared to devolve on the women. It was they who bound the sledges used for carting corn, who cut the corn, and put it in sheaves. Their husbands assumed the more responsible duty of walking behind the bulls which carried the straw, and indeed were debarred from any more active occupation, from the fact that their hands were tucked up their sleeves, a luxury in which the women could not indulge, as their sleeves are tight fitting. The field-work done by the women follows on the completion of their house duties, such as cooking and washing their lord's clothes—no light task without soap—and it is no wonder that they have no time to wash their own clothes, or to attend to their personal appearance, great as is the need for so doing. Sometimes a man will take his rod to angle by the river-side at a time when his services are much required on the farm, and the sight of such energy attracts to his side three or four spectators; but the result of his fishing is of as little profit to the household as in other countries. The long dry autumn, however, prevents such evil consequences ensuing on this inactivity as might be dreaded in other countries, except in those years when winter sets in very early.

Silk seems to be produced in small quantities all along the valley of the Yalu, and is woven in their houses by the women, who also manufacture the chief portion of the cotton and hempen clothing worn by themselves and the men. The silk is very narrow and full of knots; but the people seem to have some experience in the treatment of the worms, as pierced cocoons are rare, and the combination of silk and cotton enables them to use the broken thread in cotton silks.

Chiang-sóng is a very pretty little town of 300 houses, situated on some low hills a few hundred yards from the Yalu, and surrounded by
two walls. Great friendliness was shown me by both the officials and people, and the sense of this was heightened by the usual civility shown to benighted travellers, in parties of men coming with torches to show the road to the town, in the streets of which a few lighted sticks or a wick in a small bowl of oil, placed before each house door, evidence the same kindly attention. When travelling under official protection, news is always sent on before hand as to when travellers may be expected, and if they do not arrive before nightfall men with bundles of reeds for torches are stationed along the roadside to await their coming. This duty is said to fall only on the keepers of inns or wine-shops, and seems to be very readily fulfilled, the men apparently entering into the excitement of the scene.

Between Chhäng-sŏng and Chhu-san the only place of any importance is Pyŏk-dong, a town of 400 houses set on a steep hill, the base of which is skirted by the road. In the valley at its back there were formerly large gold washings, but work on them has now been discontinued.

Progress through the country between Wi-ju and Chhu-san is very slow, detours being frequently occasioned by hills abutting on the river. When such is the case the path as a rule follows one stream to its head, and descends another until it falls into the Yalu a few miles above the point where its south bank was left, and it is seldom that the road on reaching the summit of a ridge does not descend at once down the other side. As the tributaries of the Yalu on its left bank below Chhu-san are of no great volume except in summer, when their waters rise very rapidly, and as the hills are very uniform in height, it would seem quite possible to construct a road following the higher ground, which would greatly shorten the journey from east to west, but as little traffic takes place between the two coasts the road naturally passes through all the places situated near the Yalu.

The number of small fish in the mountain streams is very large, and good angling is to be had in the Yalu, the fish, among which is a trout weighing 2 to 3 lbs., running to 7 or 8 lbs. in weight; but though the supply of fish is large, they are not salted for a market elsewhere. The tackle used by the Coreans is very light, the lines being of silk and horse-hair. The hooks, which are barbed, are probably imported.

Many of the villagers in the mountains keep bees. The hives in general use are made from branches of trees which have been hollowed out, but clay cylinders with straw tops are frequently seen placed in some recess in the rocks, where the bees will be safe from storms and animals. The honey obtained from a hive is said to be three to eight cupfuls, or about 5 to 12 lbs., and sells for 30 to 50 cash a cup. It is generally obtained by smoking the hive, but sometimes, when it is desired to save part of the swarm, is scooped out with spoons. Beyond the fact of the existence of the queen, known as "the General," little is known by the Coreans of the domestic life of the bee.

Chhu-san, 150 miles above Wi-ju, is the most thriving place that I passed in the valley of the Yalu. Situated on the bank of a small river only 15 li from the Yalu, it has on two sides of it a valley of from three-quarters to one and a-half mile wide, in which rice is largely grown. In the hills in the neighbourhood small deer are plentiful, and on the opposite bank of the Yalu there is said to be very fine timber, which undoubtedly is cut by the Coreans, though, according to the official account, there is no intercourse between the inhabitants of the two banks. The houses are roofed with shingles, as is the case generally to the east. Fine white marble is found in the neighbourhood, the geological formation being different to that farther west, and some of the rocks in the neighbourhood apparently volcanic.
There has been a steady stream of emigration from Chhu-san to Manchuria for some years past, estimated by some of the villagers at a sixth of the whole population in the course of the last ten years, but no official Returns could be obtained on the subject. At present there are 3,875 families in the district, which as tax-payers are divided into three classes—the "paying" families (of whom there are 1,811), the "smoke," and the "charcoal," the "smokers" numbering 3,722 and "charcoal" 2,229. I was unable to learn the meaning of the two last terms, but presume that "charcoal" refers to their being employed in charcoal-burning. Curiously enough, though charcoal was obtainable at almost every place on the road, I never saw any charcoal-burning.

The volume of the Yalu shows little diminution as its course is ascended. Where the road strikes it, a few miles from Chhu-san, it is still over one quarter of a mile wide, with a great depth of water, and the width continues much the same as far as Wi-won, the last point at which I sighted it.

The rise in its waters is, however, less in the higher reaches, though even in the Chhu-san country signs of the summer floods were visible 25 feet up the banks. The river traffic continues the same as far as Sam-su, and a certain amount of trade is carried on from Chhu-san upwards by the Chinese boatmen with the Coreans on the south bank. Lower down such trade as exists takes place chiefly at night, and by means of small fishing-boats, which risk little chance of being detected, as they can easily drop down the swift stream beyond pursuit if any danger arises.

The difference between the two countries on the opposite banks is very noticeable. Though not a decade has passed since occupation by Chinese of the northern bank has been sanctioned, the houses on that side of the river are far more substantially built than those on the Corean shore; temples are planted in the well-wooded hills, and numerous small craft lie at anchor off the towns, whose walls appear to be in good repair. The dress of the Chinese settlers and their demeanour also indicate a state of material independence which does not exist on the south bank, where no temples, few woods, and hardly any boats are seen. That the prosperity on the north bank is due to the richness of the soil, and not to the advantages of Chinese administration, is evident from the fact that already complaints have been made to the Throne at Peking of the rapacity of the Chinese officials in the newly-opened districts. The Corean immigrants are said to be treated on the same footing as Chinese, and to be allowed to penetrate as far north as Kirim.

Beyond Chhu-san the road, as is occasionally the case lower down, follows the bank of the river on a level from 30 to 40 feet above the water at its foot, and passes through the most exquisite woods of maple. The clear waters of the Yalu, as seen in autumn through the russet woods stretching for miles in the sunlight to the foot of the hills at some distant bend, offer a scene of quiet river beauty such as can hardly be surpassed. The only signs of life are the sails of the long boats working up the river and a few ducks and divers on the surface of the water.

Silver is said to be found in the hills on the north bank of the Yalu opposite Chhu-san, but the mines are not worked at present, and in North-west Corea silver appears to be entirely absent.

On leaving the Yalu the road strikes across country, until it reaches it again near Wi-won. Large quantities of tobacco are grown in the valleys on the way. The quality of the leaf appears to be very good, and Corean tobacco out of a Corean pipe is not to be despised when other tobacco runs short. The best class is cut up into thin shreds, but the common tobacco is curled up into a ball, open at two sides, and is stuffed into the bowl,
only the centre of the ball being consumed, and the coarser portion being thrown away. The pouch which hangs at a Korean's waist carries but little tobacco, and on entering a village there is generally a shout raised by some improvident pony driver asking where spirits and tobacco are to be had. When neither luxury is to be procured, he passes a malediction on the place, and travels on without profiting by his experience.

Spirits, which in the south of Corea are generally made from rice, near Wi-won are distilled from Indian corn, which is largely grown in that neighbourhood, and are more suited to an English palate than the ordinary kind, which is usually sweetened with honey at officials' tables.

Fish traps are laid in the torrents of the mountains in this part of the country, consisting of basket-work shaped like a wedge, converging from the banks to a mouth at the apex leading down stream, where baskets like ear-traps are placed, or a tray under a wide-barred hurdle receives the fish as they fall through.

A small industry exists also in the manufacture of the large earthen pots used for holding water. These are baked in ovens of hard beaten clay, sometimes 50 yards long, and with a slope of 30°, for which reason they are generally built on the side of a hill, the mouth being situated at the bottom.

The little hamlets in these mountains are too small to demand the presence of an official, and the collection of taxes devolves on the head of the tithing. Large granaries are built for their reception, as the greater part of the land tax is paid in kind; and there is generally some room attached in which a night's lodging can be found.

The tithing-men are divided into three classes: (1) the "Sa-im," (2) the "Tjoa-shang," and (3) the "Tsam-cu," the first of whom is chosen by the magistrate and the two latter by the villagers. The "Sa-im" keeps the register of inhabitants in a book called "Song-techak," a copy of which is sent to the magistrate, and therein records all deaths and births; the "Tjoa-shang" attends to public matters, such as the repair of roads and bridges, and reports deaths and births to the "Sa-im," while the "Tsam-cu" are entrusted with the settlement of minor disputes among the villagers, the amount of land-tax due from each household, and the subscription to be raised for the erection of tablets to officials, and similar public expenditure.

Three miles west of Wi-won my road struck the Yalu for the last time,* and turned up a stream 200 yards wide called Pounng Môn-gang to Wi-won, which is remarkable for its position in the hollow of a basin of hills, unlike most Corean towns, which, as a rule, rest their back against a hill and face a valley. This may be partly due to the geological formation, which I was informed by Dr. Gottschke, whom I again met at Wi-won, consists of diabase. A small volcanic cone is just outside the town, and many varieties of lava are to be found in the valley.

The town contains but 190 houses, with 600 odd adults, and the district, which is said to have a population of 20,000, produces little but grain and tobacco. Its supplies are drawn partly by land and water from Wi-ju, and partly from Söul.

On leaving Wi-won the road, after following the Pounng-men for a couple of miles, struck over some low hills into the valley of the Tounng Naï-gang, a fine stream, over 200 yards wide, and with 6 feet of water, on which there is a rise of 30 feet in summer, as evidenced by the drift on the banks. The valley of this stream, which flows into the Yalu 15 li lower down, at Orouranting, is very narrow, and affords little room for cultivation, though such soil as there is is good. A large part of the hill-side

* The aneroid at this spot showed a difference of only three-tenths of an inch from that at Wi-ju, from which the distance by road is 320 li.
has not been broken up, and the population is scanty, only two large villages being passed between Wi-won and Kang-ge. Furnaces for iron, which is said to come from the east coast, exist at two or three places on the road, where pans and plough-shares are manufactured. The men employed on the works receive 5,000 cash (about 8 dollars) per annum, in addition to their keep.

After crossing the Toung-nai, 40 li below Kang-ge, the road becomes very bad, and in parts dangerous for animals, no attempt having been made to cut a level way through the slippery rocks which extend into the river bed. Several of the pony drivers, whose spirits were already damped by heavy rain, gave way to tears on seeing their animals floundering in the water, and a good deal of damage was done to the packs owing to their frequent immersion in the stream.

Kang-ge is a walled town of over 1,000 houses, and stands on a hill overlooking the river, into which a branch falls on the east side; the east and south sides are precipitous. It is backed by a hill covered with wood.

Kang-ge copper, though well-known all over the north-west of Corea, is not produced in the district of Kang-ge, but in Keui-chhôn, a district to the north of Kang-ge, and which has recently been separated from it. There are said to be several hundred men engaged in working the mines, some of which are 350 feet deep. The water is drained off by an outlet at the foot, but accidents frequently occur from the falling-in of earth. In spite of the quantity of ore produced, there are, however, only two copper-smiths' shops in Kang-ge.

The products of the place are cotton and hempen cloth, deer-horns, and velvet, wild ginseng, and potatoes. The only artisans besides the copper-smiths and one iron-smith are carpenters, coopers, hat and stocking-makers. Its foreign supplies are drawn from Gensan, which is 800 li to the south-east, and a fair quantity of shirtings, lawns, and handkerchiefs was for sale in the shops. Seaweed, salt-fish, and salt were its chief other imports.

The local official seemed to take a great interest in the welfare of his people, and had been making some experiments in the preparation of the leaf of a kind of catechu as a substitute for tea. The beverage produced, though indifferent, is worth introducing into a country in which spirits are the only drink, excepting water. The fruit of the bush, which in China is made into an excellent preserve, is here left for the birds to faint upon.

On leaving Kang-ge there was a change of weather, which brought a fall of snow and made travelling difficult. The road striking due east into the mountains followed the bed of a stream upwards towards its source through a country very thinly populated, with large woods chiefly of birch. Twenty-three miles out from Kang-ge I reached the edge of a forest, which extended to the summit of the mountains, 6,000 feet high, which form the left line of the valley of the Sam-su River. In the lower portion of the forest some of the trees had been ringed 10 feet high and left to die; others, whose trunks were too large to be easily removed, had been cut through, 20 feet and even 30 feet from the ground; but there had been no regular wood-cutting, and farther up the hill-side no trees had been felled except such as served to form runs for marlins across streams. In some parts such trees were laid every 10 yards, and springs weighted with heavy stones were set on their trunks midway across the brooks. The season for pelvies had, however, hardly commenced, though the snow was already knee deep.

The trees of largest girth seemed to be a kind of elm, several of which were 4 to 5½ feet in diameter. Birch, rowans, oak, and maple, were
interspersed, and those that had fallen formed a tangle of rotten trunks and boughs, through which it was almost impossible in the deep snow to find a way if the track were left for a moment. A belt of poplars came between the mixed wood and the yellow pines, which reached to the summit of the mountain and were quite perfect in their growth, every tree standing with a straight stem and drooping fringe of branches quite ready for a painter's pencil. The finest trees seemed to have been blown down; one measured 5 ft. 6 in. in diameter 6 feet from the base, and 2 ft. 6 in. 50 feet up. Among those that were standing few, however, had a diameter of more than 8 feet. I could not estimate their height at all accurately, but should imagine they ranged from 70 to 120 feet.

The mountains apparently reached several hundred feet above the pass, at the summit of which the aneroid stood at 2480, but no clear view of their summit was obtained until four days later, when 320 li of road had been travelled. A peak 6,000 to 7,000 feet high was visible to the west of the pass, and a high range, probably the Paik-san, was seen lying to the south, but the view was greatly restricted by the density of the forest, which is said to follow this range of mountains as far north as Sam-su. The water power on the spot appeared quite sufficient to work saw-mills, and thus render available for transportation the fine timber, which at present is too cumbersome to be brought to the river and floated down. In spite of all that Coreans say about the wealth of timber on the south bank of the Yalu, I am inclined to believe that there is none fit for shipbuilding to be found in any quantity west of Kang-ge. Time after time on the road Coreans had maintained that, 100 li farther on, dense forests still existed, but when the locality named was reached it always proved to have been exhausted years since.

Only one house was passed in the first 10 miles of the descent down the east face of the mountains, the timber on which seemed hardly as fine as on the other slope, but at last a few cottages and farms were reached. Not a single person was seen on the road in the whole day's march, which was nine hours long without a break, but the absence of traffic may have been partly due to the intense cold, from which my servants suffered considerably on horseback.

At O-man-dong, 30 li north of Chang-jin, are some mines, which used to yield a large quantity of silver. Of late years, however, the galena has proved very poor, and of 300 miners who formerly were employed only a score or two are left. The owner of the mine came to me at hang-jin to ask for assistance. According to his account, a shaft had been sunk very successfully to a depth of 400 feet, when its working was stopped by water. A gallery was then driven into the hill-side to meet it, but some hard rocks had been encountered, which resisted all attempts at boring and blasting. The gallery, which I saw, was 4 ft. 6 in. high by 4 feet, and was lined with poles and boarding. The yield of silver at one time had been as much as 8 ounces from 100 catties of lead, but latterly it had dropped to 3 ounces, and sometimes to nothing. The mine was therefore now only worked for its lead, which was sold on the spot for 3,000 cash per 100 catties to men sent from the mint at Söul. Wages were 30 cash a-day and 50 cash for night work, as well as the men's food. A royalty of 6,000 cash is paid annually to the Board of Revenue, and a tax of 150 cash is paid every five days, if ore is found, to the Governor at Phyong-yang.

The whole of the valleys from the foot of the A-te-kai Pass to the junction of the Chang-jin and Sam-su Rivers, and up to the head of the latter river, lie at an elevation of 3,000 to 4,500 feet above the sea. The height and exposure render the growth of rice, cotton, and corn im-
possible, and the main staples of food are potatoes, oats, buckwheat, and beans. The oats are hulled in water-mills in the same manner as rice is in the low lands, and cooked whole in the same manner as rice, oatmeal being apparently quite unknown. The number of washings required to cleanse the oats is very great. A very typical picture of Corean highland life is presented in the large kitchens of the inns, where the women of the house are cleansing the oats, seated on the ovens, which extend far back into the room, and serve to hold the huge earthen pots required for the washing and cooking of the rice, while at the same time they heat the floor on which perhaps a score of Coreans are squatting, each dining at his separate table with his separate service of copper utensils, the number of which is the only sign of comfort in the room.

Chang-jin is the only town in Corea at which I saw evident signs of poverty. The dress of the servants attached to the yamên showed that they shared in the common distress, and the crowd, assembled outside the room in which I was lunching, applied to me for advice as to how to improve their position. A recommendation for different villages to exchange their seed, and to use only the best grain as seed, met with a ready consent, and I am in hopes that some Australian oats which Mr. Wright, the Commissioner of Customs at Gensan, promised to send to this district as seed, may give a better return than has been known before.

The ascent of the Sam-su River was full of surprises. At the point where the Chang-jin stream joined it, it showed no sign of its being so considerable a stream as it is, but the diminution of its volume was hardly perceptible until 90 miles up. The higher the level the more placid was the stream, and while on some of the lower reaches the water was hidden out of sight by the sheets of ice which had been piled one on top of another by the swift stream, in the higher waters, where there was hardly any current, there was not even a fringe of ice on the river's banks. Near Chang-jin the river flows through gorges in which there are few houses and but little ground for farming. Higher up, and indeed quite near the head of the river, the country opens out into a wide valley with rounded downs, suggestive of sheep farming, stretching away into the far distance, and at last permitting a view of the A-te-kai mountains. To add to the puzzle, my aneroid, which had apparently become deranged by the sudden change of climate, rose at night as much as it fell in the daytime, and showed a rise of only 20 feet after following the stream upwards for over 80 miles, whereas there had really been an ascent of 1,200 feet.

In the Chang-jin valley some men were at work carrying their crops on the light sledges drawn by bulls, which are in general use during the winter. They are made as a rule of two poles bent so as to meet at one end the yoke on the bull's neck, and at the other to trail on the ground sufficiently wide apart to allow a light frame being supported by them. Where the depth of snow is slight, the poles attached to the yoke only reach half the length of the body of the sledge, and a second pair of poles is attached to the front part of the frame which trails behind the other; as the points of the poles are turned to the back of the sledge they do not interfere with its progress, and the friction is less than would be the case with runners.

This high plateau has but recently been opened up, and emigrants from the Ham-heung country and the Province of Phyong-an are constantly taking up ground in it, to which they become entitled on payment of the regular land tax. There are gold washings at Teuk-sil-tung, 55 li south of Chang-jin, and at Chung-nyong-phe, near the head of the Sam-su River, but the main attraction at present is said to consist in the cheapness of living. A large log hut, with accommodation for several persons
besides the family of the owner, and sheds for cattle, all inclosed in a courtyard by a high stake fence, costs only 15 dollars, and any man who has the strength and tools wherewith to build himself a house has the materials ready at hand.

As the whole of the country between Kang-ge and the descent from the plateau to Ham-heung was under snow, it was impossible to tell why much of the ground was left fallow after having been broken up. The people complained of poorness of the soil, but the fact that immigration was steadily continuing seemed in itself to disprove the assertion, against the truth of which the character of the valley seemed conclusive evidence. The apathy of the people in this district was almost beyond belief. The open season, in which work can be done on the farms, extends only from May to the end of September, and this year there had been a heavy fall of snow earlier than usual, following on heavy rains which had prevented the grain from ripening before October. The result was that a large part of a very poor harvest had been buried in the snow. Oats, beans, buckwheat, turnips, potatoes, and hemp were all outstanding, some of them cut and some uncut; but though only 4 or 5 inches of snow remained on the ground, the people showed no intention of bestirring themselves to save what might be saved before there came another fall. When reproached with their inactivity, they answered that next month they would go on to the hills to cut firewood. The only explanation of their conduct, with famine staring them in the face as they knew, seems to be that their ignorance prevents their appreciating the horrors that await them.

It was very sad to contemplate what threatens to be the extinction of a Colony, which in its houses, pigs, and cattle showed greater sign of comfort than the richer Province of Phyong-an. The poorness of their clothing was the only marked sign of their want of money, and was more noticeable in the town of Chang-jin than in the villages of the district. As no cotton will grow at this height hemp has to serve its stead, and gives but a poor protection against the cold of the winter. As the people said, their dress, which is open at the waist, is in itself ill-calculated for a cold climate, and many a man caught in a sudden storm on the mountain side is frozen to death; but caste prejudice against the preparation of skins hinders all but the hunters from utilizing the excellent material which they have at hand in deer-skins. These highlands are almost hemmed in by snow in the later part of the winter, and every household is called upon to supply a man to assist in treading down the road by which communication between Kang-ge and Ham-heung is alone possible. No other road seems to exist in the course of this valley, but no use is made in summer of the waters of the Sam-su to export timber or the surplus of a good harvest, and the advantages in winter of snow-shoes when explained to the country people were in their eyes apparently quite counterbalanced by the necessity for exertion which their use would entail. It is difficult to understand how men who will not stir out of their houses to get in their crops if 4 inches of snow are on the ground are induced to leave their houses and families and seek their fortune in such a hard land, but the cleanliness and substantial air of the buildings show that there is good stuff in the men, which only requires education for development. As far as could be seen the country appeared well suited for root crops and sheep, there being a sufficiency of timber ready at hand to protect sheep during the winter. The large hawks, numbers of which are trained to strike pheasants and small deer, would perhaps be a danger in lambing time; but wolves are unknown, and the larger beasts of prey keep to the more secluded parts of the mountains. A few miles below the crest of the ridge which forms the

* The valley of the Sam-su River.
south limit of the Sam-su watershed a number of streams, which drain a
large extent of country to the east and west, unite to form the Sam-su
River, which thus almost at its head is of considerable volume, and might
be used to float timber from the mountains to the Yellow Sea.

Above the junction of the streams woods of pine richly festooned with
lichens stretch up a gentle slope to the top of the ridge, which forms the
divide of the waterheads of the two coasts. The descent on the south
side is very rapid, and commands a fine view of the Ham-heung Plain,
flanked on the west by the Paik-un-san, a range of mountains the eastern
face of which is almost precipitous. In the far distance the waters of the
Japan Sea are seen to the south-east, and immediately at the foot of
the pass is Chong-nyong, from which woods of small oak extend up the
hill to a low stone wall, which marks the division between the Ham-heung
and the Chang-jin districts. In the gorges are torrents tumbling over
boulders of rock to the plain below, and behind to the north-west
is the fine chain of mountains which forms the eastern boundary of the
Sam-su Valley.

The snow came to an end a few hundred feet above Chong-nyong,
which is a hamlet of only fifteen houses, and only a few patches lay on the
Chao-pang-ryong, a pass 1,000 feet above the sea to its south. On
descending into the plain signs were visible of the same distress that pre-
vailed in the Sam-su Valley. The year’s crop was said to be already
consumed, and some families were preparing to emigrate north. The
failure in the crops, which were only two-tenths of an average yield,
was ascribed to the exceedingly heavy rains which had fallen in the
summer.

In the plain, north of Ham-heung, and as far south as Chong-
phyong, most of the produce is carried in carts, with a body 6 feet
long and 2½ feet wide, and wheels 5 feet high, the spokes of which are
arranged in a concave form about the axle, the nave of which projects
2 feet.

The shafts run the whole length of the cart, and rest without any
harness on the light yoke, which is placed on the bull’s neck. If,
therefore, any accident occurs the animal is freed instantly, and the cart is
prevented from falling right over by the long boss of the axle, while the
strain on the cartilage of the nose of cattle, caused by a sudden strain on
the leading rope, is greatly relieved by the rope taking a turn over the
band which crosses the forehead between the horns.

Some royal tombs of the last dynasty lie to the east of the Ham-heung
Valley, which is greatly impoverished by the quantity of sand deposited
upon it by floods.

Near the city large earthen embankments are carried for miles along the
banks of the river to protect the fields from its attacks, and in spite
of the heavy rains this year the embankments seemed to have remained
uninjured.

Hundreds of people were in the fields carrying the taraip crop, which
looked very well, and the empty carts returning from Ham-heung created
almost a block in the narrow streets.

Close under the south gate of Ham-heung flows a wide stream, which
my ponies forded, but which in the summer had carried away a substantial
wooden bridge, said by the people to be 5 li long, but which proved
on measurement to be only 400 paces across. Scores of men were at work
repairing it, and foot passengers were already able to cross by it. The
cost of the repair, which is said to be inconsiderable, logs 16 feet long,
costing only 30 to 50 cash, falls upon the people in Ham-heung and seven
districts to the south of it.

The town of Ham-heung, which is 30 li from the sea, and inaccessible
by boat, contains over 3,000 houses, and there are 10,240 houses in
the district. The number of carts laden with firewood and turnips gave
quite a busy air to the streets, in which more business was being done
than in any town seen since leaving Phyong-yang. The chief trade of
the place is in hemp and hempen cloth, but large quantities of English
shirtings were for sale at 2.300 cash per piece, and iron from Tau-chhön
was sold at several shops, though there are only five iron smithies in the
town.

Graphite-cylinders for the boxes of cart-wheels were the only novelty
that I observed; but there was an appearance of well-being about the
streets, due partly to the presence of little luxuries, such as fur-lined
cuffs and caps, and partly perhaps to comparison with the poverty of
Chang-jin.

Owing to some unknown cause, the great courtesy and friendliness
which had been extended to me by almost every official on the road
were here absent, and the lodgings that were given me were far filthier
and less cared for than the cottage in which I had slept on the previous
night.

As Ham-heung is the capital of the province, it is the residence of
the Governor, a Lieutenant-Governor, and a large number of officials; and
some of the houses are built as in Sŏul, of stones tied together with
millet stalks, and coated with mud, and are roofed with tiles instead of
being covered in with birch-bark weighted with stones, as is the case
nearer the mountains. There are no buildings, however, in the town
worthy of remark, except the towers over the city gates, in one of which is
placed the large bronze bell, which seems to be the distinctive mark of
provincial capitals.

A few miles east of Ham-heung is the home of the founder of the
present dynasty, in whose honour a hall has been built, which contains a
portrait of that King.

A wide plain of fertile ground stretches as far south as Chong-phyong,
the crops on which had mostly been carried, and on which thousands
of wild geese were feeding. Not only here, but in the whole extent of
country, from Ham-heung past Gensap to Kosan the harvest had been
exceedingly bad, ranging from three-tenths of an average crop to nothing.
Rice, which is the main cereal, was still outstanding near Gensan, and the
damage done by the wet season had been seconded by the inactivity of
the people; on hundreds of acres the rice after being cut had been laid on
the wet ground to rot, and as rain was falling hardly a man left his house to
set the rice in shocks on the ridges between the fields.

Hemp is very largely grown in North-east Corea, and is steamed in
pits lined with stone, at the bottom of which large stones are placed after
being heated in a fire. The hemp is heaped on, covered in with brushwood
and grass, and through an orifice in the top water is poured on to the hot
stones, the steam arising from which is said to render the fibres easy of
separation. This process is quite different from that in use in China,
when the hemp is thrown into water and left there, thoroughly sodden
and half decomposed.

Gold washings were formerly worked near Chong-phyong, and one of
the largest gold-fields of Corea lies at Keum-pai-wŏn, a few miles to the
north of Yong-heung. The whole bed of the stream in the latter place
has been washed out from its very source, and the gold export from
Gensan chiefly depended upon this place. The produce this year has
fallen off considerably, and the Customs figures give a Return of between
70,000 and 80,000 dollars' worth for the first ten months of the year; but
a considerable addition has to be made to this figure on account of gold
on which no freight is paid.
The system under which gold is worked is peculiar. Permission has first to be obtained from the King, and is sometimes sold to merchants, sometimes granted to officials; the magistrate of Chang-jin had recently applied for permission to work some gold mines in his district, in order to recoup himself for the expenditure entailed by rebuilding his yamen, which had been burnt down a short time before his arrival at his post. When a permit has been granted gangs of men, numbering from ten to thirty, undertake to pay the licensee an ounce a-month per gang for the privilege of working. His income therefore is regulated by the number of gangs engaged, and, so long as gold continues to be found, he is paid very regularly; but if their gains fall below the value of their labour the men decamp, and leave the licensee in undisturbed possession of his barren gold-bed. On the south bank of the valley of Keum-pai-wôn is an outcropping of graphite, which is carried away to Ham-heung and made into boxes for the axles of carts. There is said to be no ingredient mixed with it, and the only preparation consists in hammering the clay on a round stick until it is hard enough for use.

Nearer Yong-heung is a dark soil which is much used for the manufacture of water-pots, and a kind of slate is found on the hills which is used for roofing houses.

Yong-heung is a town of 1,000 houses, prettily situated on the southern bank of the Yao-hae-gang, a river with two branches, each 150 yards wide, and crossed by bridges. The town is said to be accessible by boat from the sea, from which it is 110 li distant by water. Its chief trade is in silk, which is produced and manufactured in the villages in the neighbourhood; three to four pieces, worth from 1,200 to 1,600 cash each, are made by the women of a house.

The hills to the west of Ko-wôn contain several monasteries and are very picturesque, but the valleys between Yong-heung and Gensan were low and wet. Little is seen on the way that calls for attention except the posts that warn persons from entering the valleys in which are some royal tombs and the marks by the road-side which define the limits of residence and travel outside Gensan under the Japanese Treaty of 1876.

Gensan is still almost purely a Japanese Settlement. Streets well kept up, good roads and bridges, and a well-constructed jetty, with a substantially-built Customs examination shed, all speak favourably for the place; but there is little improvement in its trade, and it is to be feared that a long time will elapse before the importance of the place does justice to the style in which the Japanese Consulate has been constructed.

The boundaries of a Chinese Settlement have, it is true, been defined, but the Chinese Consul with his half-dozen subjects resides in the Japanese Settlement, the population of which numbers about 300, and there are no European merchants in the place. At a distance of about three-quarters of a mile from the Japanese Settlement is the Corean town, consisting of little more than a street running along the shore for about 1,000 yards. Hides and beans are the chief articles of export, and among other things exposed in the market were fox, raccoon, and antelope skins, seaweed, benitoes, mackerel, sardines, paper, &c. Ham-gyong is said to be the province from which most of the peltries are exported, and tiger and other skins are brought to Gensan in small quantities for sale. Much has already been written about this port, and there is little occasion therefore to do more than notice the absence at Gensan of the mud-flats which occur on the west coast, the slight rise and fall of tide (only about 2 feet), and the mistake made in most maps in placing Mun-chhön and Tôk-wôn south of Gensan, Mun-chhön being almost due north and Tôk-wôn due west of that place.
The road from Gensan, after making a slight deviation to the east as far as Kosan, continues very little west of south until reaching Sóul.

An-byon, a town of 510 houses, which lies to the east of the road, about 80 li from Gensan, is remarkable for the manufacture, at a small monastery outside the town, of a paper from the "thak" tree. No specimens of the paper or leaf or seed of the tree, were procurable on the road, and the manufacture seems to be confined entirely to one place.

A rich cultivated plain extends about 10 miles south of Gensan, on leaving which hills of volcanic rock are entered, which continue as far as Nam-sa. Hence up to Kosan there stretches a great plain of lava 3 miles wide, with a river flowing through precipitous banks on either side of it. The surface is slightly convex, and nearly at its centre is a pool of water 300 yards long, the only pool which I have seen in Corea.

In spite of the plain appearing well adapted for cultivation a great part of it is left waste, and very few houses are to be found on it.

Several men were met on this part of the road who had been robbed by a party of men, thirty in number, armed with guns and spears, who waylaid travellers when crossing the mountains. An ascent of 1,200 feet from Kosan leads to the crest of the mountains which part the watershed of the two coasts, and which, judging from an aneroid, are 2,000 feet above the sea at the pass. A little Zaoist shrine is erected there, at which almost all the passers by paid 5 cash to the priest in attendance for offering up prayers on their behalf for protection against robbers.

The bed of the stream on the south side of the pass had been much worked for gold, but the richest gold-field in the country was said to be at Phyong-kong, a place about 80 li south-west of Kosan, and through which there runs the shortest road to Sóul, a fact carefully concealed by the pony drivers, who were afraid of the robbers said to infest that region. It is impossible to tell what importance Phyong-kong has as a gold-field without first visiting it. The Coreans, when questioned about it, at first always denied that there was any gold there at all, but afterwards acknowledged that 3,000 men were working there. The small export of gold from Gensan for this year makes it however appear improbable that the latter statement is truer than the former.

At Hoi-yang there are again signs of a bed of lava near the course of the river, but the road continues across low hills for 30 li, and then once more enters a plain of lava which extends as far as Chhang-do. At the point where it is intersected by the Hoi-yang River the banks are cut 130 feet deep, but the general appearance of the country, which is chiefly grass land, is almost level, the view across which is but little interrupted by trees. The bad harvest on the eastern coast has not extended across the mountains, and between Keum-song and Sóul the people spoke very well of the rice crop. As this country was described by me in a Report written last year, I shall not enter into particulars again. It is worthy of notice, however, that the gold-washings at Mansitari, 120 li from Sóul, have been tested this year by foreigners, and promise to be remunerative whenever permission to work them is granted by the King.

In addition to the dolmens alluded to in the previous Report as existing in this valley, there are two other objects of historical interest. The one is a small inclosure at a place called Zi-kyeng-tjeng, 20 li north of Thoun-tjen, with a high earthen wall planted with trees. According to local tradition, on the downfall of Shin-ra in 912 A.D. its Ruler fled from Chhol-won, which is regarded here as his capital, and made a stand in this place, from which he was driven to the hills, where he died of a broken heart. The other place of interest is on the left bank of the stream opposite Chao-liang, 110 li from Sóul, and consists of the remains of an old city which formerly stood there on a hill. Excavations among the
ruins of its ancient cities may perhaps discover some of the antiquities generally ascribed to Korea in bygone centuries, but of which hardly a trace is to be found in these days; but after diligent inquiry made on my journey I am inclined to believe that the Corea of olden days differed but little from that of the present time, and that her early civilization has been greatly over-rated. It seems impossible otherwise that in places such as Phyong-yang no remains indicative of a higher state of art and culture should be known. The officials, one and all, pointed to Sool as the centre to which all that was of any value gravitated, and denied that either books, bronzes, porcelain, or carvings were to be found in their jurisdictions such as would show a higher state of civilization in the past.

It is true, however, that Corean officials are very ignorant of the places in which they hold posts. Their tenure of office is only for three years, and a large portion of that time is spent in frequent journeys to the capital, where as a rule their families reside, and in which alone they find any society among men of their own rank in life. The men permanently attached to the staff of the yamens are much better acquainted with the country, the administration of which is practically in their hands.

This frequent change of office naturally entails a lack of interest in the people governed, and prevents the completion of any reforms which an active magistrate may desire to introduce.

It is, however, only one among many defects which stand in the way of the advancement of the people, and which can be removed by a beneficent government.

Chief among these is undoubtedly the enormous staff of underlings attached to the local yamens. To take the Province of Phyong-an as an instance: there are in it forty-four districts, each under the supervision of a magistrate, whose staff on an average consists of 400 men, whose only public duties are the policing of the district and the collection of taxes, but the chief part of the latter duty is taken off their shoulders by the heads of tithings. There are thus in the cities alone of Phyong-an Province 17,600 men, whose board alone, at the rate of 2 dollars per month, amounts to 392,400 dollars. Many of them, however, of course, receive more than their bare food, and all are well clad and lodged. It is not either only in the expense entailed by the maintenance of such an army that the country suffers, though probably three-fourths of the expense could be curtailed without any diminution in the efficiency of the public service, but the nation suffers as well through the labour which is lost to it. If 12,000 men, most of them able-bodied, were turned into artisans and labourers, the material condition of Phyong-an would be very different from what it now is.

Another great obstacle to the progress of the country lies in the sumptuary laws and the insecurity of property. What stimulus has a labouring man to work when the utmost that he can do with the fruits of his toil is to procure some more copper pots and lay in a larger store of spirits? He is not allowed to exercise his wits by making himself chairs and such-like furniture. Chairs are for the use of the magistrates, and not for working men like him. If he has an excess of funds, he may subscribe with his neighbours towards the repainting of the towers on the city gates, or erect or restore an official tablet, or, if he is still at a loss as to how to dispose of his money, lend it to the magistrate, to whom he may at the same time present some of his surplus stock of pigs or calves. It is undoubtedly the knowledge that the acquisition of riches will only slightly benefit their holder that induces such extraordinary apathy as is seen in Corea, and no change for the better can be hoped for until men know that their property is their own to deal with.

It is evident that the country is easily susceptible of great improve-
ments. At present on the eastern road a few hundred yards of bad ground here and there prevent carts being used continuously along its whole length. Again, the country is being impoverished year by year through want of protection for its woods, which form one of the chief treasures of the land. Were a little care exercised in this direction, and were sheep and goats gradually introduced on to the downs and hills, which now serve only to supply firewood, a great improvement might be seen without much expense being incurred, such as later on will be requisite, on replacing the present coinage by a currency in one of the precious metals.

The innate spirit of gambling in a Corean is so great that it is doubtful whether the natives as a whole would be benefited by the removal of the present restrictions on the working of gold and silver. The result of the change probably would be that men would leave their farms to rush to the gold mines, the outturn of which, though sufficient to repay the work of spare hours and to form a very useful supplement to a man's income if he lived on the spot, would in all probability demonstrate that the fabled wealth of Corea vanished like a fairy's gift on being roughly handled.

(Signed) W. R. CARLES.

Shanghae, December 23, 1884.

Itinerary of route from Sŏul to Wi-ju, Ham-heung, and Sŏul.

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