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[page 337] The Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

The publication of the first volume of the *Transactions* of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society is an event of prime importance in the literary history of Korea. It is the first time that a distinctively and avowedly critical study of Korean life and thought has been begun. There have been several popular attempts at placing the Korean before the world in his true colors, but we have here the first serious attempt to deal with the facts from a purely critical standpoint. In the past we have seen in print many partial discussions and many exaggerated descriptions of things Korean. They have been interesting and entertaining but the object of the society whose publication we are now considering is something different from mere entertainment. The society stands for a just, balanced, dispassionate discussion of the many phases of Korean life. It is not the province of this society to make facts square with theories, but to make theories an outgrowth of a careful and exhaustive study of the facts. In cases where an inductive method is necessary an hypothesis should be adhered to just so long as it affords the best explanation of what few, isolated facts there may be in hand, and no longer. The champion of a theory is a sorry spectacle to the true scientist. Facts are hard cash while theories are mere promissory notes, often discredited.

The first work of this learned society should be to collect material facts. The subject matter has heretofore been fur- [page 338] nished only in scattered and isolated fragments. No one subject has been exhaustively investigated and all the facts connected with it brought together; but many conclusions have been jumped at after a merely superficial examination of a few of the more obvious facts. From a scientific standpoint it is a rather rash thing to state dogmatically that this or that thing has never existed in Korea or that it has always existed here. This presupposes more knowledge cm the part of the writer than any man can possibly have, and it discredits him just in proportion as the statement is manifestly impossible of demonstration. Each man should confine his testimony to matters that have come clearly within the radius of his own experience and study. And even when the bearing of a certain fact may seem quite clear to the individual student he should accept the explanation only tentatively until it can be corroborated by the testimony of others. The first ten years of the society might well be spent in merely collecting facts without trying to make generalizations. In this way the ultimate advance would be more rapid, for the destructive criticism which is made necessary by the propounding of crude and ill-founded theories takes even more time than the working out of sound generalizations.

The success of this society depends upon the enthusiasm of its members and their willingness to merge their individual preconceptions in a single crucible from which shall finally emerge a product that shall be authoritative because it is the consensus of many separate authorities. This society is not the arena where any one man can expect to reap literary or scholastic renown above his fellows or hope to impose upon others his own theories. It is distinctly democratic and whatever of good is accomplished will receive the superscription not of any one man but of the whole body.

In the volume before us there are three papers, (1) The Influence of China on Korea, by Rev J. S. Gale, (2) Korean Survivals, by H. B. Hulbert, Esq., (3) The Colossal Buddha at Eun-jin, by Rev. G.H. Jones. A careful perusal of the three will show that the last one adheres most closely to the ideal of the society. It is a clear, straightforward statement of facts about a specific object. It adds a definite quantity to our [page 339] knowledge of Korea and its authority is manifestly beyond dispute. The subject is worked out carefully and exhaustively. We are given the historical, legendary and local setting of the colossal Buddha in a way that makes the article of definite use for comparative purposes. When some one gets ready to describe some other monument or monuments as carefully as Mr. Jones has described this one it will be possible to enter upon the second stage—namely, a comparative study of Korean monuments.

As for the other two papers, they are interesting and readable but it is evident that the time is not ripe for generalizing over such an enormous stretch of territory as that contemplated in these papers. They are both *ex parte* productions, each writer taking extreme ground and trying to prove too much. The one argues that there is nothing in Korea that is of Korean origin, the other that there is comparatively little in Korea that is of Chinese origin. The one overrates the influence of Confucianism, the other underrates it. Even a person who knew nothing about Korea after reading these two papers would conclude that they were both exaggerations. We would not, in saying this, be understood to impugn the scholarship or the authority of either of the writers, for they have lived long enough in Korea to know whereof they speak; but it is plain that they have formed theories and then gone to work and collected every fact that would support their theories and rejected every other fact. The first writer had the more difficult proposition to prove, namely, that “there is no life, literature or thought in Korea that is not of Chinese origin,” for the citation of a single thing in Korean life, literature or thought that is of native origin obviously refutes his contention. The other writer proposes to show that the great majority of things Korean, the main things, the vital things, are purely Korean. He might have shown a number of things that are distinctive of Korea but he proves too much. He tries to make us believe that Confucianism is of comparatively little account, that Buddhism is not really from China, that the Korean temperament is untouched by Chinese ideals. Now it is apparent that there are many points where opinions will clash and where individual judgment will have to determine which side to take, but here each writer takes such ex- [page 340] treme ground that the “man in the street” humbly declines to follow either or them. He insists that there must be some middle course; and, as usual, he is right. If the first writer had contended that there is nothing in Korean life, literature and thought that has not been tinged by Chinese influence (instead of saying that they are of Chinese origin); and if the second writer had contended that there is no Chinese innovation that has not been tinged by Korean influence they might both have been accepted; but as they are writers of approximately equal authority and their statements are mutually destructive rather than complementary, we must conclude that each has tired to prove too much, and that it remains for someone to point out the middle course of safety. The value of these two papers lies not in their conclusions but in the incidental statement of facts which the student can dissociate from the argument and use to advantage. A second benefit to be derived from them is that they bring up many subjects that are well worth discussing and will set people to thinking and studying in directions that will sometime bring the society to a definite goal. Among other important subjects suggested we find these. How does Korean Confucianism differ from Chinese Confucianism? What part does Buddhism play in the religious life of the Korean? To what extent is Korean architecture influenced by the Chinese? What similarities exist between Chinese and Korean Shamanism, folklore, mythology, music, food, games and artistic products. We want critical discussions of these and a hundred other important topics; arguments founded not or some ex parte investigation but upon a dispassionate and judicial sifting of hard facts, and all the facts.

It is always more interesting to fight than to arbitrate. It satisfies the natural man far better to hold his literary opponent up to contempt by a clever exaggeration of his faults than to clasp hands with him and say: Let us sift this matter down and find what common ground we can stand on. But no one will doubt as to which is the sane and scientific attitude to assume. The object of the society is mutual support and help rather than mutual stultification.

The reading public, at least that portion of it that is interested in Korea, will welcome this publication not merely on its own account but because of what it promises for the future. [page 341]

**Korean and Efate**.

(Concluded).

Ko=face. Korean = K’o, nose (a part for the whole?) lit. the Ki. Ko means the part before.]

Kori = dog, Korean dog. [Ma.=kuri, a dog; = kuli; Fut=kuli; Ta.=kuri; Epi.=kuli; El.=kuri.]

Kota=time. Korean=got, immediately, instantly.

Lu = rise up. Korean = na, rise.

Luaki=utterance, proverb. Korean=niagi, talk, story.

Ma (dd. nanum, nanu, nanofa) = day. Korean = nal, day.

Ma. =with, and. Korean = myu , verbal-ending of connection, and. [Ha. =me; Ma.=me; Mota. = ma, me.]

Ma-nia = to grinds Korean = ma, a mill, mill-stones.

Mabe = chestnut. Korean = pam, chestnut. [Tah. mape;

An. = mop; Malo = mabue.]

Mai or me = rope. Korean = to bind, tie. [Sa. = maea; To. =maia.]

Maler = transparent. Korean = malk, clear, pure (as clear water.)

Malo = to be unwilling, averse. Korean mal, denoting negative command or prohibition—”don’t.”

Manu = a multitude. Korean —man, many. [Sa. = mano, a great number.]

Manua = to be finished. Korean = man, only, no more, (as keu-man-tu = stop.)

Maritan = to wither. Korean = mal or mar, to be dry, to wither, thirsty.

Ma = alone, only Korean = man, alone, only.

Matu-ki = to strengthen or support with posts. Korean = put, to support, to bolster.]

A

Matru = to be thirsty (dd. manru, mandu, maru). Korean = mal, to be dry, thirsty, [Ml. = mernh.] [page 342]

Ma = interrogative pronoun used indefinitely.

Korean =muu, the interrogative used also indefinitely.]

Man = very. Korean = mao, very. [Fi. = ban, very; Fut. =

ma.]

Mauta = a rising ground. Korean = moi, mountain [Sa. = inauga, a hill ]

Mea-mea = long. Korean = mor or mol, to be long.

Mina = pleasant, nice. Korean = man, a verbal ending, meaning pleasant or nice as pol-man-hata = nice to see.

[Tah. = mona; My. = manis; Mg. = manitura.]

Miu = wet. Korean = mut, to be wet or daubed with anything. [So the Ef. mota = dirty.]

Uma == the hole, i. e. the inside of a house. Korean = um, ancient form of house made by digging a hole in the ground and covering with a thatch.

Mua = to flow. Korean = pu, to pour.

Na = adverb of assent. Korean = ne, yes.

Nabo = to smell. Korean = naamsa or na, a smell (especially

a bad smell). [Sa. = namu, bad smell; To. =namu; a good or bad smell.]

Nai = water. Korean = na, a brook or small stream.

Namu = mosquito. Korean = mogi [Mg. = moka; Ta-sa. =

moke; Malo = rnohe; My. = namok; Bu. = namok.]

Ni = genitve ending. Korean = eui, genitive ending. [Fi;ni, i or e.

of; Ma. = i, of；Battak = ni, of；Bu. = ri, of; Tag.= ni, of; Mg. =ny, of.]

Ore= yes, that’s it. Korean = or, ol, it is true, right.

Sa = negative adv. in prohibitive clauses. Korean = asu, stop, don’t.]

Sai = to come forth. Korean = sa, new.

Sana = an arrow. Norean = sal, arrow.

Sela = to carry. Korean = sil, to load.

Sera-ia = to sweep. Korean = seur or seul, to sweep.

Si = to blow. Korean = se-ge, violently (to blow) used only in connection with the wind. [page 343]

Sog = compulsion, force, constraint. Korean = suk, suddenly, forcibly, with a jerk.

Tabos = narrow. Korean = chob or chop, narrow.

Tagoto = axe. Korean = tokeui, axe

Taku = at the back. Korean = tol, or tor, back, turn. [Sa. = tua; Malo = tura; Motu = dolu] in same connection.]

Talo = round about. Korean = tol, turn around, to revolve.

 (Ef. tili-mar = revolve.)

Talu = a crowd, herd. Korean = teul, the universal ending of the plural.

Tama (dd. taba) = to cover. Korean = tup, to cover.

Tano (dd: tan) = earth, soil. Korean = tang, the earth, ground. [Sa. = tanu; My. = tanem.]

Tari-a = to rub. Korean = tar, to be rubbed, smoothed.

 [Sa. = tele.]

Taru-b = to fall. Korean = turu-jinta, to fall.

Tan = to abide, be fixed. Korean = tu, more, continually,

further. The Ef. tan is used before any verb to denote continuous action. The same is true of the Korean.

Tau = to pluck. Korean = ta, to pluck.

Tatu = a stake. Korean = tari, a stake (used only in composi- tion as in ul-tari, a stake fence or paling.)

Tiko or tuba = post in a house. Korean = teulpo, a cross-

beam in a house.

Tiko = staff, walking-stick. Korean = tagi, in composition as Mak-tagi, a walkingstick or staff. In this connection the To. = toko, a post to tie canoes to is similar to the Korean tuk as in mal-tuk the post to which a horse or other animal is tethered. [My. = takan, staff; Mg. = telaina, staff.]

Toki = axe. Korean = toki, axe.

Tok = violence, force. Korean = tok, poison, but it refers

broadly to any violence.

Tu = to stand. Korean = tu, to place, set.

Tuku = go down, send down. Korean = suk, down, an intensive adverb used with verbs denoting motion down [page 344]

Turuk = to permit. Korean = Hurak, to permit, allow.

 U = we, they. Korean = we.

Ua (dd.ba) = rain. Korean = pi, rain.

Uago or Uigo = an exclamation. Korean. = ago, a exclamation.]

Ulua = to grow up. Korean = olla, up.

Um = oven. Korean = um, covered hole in the ground.

Uru-uru = to growl, grumble, murmur. Korean = ururung- ururung.]

Usi = to hasten. Korean = ussa, hurry！quick!

**George C. Foulk**.

We had occasion, a short time since, to recall the work done in the early days of Korea’s foreign intercourse by Baron von Mollendorff. Another man who was intimately connected with some of those events and who for a time exercised a powerful influence on Korean affairs was Ensign Geo. C. Foulk of the U. S. Navy. It will be of interest to those who desire to understand the factors which were included in the problem of Korea’s opening to review some of the events of the late Mr. Foulk’s career in Korea.

Geo. C. Foulk was born in Pennsylvania in the early sixties and at the early age of fourteen entered the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. His extreme youthfulness would seem to have cast some doubt upon the wisdom of this move but the result justified the venture, for four years later he graduated at the head of his class. The ease with which he mastered every subject that engaged his serious attention amounted almost to precocity.

Soon after his graduation he was ordered to the Far East on the China station. The alertness of his mind proved not to be confined to the mere scholastic and technical part of his profession but in actual practice he soon brought himself to the favorable notice of his superiors and he became, in a sense, a favorite with the Admiral in whose staff he was acting [page 345] as assistant flag-lieutenant. Besides the ordinary routine of the profession he acquired the Japanese language with marvelous rapidity for he was a born linguist. It was while thus connected with the Asiatic squadron that he made the acquaintance in Nagasaki of the young lady, a Japanese, who later became Mrs. Foulk. Such was his proficiency in Japanese that when he returned to Washington in 1883 he was attached to the Korean embassy which arrived in Washington in the autumn of that year headed by Min Yong-ik. He was detailed by the naval department to accompany this embassy in a trip through the country for the purpose of examining educational and other institutions. It was under these favorable circumstances that he became acquainted with Koreans and began to acquire their language. Several—in fact at this time all—of the members of that embassy were favorably inclined toward a progressive policy in Korea and a strict limitation of the Chinese claim of suzerainty. Mr. Foulk naturally became a warm partisan of Korea’s independence and he undoubtedly helped to confirm these men, especially So Kwang-bom, in their ambition to see Korea follow the lead of Japan.

It was in June 1884 that the embassy arrived in Seoul accompanied by Mr. Foulk who was of course a confidential friend of these progressive men. Mr. Foulk was now attached to the U. S. Legation as naval attache and was directed by the government to make an extended trip through the four important towns which are supposed to guard the approaches to Seoul. His rapid acquisition of the language and his deep interest in Korea made him an eminently fit man for this work. The entire success with which he fulfilled this mission is shown in the printed report which is published in the Foreign Relations of the U.S. It is one of the clearest, fullest and most readable articles ever published on Korea. Considering the very short time he had been in the country it is rather remarkable that he should have so fully grasped the situation and given us an account which even to-day would gain nothing at the hand of a reviser.

Returning from this journey he found matters in Seoul in a very unsettled condition. Some of the friends of reform had seceded to the conservative wing and the pro-Chinese element was in power. The fact is that some of the liberal [page 346] leaders described the condition of things accurately when they told Mr. Foulk that it was a case of kill or be killed. It is quite natural that Mr. Foulk should have underrated the lengths to which party feeling will go in Korea, for he evidently thought this was rather wild talk, but it was not. The only thing that could have saved those progressive leaders’ lives was either flight or fight. They tried the latter first and being unsuccessful they tried the former but the fate of Kim Ok-kiun shows that even flight did not obviate the peril. Mr. Foulk evidently sympathized most thoroughly with the progressives and within proper limits gave them every encouragement in his power. He had a wide acquaintance with Korean officials and exercised a remarkable degree of influence over them. This can be accounted for on the following grounds. His was an eminently sympathetic nature. You could not sit down and talk with him without feeling that he was putting himself in your place, and that for the time being he was thoroughly interested in your affairs. His unassuming manner and hearty, open-handed courtesy won everybody that came near him. The abandon with which he threw himself into the fight for reform shows the unselfishness of his nature, for he must have seen from September 1884 that the cause of the progressionists was a losing one.

He was in frequent communication with the King and was entrusted with many confidential missions by His Majesty who at that time was by no means hostile to the plans of reform which the progressive leaders were drawing up. Probably no other foreigner ever enjoyed so unreservedly the confidence of His Majesty. Military instructors were wanted and Mr. Foulk was entrusted with the work of securing them from America. School teachers were wanted and it was through him that they were secured by the aid of the Educational Bureau at Washington. A government stock-farm and breeding station was contemplated and Mr. Foulk had charge of the arrangements.

Mr. Foulk clearly foresaw the storm which broke on December 4th 1884, but he realized neither its violence nor the nearness of its approach, for only a month before it happened he started out on an extended tour of the country at the order of his chief. If he had been at all conscious of the peril that [page 347] was so imminent he would have postponed or given up this trip, for as it turned out his life was in extreme peril after the breaking out of the emeute. He was far in the south at the time, and when news came that the progressive leaders were killed or had fled to Japan, Mr. Foulk’s prospects were extremely gloomy. Far in the interior of the country, surrounded by forces which he could not estimate, ignorant of what excesses the people might run to—the very uncertainty must have been exceedingly trying. His verbal description of his journey toward the capital after the emeute, the pursuit by enemies, his wanderings among the mountains from well-founded fear of following the main thoroughfares and his final escape will remain for many a year in the writer’s memory.

It may well be imagined that after the emeute his well-known sympathy with the progressives made him an object of great suspicion to the officials in power and yet it is remarkable to see how he was still trusted and how his advice was still sought after by Korean officials. The King seems to have retained much of his liking for the youthful Naval Attache who now by the retirement of the U. S. Minister, Gen. Foote, became Charge d’Affaires ad interim, an interim that continued for eighteen months. He is perhaps the youngest man that was ever entrusted with the duties of Minister from United Stales to a foreign country.

The plans that had been laid for advances along educational lines, both military and linguistic, which had been frustrated or held in abeyance by the outbreak of 1884 were again brought to the fore and through the efforts of Mr. Foulk were carried to a successful issue. In the autumn of 1886 the Government English School was founded and put in the care of three men selected by the Educational Bureau at Washington, and shortly after three military instructors arrived from America. Stock was secured for a government farm and other improvements were contemplated. On the whole it would appear that Mr. Foulk, though known to be unalterably in favor of Korean independence and a progressive policy, was trusted in large measure even by those who disagreed with him as to the wisest course to pursue.

The reason for this raises one of the most interesting [page 348] points in connection with the opening of Korea. It must be remembered that in the late seventies, when hostilities of a most decided nature had been declared between the late Regent and the Queen’s party, it was the latter which urged and in 1876 secured the signing of a treaty with Japan. It was the Min family and faction that took the lead in every reform. At that time the Min family had not adopted the friendly attitude toward the Chinese into which events finally forced them. They favored the foreign treaties and a progressive policy. But after a time-and here is the crucial point—a party sprang up that threatened to take the leadership in these reforms out of the hands of the Min faction. These men Kim Ok-kiun, So Kwang-bom, Pak Yong-hyo and and the like were men of a different political party from the Mins. They were active, intelligent, energetic but it must be acknowledged that had the conservatively progressive tendencies of that Min party in 1880, for instance, been given free scope and the introduction of reforms not been taken out of their hands by extreme radicals like those above named the progress would have been much more rapid. The personal element undoubtedly entered very largely into the problem that the extremists were trying to solve. To say that Kim Ok-kiun and others of his kind were actuated by purely unselfish and patriotic motives would be as false as to say that there was no desire for progress and no patriotism in the opposing faction. The Mins had occupied a commanding position for years, they had broken down the exclusive policy of the ex-regent and had opened the country. They were instituting reforms gradually; when there arose a clique, (for its numbers would not allow of its being called a party) who wanted to hurry the government into changes for which she was not only not ready but which the people would have been sure to reject. This new party threatened to take everything out of the Mins’ hands and assume control. It is not to be wondered at that the Min party immediately looked about for means of upholding their prestige. There was one means and only one. They threw themselves into the arms of the Chinese, gave up the reforms, opened up anew the whole question of Chinese suzerainty and introduced the era that inevitably led up to the Japan-China war. No one could blame them. [page 349]

It was simply a misfortune. That the Min faction was not the enemy of reform is evinced by their action after the emeute in carrying out some of the progressive plans formulated by their vanquished opponents and doing it through a man who was known to have been in full sympathy with the radical progressionists. It is thus that good intentions some-times bring forth bitter fruit because of the means that are used for carrying them out. When we view the change of face of the Min party between 1878 and 1883 from the view- point here given we see readily why Min Yong-ik drew back from the progressionists and lined up with the pro-Chinese party. He wanted progress but he wanted it to be instituted and carried out through his own family and party. Nothing could be more natural. Had the Mins been retrogressive from the start the action of the radicals would have taken on a different color, but it became a struggle to see which side should lead the reforms. And as has happened so many times in Korean history this working at cross-purposes, with the personal equation ever to the front, made sad work of reform.

**Rice and the Ideograph.**

Rice and the Chinese ideograph together form a very consistent pair, for they are both of them very difficult to get, and even after getting they are found to be no better than other physical and intellectual pabulum, if as good. Two things must excite the wonder of the thoughtful student of the Far East; the one is how these eastern people, who are so primitive in most essential things, have developed the taste for rice which is the most difficult of ail cereals to raise and which is, on the whole, such a poor all-round food; and the second is how people whose intellectual attainments are of such mediocre grade should have adopted the most complicated and cumbersome of all written symbols for the expression of their thought. Let us see if there is not some deeper relationship between rice and writing in the Far East than mere coincidence. [page 350]

It is generally supposed that the use of rice for food originated in the discovery of wild rice. The people plucked this wild rice in the swamps and marshes and gradually, as the demand increased, they got to making artificial marshes for growing this favorite grain. The habit once formed was ineradicable, and from that time to this they have been compelled by the very inertia of their minds to turn the face of the earth into reeking paddy-fields which require so much care that they leave the farmer leisure for nothing else. And they do all this to produce a cereal that is almost pure starch and that is sadly lacking in the nitrogenous elements which go to make up a proper food for man. It reminds us of Charles Lamb and his Dissertation on Roast Pig. It is as sensible to burn your house down whenever you want roast pig as to turn the face of God’s earth into a pestilential swamp in order to get grain to eat. The farmer instead of taking nature into his confidence and allowing her to help him is incessantly fighting against nature, fighting gravitation, making water run up hill, electing to starve unless it happens to rain at a particular time and neither too little nor too much. The poverty of mind that during all these centuries has discovered no other staple article of food is appalling.

But how is it with the ideograph? The primitive man poking with a stick in the sand made a circle and called it the sun. He put a straight mark below it to represent the horizon and called it morning. He made a two-legged figure to represent a man and then inclosed it in a square and called it a prison. He elaborated the man into a woman by adding the semblance of a skirt and then put three of them together and called it gossip; and so on to the end of the chapter—and a very long chapter too. It showed the narrowness of his mental view that a single clumsy solution of the question completely blocked up the avenue for new ideas along that line. The ideographic idea once implanted in his mind, there was no room for a phonetic symbol. How should he ever dream that the sounds of human speech are vastly fewer than the ideas in the mind? He tired to make a symbol for each idea, but the ideas to be represented were so many that he struck a mean and made a host of ideograms and apparently eliminated all the rest of the ideas. Just as in the discovery of rice he en- [page 351] slaved himself to a laughably unnatural agricultural life, so in letters by the discovery of his picture-making power he enslaved himself to an intellectual life that is dwarfed and stunted. It is useless to talk about the great works that have been written in Chinese. Reduce them to the cold test of translation; strip them of their rhetoric and the glamor which antiquity and privilege have cast about them and we find there neither credible history, clear logic nor genuine poetry. The Koreans have made a partially successful attempt to rid themselves of this incubus, but we see what a tremendously conservative power it wields when five hundred years’ use still finds the excellent Korean alphabet a sort of outcast, fit only for women and coolies.

But now, curiously enough, as the Chinese begin to import wheat flour in large quantities and to make it for themselves for a staple food instead of rice, we also hear of projects being formed for the making of a phonetic alphabet for China. The Emperor himself, if we mistake not, intimated the need of such an alphabet and others have taken it up and talked seriously about it. The rice and the ideograph are evidently going together, the one an economic burden, the other an intellectual burden. They are going hand in hand-as yet hardly a beginning has been made but the end is sure. It has already become a live quest on in Japan whether the government had not better discard the Chinese character and adopt the Romanji—so in time will China and Korea do.

There have been several suggestions made as to what sort of phonetic system China should adopt. We beg leave to enter the company of those who are giving advice on this subject, and suggest that Korea should heap coals of fire on China’s head by giving her an alphabet that has not its superior in the world for phonetic power; which, being a “square” character, could be most easily adapted to Chinese penmanship, and which would need to be remodelled only to the extent of indicating the Chinese tones. This would be one of the great compensations of history; for when Korea was still half savage and without the civilizing influence of letters the Chinese character and literature were introduced, thus opening the way to whatever can be gotten from Chinese literature. Now let Korea repay her by giving her the Korean alphabet. In all [page 352] seriousness, we believe this to be the best solution of the difficulty which is becoming better and better recognized in China—the lack of facilities for the education of the masses.

**Odds and Ends.**

**Unwelcome insects.**

Koreans have curious notions about that most irritating of insects called in scientific parlance the *Cimex Lectularius*, but in good Anglo-Saxon called the bed-bug. They seem to believe in what we may call epidemics or recrudescences of bed-bugs. For instance, the foreign community may not know that Chong-dong, where westerners mostly congregate, is to the Korean known as “Bed-bug Den.” When in 1592 after the Japanese invaded the country and forced the King to flee northward they retired to the south and the court returned to Seoul. As the Kyong-bok palace was in ashes the King made a residence of fourteen years at the place where the court now is in Chong-dong. This is said to have roused the bed-bugs and at that time the city was infested with them. And now again that the court has taken up this position, the city is again experiencing a similar recrudescence of this pest.

**Death in the pot.**

When there is a dead body in the house no vendor of pots or jars dares come near the place; for not only must not the people of that house buy a jar but they must smash every jar or pot that the unlucky vendor carries. If they do not it means that another member of the household will shortly die. The reason for this is somewhat obscure and we can only conjecture what it may be. They may have the subconscious notion that to buy new pots and jars at such a time implies that their thoughts are all directed toward their own continued life and pleasure, in complete forgetfulness of the dead. We know that pots and jars form the major portion of the ordinary Korean’s house furniture, and to lay in a new stock upon the death of an inmate of the house implies that the house-keeping has taken a new lease of life. We grant that this notion is painfully [page 353] esoteric and a clearer and simpler reason would be welcomed from anyone who has probed the Korean mind deep enough to understand all his idiosyncracies.

**Question and Answer.**

(15)Question. Why is it that dogs are not fed on the fifteenth day of the first moon?

Answer. The only answer that comes to hand is that the Koreans believe that by making the dogs fast on that day, they (the dogs) will be comparatively free from vermin during the coming summer. We must confess that the remedy does not commend itself by its results. We would propose that the dogs fast the whole of the first month. This would probably be fairly effective.

(16)Question. When the Manchus conquered Korea the Koreans were wearing the same style of clothes and the same coiffure as the Chinese. How then did it happen that the Manchus did not compel the Koreans to adopt the queue as they did the Chinese?

Answer. History gives no specific answer to this question so far as we are aware. Korea was recognized to be a vassal to China, but it is evident that the Manchus perceived a very great difference between the two peoples. They never proposed to incorporate Korea into the home government as they did the whole of China. They left the king and court as they were and continued with Korea the relations formerly sustained by the Ming emperors. In spite of superficial resemblances they never thought of calling Korea a part of China.

**Correspondence.**

To the editor the Korea Review:

DEAR SIR,—Since you have published a translation of the report of the Governor of Quelpart upon the disturbances in that island I beg to hand you the following for your information. [page 354]

To begin with, the influence which procured his present position for the gentleman whose report you quote, was gained in a manner which left it impossible to be impartial. He is therefore not the best of witnesses.

The facts of the matter are that the Catholic Mission in Quelpart has had an extraordinarily rapid growth in the past two years, and, where before that time there was hardly a Christian in the island, at the time of the massacre there was hardly a village which had not a certain number. The official servants and yamen-runners, who before had exacted what they pleased of the people, found that this was no longer possible with those who had become Christians. The priests stood between them and oppression.

Add to this the ill-feeling in official circles:

1.That the island, which had never been taxed before, has, during the same period, been subjected to an exorbitant taxation;

2.That the chief tax-collector had chosen some of his assistants from among the Christians; and

3. That his rival and personal enemy, the most powerful man in the island, was, at the same time, strongly opposed to the spread of Christianity; and the result in so unsettled a country as Quelpart was to be expected.

It is possible that many people joined the Mission who had not its best interests at heart, because of the protection they received. This, however, is so common an occurrence in every mission throughout the East, and is so well known to you gentlemen in your mission work that no comment is necessary.

 I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. F. SANDS.

25 July, 1901.

**Editorial Comment.**

It is most unfortunate that there should be a scarcity of rice both in Japan and in Korea. This peninsula is becoming more and more the food supply for Japan and a shortage in [page 355] both countries at once is a rather serious matter. All the signs at present indicate that Korea will produce less than a fourth of the average crop of rice. Telegrams have come in from all parts of the country bewailing the lack of water and the Koreans are busy turning their rice-fields to account by hurriedly planting beans and other things which may possibly mature before the winter sets in.

In view of the threatened famine the Korean Government has availed itself of the right, granted by treaty, of prohibiting the export of rice after giving one month’s notice. This course is dictated by a number of good and sufficient reasons. First, the general welfare of the people at large. It is well known that there are large numbers of people in Korea who live continually on the verge of want. The rise in the price of any staple commodity is sentence of death to thousands. The bulk of the population could pull through a single year of scarcity, but the Government is under obligation to protect those who are poor as well. Reason and humanity demand that what little the land produces this year should he carefully hoarded and used exclusively by Koreans. In the second place the government revenues which come mainly from the land tax will of course be severely cut down and the Government at the same time will be called upon to extend help to thousands who are or will be starving. To let rice be exported would therefore be both inhumane and financially embarrassing as well. In view of the situation we have to confess that the objections raised by the Japanese against the prohibition of the export of rice seem to be dictated by purely selfish motives. It is natural that the Japanese should deprecate such prohibition but they must remember that Korea’s first duty is to Koreans, and, that however much the Japanese may need Korean rice, it is beyond the bounds of reason to object to an act winch is sanctioned by treaty and rendered imperative by circumstances. They tell us that there appears to be no serious shortage, but the facts do not bear them out. At this season of the year the old rice that has been kept over from last year invariably falls in price if the prospect for a crop is fair, but this year rice has gone up nearly 100 per cent during a single month. Now the Koreans know what they are about. There could be no surer indication of coining famine than [page 356] this enormous rise. It is an unanswerable argument. It is difficult to see how the Japanese can claim that there is no special danger when all about us the rice fields lie fallow, and reports from a great majority of the prefectures show that the rice crop is a failure. We should like to see upon what facts they base their contention. Meanwhile the foreign papers in Japan voice the sentiment that Korea should not refuse Japan her due. One of these papers in a recent issue gives a most peculiar argument to show why the export of rice should not be prohibited. It says in effect that as imported rice in Korea is cheaper than the native product the Koreans should not refuse their rice to Japanese who need it so much. In other words, let Koreans sell their dear product to the Japanese and then go and import from a cheaper market. This is a charming commentary on Japanese commercial ability. If there is a market where rice is so much cheaper, perhaps our contemporary will tell us why it is the Japanese do not buy from it instead of from Korea. No; the truth is that the Japanese are pinched as well as the Koreans and are trying to oppose the prohibition of export from Korea in order to cover their own shortage. It is sincerely to be hoped that the Korean Government will not give way to the demand. As the treaties do not state who is to decide whether there is need for such prohibition it must be presumed that the Government which does the prohibiting is to decide. Could it be reasonably expected that the Government would forego the large revenues which come from the export duties if there were not pressing need? But not only has Korea done this; she has opened the ports of the country to the tree import or rice and other cereals, thus entailing a further diminution of the custom’s revenues.

Hardly during the memory of living Koreans has there been a more discouraging outlook in the way of food for the people. The pinch will not come this autumn but next spring, and it will then be seen whether those who oppose the prohibition of the export of rice are right or wrong.

The letter from W. F. Sands, Adviser to the Household Department, which we print in this issue, forms a valuable addition to our knowledge of the Quelpart trouble. Being from one who was so intimately connected with the trouble it is doubly interesting. [page 357] He makes the frank statement that the French priests stood between the Christians and Government oppression. This is practically what happens in every mission in Korea. Some may do it more openly and avowedly than others, but the truth is that the mere presence of the foreigner in the country is an effective check on official oppression. We know of cases where provincial governors and magistrates have said that such and such a tax could not be collected in certain strongly Protestant Christian centers. But it must be confessed that there is a difference between a passive resistance (if such a paradox may be allowed) and an aggressive resistance. The former is merely the moral influence which the foreigner exerts; the latter is an active threat of political complications and an appeal to temporal powers. How far these two attitudes are descriptive of Protestant and Roman Catholic propagandism in Korea it is not our purpose to discuss. It may be that the more bitter opposition which Roman Catholicism is receiving from the people has made it seem as if the Roman Catholics were making a greater use of physical arguments, but in any case it is to be deplored that the numbers of Christian adherents, either Protestant or Catholic, should be swelled by those who are simply seeking to evade physical oppression. It is a serious question which the Church and the Government both have to face and which requires most delicate handling. It cannot be questioned that adherence to Christianity in any form does to a certain extent take people out of the hands of the Government, but it does so only in so far as the Government exceeds a just limit of taxation or when there is a gross miscarriage of justice. It undoubtedly forms a most subtle temptation to those who find it possible to train their consciences to a purely mercenary standard and it forms a most odious cause of offense to those who see others relieved of government pressure by simply adopting the Christian name. We can see no solution of the difficulty short of such a fixed rate of taxation and such a strict justice in its collection as shall leave no room for either the Government or the people to complain. [page 358]

**News Calendar.**

F. H. Morsel, Esq. Correspondent of the Physical Observatory, St Petersburg, has sent the following interesting hygrometrical record for Chemulpo for the years 1887—1901 inclusive, up to the middle of 1901. He says;—

The record given in the table appended comprises the years 1887 to 1900 inclusive and the first half of 1901. The quantity of snow-fall is given in terms of the water which the melted snow would make. The figures for 1899, 1900 and part of 1901 are taken from the customs meteorological record. All the others are from my own personal observation. The figures may not be exact, owing to the fact that the customs pluviometer is not so placed as to give the most precise results. But if the figures are not exact they are below rather than above the actual amounts.

HYGROMETRICAL RECORD.

Years Rainfall Snowfall Total Fog Days and hours

inches rain snow

1887 30.86 2.00 32.86 18d 3h 19d 17h 4d 2h

1888 20.91 2.15 23.06 14d 5h 12d 6h 3d 3h

1889 28.18 0.91 29.09 25d 13h 25d 5h 5d 9h

1890 47.00 1.06 48.06 12d 18h 27d 10h 64h

1891 41.04 1.66 41.70 13d 5h 30d 20h 3d 7h

1892 34.04 1.20 35.24 13d 2oh 16d 00h 4d 5h

1893 50.64 3.55 54.19 31d 5h 36d 6h 8d 11h

1894 31.81 0.64 32.45 33d 18h 21d 9h 1d 8h

1895 31.88 2.06 33.94 32d 7h 29d 11h 6d 17h

1896 31.08 5.15 36.23 51d 7h 27d 0h 2d oh

1897 48.35 3.23 51.58 24d 5h 31d 17h 4d 18h

1898 37.8O 4.73 42.53 31d 14h 29d 19h 5d 15h

1899 25.07 2.05 27.12 18d 19h 1d 3h

1900 29.14 0.83 29.97 20d 2h 0d 20h

1901 7.09. 0.06 7.15 7d 5h 3d 7h 2d 00b

It will be seen from this table that the rainfall for 1899 [page 359] and 1900 was not much below the average of the previous years. It is only in the present year that there has been any considerable falling off.

There have been many complaints of the scarcity of water during the past three years, but this is not upheld by the records until the present year. People say the wells are dry, but we must remember that the population has increased with much greater rapidity, in proportion, than the number of wells and that many of the new wells may be fed from the same springs as the old ones.

The great increase in shipping and in the number of rice-fields, all of which demand water, account for much of the scarcity.

It is to be deplored that observations are not being kept at other points in Korea. In former years His Excellency C. Waeber, kept careful records in Seoul, but at present no one seems to care for it. The “Independent” used to give us occasional readings. It would be a good thing if some one in each of the ports would keep careful records. But it must be remembered that it takes a certain amount of knowledge of the science of meteorology to keep correct records. From some records we have seen it would seem that a washtub had been used for a rain-gauge.

[We would like to suggest that in estimating what is or what is not a proper amount of rain we must know at what time of year the rain falls. Thirty inches of rain is of less value than half that amount if it falls mostly in November rather than June. That is the difficulty in cultivating rice, that you must not only have rain enough but you must have it at a certain specified time or it is practically useless. Suppose for instance that it rain from now till the middle of November. The record would show a good total but it would be utterly useless to the Korean. Ed. K. R.]

The audited census of Seoul, taken this summer, shows that in the five divisions of the city, namely, north, south, east, west and center, there is a total of 193,946 people living in 42,565 houses. This does not include the fortune-tellers, exorcists, so that we may say that Seoul contains within the wall 200,000 people. It is notable that all the four districts, outside the middle one, have lost in population to [page 360] the number of 3,393 though the number of houses has decreased only 29. The middle district increased in population 139 and the houses by 96.

The enterprising Seoul Electric Company has completed the preparations for supplying Seoul with incandescent and arc lights. This will be an unspeakable blessing and will be all the more appreciated because the change is directly from kerosene to electricity and not by way of the intermediate step of gas. Before this number of the Review is issued Seoul will be enjoying one of the most striking products of modern civilization.

Yun Chi-ho, the popular Superintendent of Trade for Chinnampo, has been in Seoul recently and has now been appointed to his old post at Wunsan. The Government has been besieged with requests from the Wunsan people to send Mr. Yun back to them. Meanwhile the people of Chinnampo and Sam-wha fearing that they were going to lose him have been keeping the telegraph wires hot with messages imploring that he be not taken away from them. What better testimonial could a man have as to his civic virtue and his fitness for magisterial power than to have the people clamor to have him put over them. At the same time it is to be regretted that one reason for this insistence is the fear of what may happen to them if Mr. Yun is not returned to them.

On July 25 there was a decided tendency on the part of the large rice owners not to put it on the market. The retail dealers were besieged with demands from the people and quarrels were frequent, but the police interfered and compelled the dealers to sell rice in small quantities to each purchaser. The police authorities went to the river granaries and carefully counted the rice bags and locked them up. It is said that the Government will buy it all up and sell it out to the people at retail. We very much doubt whether this will greatly benefit the people, but it is to be hoped that, as there is enough rice near the city to hold out till another crop can be harvested in 1902, it will be so handled as to save he people from as much suffering as possible.

The Chinese merchants are taking advantage of the scarcity of rice to send for large consignments from southern [page 361] China. In the present critical situation anyone who helps to solve the problem of food-stuff for Korea is a public benefactor and we hope will reap substantial profits.

The 26th of August is the date set for the stopping of the export of cereals from Korea. The Japanese in Chemulpo Fusan and Seoul are making loud complaints against this prohibition as it naturally eats into their profits. On July 26th the Japanese Minister visited the Foreign Office and represented that it was too early to tell yet whether there would be a great enough scarcity to warrant the prohibition. Also strenuous arguments were made against the prohibition of the export of beans and other cereals besides rice, but the Government seems to have taken a determined attitude and will not let any mere technicalities stand in the way of thoroughly protecting the people from threatened famine. To say that beans are not an ordinary article of food in Korea is a very hollow argument, for in times of want it becomes the staple food of the country.

Native papers state that Yi Yong-ik in the name of the Government contracted with M. Rondon for the import of 300,000 bags of rice from Annam, paying down $30,000 on account. This makes it quite plain that the Government is quite alive to the pressing danger of famine. The contract price is seven yen a bag.

On the island of Na-ju Oe-do there is trouble between the people and the Roman Catholics. It is the same charge of compulsion on the part of the R. C. adherents, coupled this time with the statement that a French priest has beaten a Korean at the church on that island.

A very sad accident occurred at Chemulpo on July 25th. A Japanese gunboat was lying in the outer harbor. The captain accompanied by Lieut. Fujiki were coming ashore in the captain’s gig, when upon rounding the point of Roze Island they were run into and capsized by the steamship *Kyung-ho* which had just weighed anchor for China. The officers in the gig were all precipitated into the water. One of them succeeded in getting on board the *Kyung-ho* where he let down a rope and helped his companions out of the water, but Lieut. Fujiki was lost. At present advices the body has not been found though careful search has been made. [page 362]

It seems that there is being made a determined effort to implicate Cho Pyung-sik. On his return from the mission to Japan he gave a detailed account of all the moneys sent him from Seoul, but it is now charged against him that $16,000 of the money was not used for government purposes and the matter of forcing him to refund this sum to the Finance Department has been referred to His Majesty.

Since last May the Finance Department has been busy collecting arrears of taxes throughout the country. Apparently a clean sweep is being made and recalcitrants are being brought sharply to time. The result is that money is coming into the treasury at the rate of $50,000 a day. All arrears of salaries and other running expenses are paid up to date and $600,000 have been laid away to use in emergencies.

Rumor says that Chemulpo is to have a garrison of 1000 men, but 600 of them will be detailed to Quelpart for the present. The Kang-wha garrison is to be increased from 300 to 800. Three hundred and fifty rifles and 12,000 rounds of ammunition have already been sent to Kang-wha.

On Saturday the 17th the opening of the Seoul Electric Company’s electric lighting plant took place at the powerhouse inside the East Gate. The company kindly issued car tickets to a large number of invited guests and the opening exercises were largely attended. The machinery was set in motion by His Excellency, Min Yong-whan, at 9.30 P. M. The selection of Mr. Min for this leading part was a happy one, for he is perhaps the most representative of industrial and economic advancement of any Korean to day. We voice the opinion of the whole community when we express the hope that the electric works will long continue to shed light on the Korean question.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ta-ku which was burned last spring is to be replaced by a much finer one in foreign style. “The new structure will be of dark brick with galvanized iron roof and two spires. It will seat about two thousand people. Ta-ku is one of the strongest R. C. centers. When the outside world comes to see Ta-ku via the Seoul Fusan Railway they will find several foreign buildings here, as, besides the church, there are several residences of Protestant [page 363] missionaries going up.” So says our correspondent, and we hope we shall soon have the pleasure of viewing that section from the windows of a railway carriage.

It is with deep regret that we are obliged to record the death in America of Mrs. C. F. Reid. The long and faithful services of Dr. and Mrs. Reid in China and their subsequent work in Korea makes their removal from us a matter of widespread regret.

On August 1st the Superintendent of Trade and the Commissioner of Customs at Chemulpo sent a note to the Japanese Consul stating that on and after Aug. 28 the export of rice, beans, peas and other grains will be prohibited.

The native press informs us that on or about Aug. 1st the French Minister in a despatch to the F.O. stated that the trouble on Quelpart had done great injury to the reputation of the two French priests and that several hundred R.C. adherents had been killed. Therefore it is right that the men who have been arrested as leaders in the trouble, twenty-five in number, should be punished. He also asks that $6000 be paid to cover the cost of property injured and to pension the family of one of the priest’s servants who was killed in the riots. Also to excuse the banished men who came back to Mokpo and telegraphed the news to Seoul.

On July 31 eight Japanese war vessels cast anchor in Chemulpo harbor. They were the Shikishima, 15088 tons, Asahi, 15442 tons, Idzumo, 9996 tons, Hitachi, 9855 tons, Asama 9855 tons, Kasagi 4978 tons, Yugiri, 249 tons, and the Sasanami, 311 tons, Admiral Togo was in command of the fleet. Prince Kwajonomiya accompanied the fleet. Sung Ki-un, Vice-minister of the Household Department, with a company of soldiers went to Chemulpo to escort His Highness the Prince to Seoul. The Prince, the Admiral, the different commanders with a company of marines and a band came up to the Capital on the 2nd inst. Mr. and Mrs. Hyashi entertained a large and brilliant company on the evening of the same day at which the Prince and the naval officers, many Korean officials and the diplomatic body were present.

On the 3rd inst. Prince Kwajonomia and his staff had audience with His Majesty and were entertained at a banquet [page 364] in the palace. The Japanese band was present and rendered some fine selections. A decoration of the highest order has been conferred upon the Prince by the Emperor of Korea.

On the 4th the whole company returned to Chemulpo where they gave a banquet on board ship to the Koreans who accompanied them to the port.

Early in August the Japanese Minister requested that the prohibition of the export of rice be postponed a month longer than had been determined upon, stating that this would be more convenient for all parties. He also deprecated the prohibition of the export of other grain besides rice. Also he called attention to the fact that the prohibition applied only to foreign export and not the coastwise trade, and hoped that nothing would or done to interfere with the latter.

This all must agree with, but it is to be hoped that the Government will see to it that none of the grain shipped from one Korean port to another finds its way out of the country.

Mr. Yi Cha-jung, formerly Kamni of Chemulpo, is on trial for allowing the sale of tidal land near the mint in Chemulpo. A man by the name of Yo received permission from the Household Department to dike the land and cultivate it but the Kamni opposed it. However, the Household Dept. insisted and the work was done. The land was not granted or sold to this man and its subsequent sale to Japanese was a grave misdemeanor.

It is stated that Russians have started a stock-farm at A-ya-jin on the coast of Kang-wun Province and that they are raising cattle and sheep. These are to be worked up into tinned meats on the spot to be supplied to men-of-war, and merchant vessels in the Far East. The French are said to have taken shares in the venture. A great deal of land in Korea that might be used for pasturage annually goes to waste. The Koreans would do well to follow this lead and utilize more of their fine pasture lands.

On the afternoon of the 4th inst. two men were killed on the electric car line near the bridge outside the South Gate. It was getting dark and the two men were lying asleep on the track. The people congregated rapidly and assumed a threatening attitude but the excitement was soon quelled. [page 365]

Gordon Paddock, Esq. of New York arrived in Seoul on the 5th inst. and took up his position as Secretary of the U.S. Legation and Consul at Seoul.

Plans have been presented for the removal of the Gov’t engineering works from Seoul to Yong-san. The expense of removal will be $6000.

The Foreign Representatives have been informed that from the 23rd inst. the Foreign Office will be closed for one month.

On the 8th inst. the price of rice was 34 cents for a measure of the best quality, but as exchange is now at $1.45 this means only about 25 cents in Japanese currency.

On the 8th inst. the four men, Min Kyong-sik, Chu Sung-myun, Che Kal-hyung and Kim Kyu-heui, whose terms of banishment were fifteen years, life, life and ten years respectively, have been reprieved.

Mr. Hsu Fai Shen, who has been Secretary of the Chinese Legation, has been promoted to the post of Minister. His former chief has been made one of the vice-presidents of the new Chinese Foreign Office.

The F. O. has requested the Finance Department to issue $1000 for travelling expenses for the new German physician for the Household Department, and $2000 for the purchase of instruments.

The editor of the local Japanese paper requested to be allowed to witness the trial of the Quelpart offenders but his request was denied. The Japanese Minister asked that it be permitted but the Supreme Court asked the Law Department to send to the F. O. to put a stop to this annoyance.

We are told that in the new government machine shops to be erected at Yong-san the manufacture of ammunition will be carried on. For this purpose fifty French workmen will be employed at $200 a month.

Rev. S. A. Moffett of P’yung-yang was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Hanover College, Indiana, at its last commencement.

Telegraphic advices from North P’yong-yang Province announce that the river Sin-p’ung at Yang-byun, 11th and 15th instant, overflowed its banks because of heavy [page 366] and continuous rains and swept away over seventy telegraph poles on both sides of the river. It also destroyed many of the native houses.

On the Ku-ryong River not far from the same place the telegraph line was broken down. The telegraph poles along the road to Eui-ju were blown down by the high wind. The services of three engineers are urgently requested.

We are pleased to note that J. N. Jordan, Esq. has been appointed full Minister to Korea.

The heavy wind of the 15th came about as near the typhoon type as any thing we see in central Korea. It did great damage to the small boats in Chemulpo harbor. There are no reports of serious loss of life or property.

Min Ch’ul-hun, the Minister to Berlin, announces his arrival at his post but says he has not presented his credentials yet, as the Emperor is travelling. He has engaged the services of a gentleman named Mr. Harriman, a German, to act as German secretary to the legation.

Owing to the entire omission of the usual rainy season, Seoul has proved a much more comfortable place than usual at this trying season. Yet there has been a considerable exodus of foreigners, some to Chemulpo, some to Puk-han, some to the river, and others still to parts at present unknown. It is our belief that sometime a spot will be found, not far from Seoul where a summer retreat will be provided similar to those in Japan at Kariazawa, Arima, &c. The vicinity of Seoul abounds in beautiful and healthful spots for such a settlement.

The Seoul Book Circle is an organization whose purpose it is to form a small fund, by assessing each member, for the purpose of getting out from America and England the newest novels as soon as they appear. The best book of the week is to be sent as soon as it appears and upon arriving in Seoul will be circulated among the members of the circle. The small sum of five yen a year is insignificant when it helps to give us the newest and best things before the reviews have made them stale. Dr. C. C. Vinton is custodian of the books and any who wish to join should correspond with him: Some of the books have already come and among them are *The Crisis* by by Winston Churchill, *The Helmet of Navarre* and others of [page 367] equal interest. It is intended to get mostly fiction though occasionally other works of exceptional merit will be sent. The choice of the books is in the hands of a competent agent in New York.

The interesting ceremony attending the breaking of ground for the Seoul Fusan Railroad took place on Tuesday the 20th inst. at Yong-tong-p’o the second station beyond the riven If this is the real beginning of the construction of a railway line between Seoul and Fusan it marks an era in the history of this country, for it is a work of such significance, political, industrial, and commercial that it cannot but have a very far-reaching influence upon the destiny of the Korean people. In the first place, it forms a new and powerful bond between Korea and Japan. It commits Japan to a definite policy in Korea as no other thing has ever done. Modern political anchors are the vested interests of individuals and syndicates, and the active interest which the Japanese Government has taken in the inauguration of this important work argues its belief in the political as well as economic value of the undertaking. Just at the present time the beginning of this work is of great benefit to Korea, for it is apparent that with the scarcity of rice there will be thousands of people of the lower classes seeking employment in order to keep body and soul together. The building of this line, therefore, partakes of the character of relief-works and will save many a Korean from starvation Three hundred years ago the Japanese came up from Fusan to Seoul like a devastating typhoon sweeping all before them and leaving misery and famine in their wake; but now the larger view of the twentieth century shows them coming over the same route bearing with them the means for relieving present distress and attempting a material improvement which by facilitating intercommunication between the provinces will help to lessen the dangers of local famines. There is no well-wisher of Korea but views this with satisfaction and trusts that the most progressive of all Korea’s neighbors will follow up this work with others of a similarly salutary nature.

Meanwhile there are evidences that a railway north from Seoul will soon be begun by the French. As the bulk of Korea’s population and the richest agricultural territory is in [page 368] the south, the southern line gives greater hopes of financial returns, but a line to the north, especially between Seoul and Song-do will be of great advantage to Korea and will help to preserve the equilibrium. Some day when these lines are completed and Fusan is in direct connection with the Siberian Railway the great transpacific steamship lines will make Fusan a point off call and the importance of this peninsula will be largely enhanced. The question is, what part will Koreans play in the rapid developments that are sure to follow. That here will be found the great test of Korean stability needs no proof.

M. Lefevre, Secretary of the French Legation, has been appointed Superintendent of the North Western Railway. We hope this means a speedy completion of the work of construction.

The Southern Methodist Mission has purchased the property occupied by Dr. W. B. McGill in Wunsan. Dr. C. F. Reid has come back to Korea temporarily to attend to mission matters. We wish that he might stay with us. [page 369]

**KOREAN HISTORY.**

In 896 Kung-ye began operating in the north on a larger scale. He took ten districts near Ch’ul-wun and put them in charge of his young lieutenant Wang-gon who was destined to become the founder of a dynasty. We must now retrace our steps in order to tell of the origin of this celebrated man.

Wang-yung, a large-minded and ambitious man, lived in the town of Song-ak. To him a son was born in the third year of King Hon-gang of Sil-la, A. D. 878, The night the boy was born a luminous cloud stood above the house and made it as bright as day, so the story runs. The child had a very high forehead and a square chin, and he developed rapidly. His birth had long since been prophesied by a monk named To-sun who told Wang-yung, as he was building his house, that within its walls a great man would be born. As the monk turned to go Wang-yung called him back and received from him a letter which he was ordered to give to the yet unborn child when he should be old enough to read. The contents are unknown but when the boy reached his seventeenth year the same monk reappeared and became his tutor, instructing him especially in the art of wan He showed him also how to obtain aid from the heavenly powers, how to sacrifice to the spirits of mountain and stream so as to propitiate them. Such is the tradition that surrounds the origin of the youth who now in the troubled days of Sil-la found a wide field for the display of his martial skill.

Kung-ye’s continued successes soon began to turn his head. He styled himself “Prince” and began to appoint prefects to various places. He advanced Wang-gon to a high position and made him governor of Song-do. This he did at the instigation of Wang-yung who sent him the following enigmatical advice: “If you want to become King of Cho-sun, Suk-sin and Pyon-han you must build a wall about Song-do and make my son governor.” It was immediately done, and in this way Wang-gon was provided with a place for his capital. [page 370]

In 897 the profligate Queen Man of Sil-la handed the government over to her adopted son Yo and retired. This change gave opportunities on every side for the rebels to ply their trade. Kung-ye forthwith seized thirty more districts north of the Han River and Kyun-whun established his headquarters at Wan-san, now Chun-ju and called his kingdom New Pak-je. Wang-gon, in the name of Kung-ye, seized almost the whole of the territory included in the present provinces of Kyung-geui and Ch’ung-ch’ung. Finally in 901 Kung-ye proclaimed himself king and emphasized it by slashing with a sword the picture of the king of Sil-la which hung in a monastery. Two years later Wang-gon moved southward into what is now Chul-la Province and soon came in contact with the forces of Kyun-whun. In these contests the young Wang-gon was uniformly successful.

In 905 Kung-ye established his capital at Ch’ul-wun in the present Kang-wun province and named his kingdom Ma-jin and the year was called Mut. Then he distributed the offices among his followers. By this time all the north and east had joined the standards of Kung-ye and Wang-gon even to within 120 miles of the Sil-la capital. The king and court of Sil-la were in despair. There was no army with which to take the field and all they could do was to defend the position they had as best they could and hope that Kyung-ye and Kyun-whun might destroy each other. In 909 Kung-ye called Sil-la “The Kingdom to be Destroyed” and set Wang-gon as military governor of all the south-west. Here he pursued an active policy, now fitting out ships with which to subjugate the neighboring islands and now leading the attack on Kyun-whun who always suffered in the event. His army was a model of military precision and order. Volunteers flocked to his standard. He was recognised as the great leader of the day. When, at last, Na-ju fell into the hands of the young Wang-gon, Kyun-whun decided on a desperate venture and suddenly appearing before that town laid siege to it. After ten days of unsuccessful assault he retired but Wang-gon followed and forced an engagement at Mok-p’o, now Yung-san-p’o, and gave him such a whipping that he was fain to escape alone and unattended.

Meanwhile Kung-ye’s character was developing. Cruelty [page 371] and capriciousness became more and more his dominant qualities. Wang-gon never acted more wisely than in keeping as far as possible from the court of his master. His rising fame would have instantly roused the jealousy of Kung-ye.

Sil-la had apparently adopted the principle “Let us eat and be merry for to-morrow we die.” Debauchery ran rife at the court and sapped what little strength was left. Among the courtiers was one of the better stamp and when he found that the king preferred the counsel of his favorite concubine to his own, he took occasion to use a sharper argument in the form of a dagger, which at a blow brought her down from her dizzy eminence.

In 911 Kung-ye changed the name of his kingdom to Ta-bong. It is probable that this was because of a strong Buddhistic tendency that had at this time quite absorbed him. He proclaimed himself a Buddha, called himself Mi-ryuk-pul, made both his sons Buddhists, dressed as a high priest and went nowhere without censers. He pretended to teach the tenets of Buddhism. He printed a book, and put a monk to death because he did not accept it as canonical. The more Kung-ye dabbled in Buddhism the more did all military matters devolve upon Wang-gon, who from a distance beheld with amazement and concern the dotage of his master. At his own request he was always sent to a post far removed from the court. At last Kung-ye became so infatuated that he seemed little better than a madman. He heated an iron to a white heat and thrust it into his wife’s womb because she continually tried to dissuade him from his Buddhistic notions. He charged her with being an adultress. He followed this up by killing both his sons and many other of the people near his person. He was hated as thoroughly as he was feared.

The year 918 was one of the epochal years of Korean history. The state of the peninsula was as follows. In the southeast, the reduced kingdom of Sil-la, prostrated by her own excesses, without an army, and yet in her very supineness running to excess of riot, putting off the evil day and trying to drown regrets in further debauchery. In the central eastern portion, the little kingdom of Kung-ye who had now become a tyrant and a madman. He had put his whole army under the hand of a young, skillful, energetic and popular man who had [page 372] gained the esteem of all classes. In the south-west was another sporadic state under Kyun-whun who was a fierce, unscrupulous bandit, at swords points with the rising Wang-gon. Suddenly Kung-ye awoke to the reality of his position. He knew he was hated by all and that Wang-gon was loved by all, and he knew too that the army was wholly estranged from himself and that everything depended upon what course the young general should pursue. Fear, suspicion and jealousy mastered him and he suddenly ordered the young general up to the capital. Wang-gon boldly complied, knowing doubtless by how slender a thread hung his fortunes. When he entered his master’s presence the latter exclaimed, “You conspired against me yesterday.” The young man calmly asked how. Kung-ye pretended to know it through the power of his sacred office as Buddha. He said, “Wait, I will again consult the inner consciousness.” Bowing his head he pretended to be communing with his inner self. At this moment one of the clerks purposely dropped his pen, letting it roll near to the prostrate from of Wang-gon. As the clerk stooped to pick it up, he whispered in Wang-gon’s ear. “Confess that you have conspired.” The young man grasped the situation at once. When the mad Buddha raised has head and repeated the accusation Wang-gon confessed that it was true. The King was delighted at this, for he deceived himself into believing that he actually had acquired the faculty of reading men’s minds. This pleased him so greatly that he readily forgave the offence and merely warned the young man not to repeat it. After this he gave Wang-gon rich gifts and had more confidence in him than ever.

But the officials all besieged the young general with entreaties to crush the cruel and capricious monarch and assume the reins of government himself. This he refused to do, for through it all, he was faithful to his master. But they said. “He has killed his wife and his sons and we will all fall a prey to his fickle temper unless you come to our aid. He is worse than the Emperor Chu.” Wang-gon, however, urged that it was the worst of crimes to usurp a throne. “But” said they “is it not much worse for us all to perish? If one does not improve the opportunity that heaven provides it is a sin.” He was unmoved by this casuistry and stood his ground firm- [page 373] ly. At last even his wife joined in urging him to lay aside his foolish scruples and she told the officials to take him by force and carry him to the palace, whether he would or not. They did so, and bearing him in their arms they burst through the palace gate and called upon the wretch Kung-ye to make room for their chosen king. The terrified creature fled naked but was caught at Pu-yang, now P’yung-gang, and beheaded.

Tradition says that this was all in fulfillment of a prophecy which was given in the form of an enigma. A Chinese merchant bought a mirror of a Sil-la man and in the mirror could be seen these words: “Between three waters—God sends his son to Chin and Ma—First seize a hen and then a duck—in the year Ki-ja two dragons will arise, one in a green forest and one east of black metal.” The merchant presented it to Kung-ye who prized it highly and sought everywhere for the solution of the riddle. At last the scholar Song Han-hong solved it for him as follows: “The Chin and Ma mean Chin-han and Ma-ham The hen is Kye-rim (Sil-la). The duck is the Am-nok (duck-blue) River. The green forest is pine tree or Song-do (Pine Tree Capital) and black metal is Ch’ul-wun (Ch’ul is metal). So a king in Song-do must arise (Wang-gon) and a king in Ch’ul-wun must fall (Kung-ye)”.

Wang-gon began by bringing to summary justice the creatures of Kung-ye who seconded him in his cruelty; some of them were killed and some were imprisoned. Everywhere the people gave themselves up to festivities and rejoicings.

But the ambitious general, Whan Son-gil, took advantage of the unsettled state of affairs to raise an insurrection. Entering the palace with a band of desperadoes he suddenly entered the presence of Wang-gon who was without a guard. The King rose from his seat, and looking the traitor in the face said, “I am not King by my own desire or request. You all made me King. It was heaven’s ordinance and you cannot kill me. Approach and try.” The traitor thought that the King had a strong guard secreted nearby and turning fled from the palace. He was caught and beheaded.

Wang-gon sent messages to all the bandit chiefs and invited them to join the new movement, and soon from all sides they came in and swore allegiance to the young king. Kyun-whun, however, held aloof and sought for means to put down [page 374] the new power. Wang-gon set to work to establish his kingdom on a firm basis. He changed the official system and established a new set of official grades. He rewarded those who had been true to him and remitted three years’ revenues. He altered the revenue laws, requiring the people to pay much less than heretofore, manumitted over a thousand slaves and gave them goods out of the royal storehouses with which to make a start in life. As P’yung-yang was the ancient capital of the country he sent one of the highest officials there as governor. And he finished the year with a Buddhist festival, being himself a Buddhist of a mild type. This great annual festival is described as follows: There was an enormous lantern, hung about with hundreds of others, under a tent made of a net-work of silk cords. Music was an important element. There were also representations of dragons, birds, elephant, horses, carts and boats. Dancing was prominent and there were in all a hundred forms of entertainment. Each official wore the long flowing sleeves and each carried the ivory memo tablet. The king sat upon a high platform and watched the entertainment.

The next year he transferred his court to Song-do which became the permanent capital. There he built his palace and also the large merchants’ houses and shops in the center of the city. This latter act was in accordance with the ancient custom of granting a monopoly of certain kinds of trade and rising the merchants as a source of revenue when a sudden need for money arose. He divided the city into five wards and established seven military stations. He also established a secondary capital at Ch’ul-wun, the present Ch’un-ch’un, and called it Tong-ju. The pagodas and Buddhas in both the capitals were regilded and put in good order. The people looked with some suspicion upon these Buddhistic tendencies but he told them that the old customs must not be changed too rapidly, for the kingdom had need of the help of the spirits in order to become thoroughly established, and that when that was accomplished they could abandon the religion as soon as they pleased. Here was his grand mistake. He riveted upon the state a baneful influence which was destined to drag it into the mire and eventually bring it to ruin.

In 920 Sil-la first recognised Koryu as a kingdom [page 375] and sent an envoy with presents to the court at Song-do.

Wang-gon looked out for the interests of the people in the distant parts of the country as well as for those near the capital. In order to break the force of the attacks of the wild people beyond the Tu-man River he built a wall across the northern border of Ham-gyung Province. It is said to have been 900 li long. But there was a still stronger enemy on the south. Kyun-whun had by this time come to see that he had no hope of overcoming the young kingdom of Koryu and so he bent his energies to the securing of his position against the danger of interferance, especially in his plans against Sil-la. For this reason he sent a messenger to Song-do with presents and tried to make friends with his old time enemy. His next move was to attack Sil-la. Wang-gon took up the cudgels in support of the king of Sil-la and by so doing secured the lasting enmity of the bandit who from this time determined upon war without quarter against his northern enemy. Wang-gon said to the Sil-la envoys, “Sil-la has three treasures; the nine storey pagoda, the Buddha six times the height of a man, and the jade belt. As long as these three remain intact Sil-la will stand. The first two are in Sil4a. Where is the jade belt?” The envoy answered that he did not know, whereupon Wang-gon blamed him sharply and sent him home. When Sil-la finally fell, the jade belt passed into the hands of Wang-gon.

In 921 the Mal-gal tribe, Heuk-su, made a treaty with Wang-gon. This bears evidence to the rapidly growing power of the young king. The Heuk-su Mal-gal were the most feared of all the semi-savage tribes of the north. The following year the Ku-ran, usually called Kitan in Chinese histories, followed the example of the Heuk-su people by sending an envoy with presents. It was not till 923 that Wang-gon thought fit to send an envoy to China to offer his compliments.

When the last king of Sil-la, but one, ascended the throne in 924 important events were following thick and fast upon each other. Sil-la was now so weak that the records say the king had nothing left but his genealogy. Kyun-whun sent a force to begin operations against Koryu, but without success, and in the following year Wang-gon retaliated with such good success that Kyun-whun was fain to send his son to Song-do as a hostage. He thus bound himself to keep the [page 376] peace. Having done this he sent to China desiring to secure backing against Koryu, The Emperor so far complied as to confer upon him the title of King of Pak-je, thus following the time-honored policy of pitting one power against another.

The year 926 saw the first envoy come from the kingdom of T’am-na on the island of Quelpart. He arrived at the capital of Koryu, where he was well received. The fame of Wang-gon was spreading far and wide among the northern tribes. The Ku-ran, or Kitan tribe, having overcome the Pal-ha tribe, made overtures to Wang-gon relative to annexation. These advances were cordially responded to but we are not informed that the union was actually effected.

Kyun-whun, who was at this time on the island Chul-yong-do, sent a present of horses to Wang-gon but a few days later he found a book of prophecy which said that in the year when he should send a gift of horses to Song-do his power would come to an end. He therefore sent a swift messenger begging Wang-gon to return the gift. The King laughed long and loud when he saw this message and good-naturedly sent back the horses.

The last King of Sil-la, Kyung-sun, ascended the throne in 927. It happened on this wise; Kyun-whun was keeping up a double fight, one against Wang-gon and the other, an offensive one, against Sil-la. He was badly defeated in an engagement with Koryu forces but had good success in his other venture. He burned and pillaged right up to the gates of Sil-la’s capital, and, while a Sil-la envoy was posting to Song-do to ask for aid, entered the city with a picked band of men. Succor in the shape of 10,000 Koryu troops was on its way but came too late. At the hour when Kyun-whun entered the city the king, his son, the queen and many of the courtiers were feasting at Po-suk summer-house. When the unwelcome news arrived, there was no time for preparation. The icing and queen fled south without attendants. The palace women were seized and the palace occupied. The king was soon run to earth and was compelled to commit suicide. Kyun-whun ravished the queen and delivered over the palace women to the soldiery. The palace was looted and the entire band, sated with excess and debauchery, and loaded down [page 377] with the treasures of the palace, started, back on the home ward road. But not until Kyun-whun had appointed a relative of the murdered king to succeed him.

When Wang-gon beard of these atrocities, he hastened forward his troops and overtook the army of Kyun-whun in O-dong forest where a sharp engagement ensued. For some reason, whether it be because the soldiers of Kyun-whun were more familiar with the locality or because the Koryu soldiers were exhausted by their long forced march, the assault was unsuccessful and the Koryu forces withdrew. This was doubly unfortunate for it not only did not punish the ruffians for their atrocities at the Sil-la capital but it inspired them with confidence in their own power. Shortly after this Kyun-whun sent a letter to Wang-gon saying, “I became Sil-la’s enemy because she sought aid from you. You have no cause for warring against me. It is like a dog chasing a rabbit; both are tired out to no purpose. It is like a king-fisher trying to catch a clam; when he thrusts his bill into the shell the clam closes it and he finds himself caught”. To this epistle Wang-gon replied, “Your actions at the Sil-la capital are so outrageous that I cannot endure the thought of any compromise. Your present course will lead you to speedy ruin”.

Elated over His successful repulse of Wang-gon’s army, Kyun-whun took the field the following’ year, with a strong force, and was prepared to assume the offensive. He assaulted and took two Koryu fortresses and even, at one time, surrounded Wang-gon in Ch’ung-ju and caused him no little anxiety. In the battle which followed Kyun-whun lost three hundred men and was pushed back, thus freeing the king from an embarrassing position; but before the campaign was over Kyun-whun scored another victory by capturing the district of Ok-ch’un. In his next campaign he was still successful, and Eui Fortress fell into his hands and he killed the general in charge. Here his successes ended, for Wang-gon awoke to the necessity of using strong measures against him. The following year Koryu forces inflicted a crushing defeat upon the southern leader, at An-dong. The fight had lasted all day and neither side had gained any advantage, but that night a picked band of Koryu men ascended Hog’s Head Mountain and made a rush down upon the unsuspect- [page 378] ing camp of the enemy, causing a panic and a stampede in which eight thousand men were killed. Kyun-whun himself sought safety in flight. This seemed conclusive and all the countryside sent in their allegiance to the victors. A hundred and ten districts in eastern Korea came over to Wang-gon in a body. Dagelet Island, or Ul-leung as the Koreans call it, sent presents to Koryu.

The next year after these stirring events, namely 931, Wang-gon made a visit to Sil-la taking with him an escort of only fifty soldiers. The king of Sil-la came out to meet him and they feasted there at the meeting-place together. The king of Sil-la lamented the smallness and weakness of his kingdom and deplored the ravages of Kyun-whun. The evils, he said, were beyond estimation; and he broke down and wept. The courtiers did the same and even Wang-gon could scarce restrain his tears- After tins they had a friendly talk and the king of Koryu remained as a guest for some twenty days. As he left the capital of Sil-la the people vied with each other in doing him honor. Poor old Sil-la had gone out of fashion and the minds of all men were turned Koryu-ward. Wang-gon had a strong predilection for P’yung-yang, the ancient capital of the country. He had already established a school there with professorships of literature, medicine and incantation. He now in 932 conceived the project of moving his capital northward to that place. To this end he erected barracks there for his troops and was making other preparations for the change, when he was dissuaded from it by some evil omens. A great wind blew down some of the houses in P’yung-yang and, so the story goes, a hen became a cock. These portents made it impossible to carry out the plan. It was about this time that he built a guest-house outside the walls of Song-do to be used as a reception hall for envoys and messengers from the wild tribes of the north. Suspicion as to the object of their coming may have made it seem undesirable to allow them to enter the city proper, or it may have been simply to impress them with the importance of the place.

Kyun-whun’s right hand man came and swore allegiance even though, at the time, his two sons and his daughter were hostages in the hands of his former master. When Kyun-whun heard of it he burned the first son alive and would have [page 379] treated the second son and the daughter in like manner had they not effected their escape to a retreat where they lay in hiding till his death. This desertion seems to have roused the old man’s ire, and he longed for the din of battle once more. He could still command a considerable force; so he entered upon another campaign and as usual was at first successful. He seized three districts in the east country and set fire to a large number of towns. It was not until the next year that Wang-gon sent an expedition against him. This was under the command of Gen- Yu Gon-p’il, whom the king had banished but had pardoned and recalled because of his lively efforts while in exile to raise a company of soldiers. He never seemed to know when he was beaten. He routed the forces of Kyun-whun and returned in triumph to Song-do, where he was hailed as the savior of the people. We may judge from this that Kyun-whun was still considered formidable. In another fight Gen. Yu captured seven of Kyun-whun’s captains and one of his sons as well.

As things seemed quiet now, the king made a royal progress through the north and west, helping the poor, inspecting fortresses, supplanting unpopular prefects; but when he got back he found his old enemy still active, and at Un-ju he bad his last great fight with him. In this struggle three thousand of the enemy were killed and thirty-two fortresses were taken. The year 935 A. D. is another mile-stone in Korean history. It marks the end of a dynasty which lacked but eight years of completing a millennium. But we must relate the events of the year in order. Kyun-whun had many concubines and more than ten sons. Of the latter the fourth named Keum-gang, was the one he loved the best, a boy of robust body and great intelligence. The old man passed by his other sons and named this one as his successor. This of course made trouble at once. The first son, Sin-geum, led a conspiracy and the old gentleman was seized and imprisoned in Keum-san monastery, the young Keum-gang was put to death and Sin-geum ascended the insecure throne of his father, now doubly insecure, since it had lost the masterly genius which of late years had been its only support. But old Kyun-whun had not played his last card. After three months imprisonment he succeeded in getting his guards drunk (jolly [page 380] monks those) and escaped to Ka-ju from which point he had the colossal impudence to send a letter to Wang-gon surrendering and asking for asylum in Koryu against his own son. It was granted and soon a ship of war arrived with a high official on board to escort the grey old wolf of the south to the Koryu capital, where he was received as a guest, given a comfortable house and plenty of servants and the revenues of Yang-ju prefecture. From that point we may believe that he waited patiently to see the overthrow of his sons.

But these are small events compared with what followed. The king of Sil-la determined to abdicate and hand over the remnant of his kingdom to Wang-gon. When he broached 그 the matter to his officials no man raised his voice. They could not assent and they knew there was no use in demurring. The crown prince urged his father to submit the question to the people and to abide by their decision, but the king was determined and so sent a letter to Song-do offering to lay his scepter at the feet of Wang-gon. The crown prince was in despair, refused to see his father, retired to a mountain retreat and ate coarse food as a token of his grief. He died there of chagrin and sorrow.

Wang-gon answered by sending one of the highest officials to escort the ex-king to Song-do. The royal procession was ten miles long, as it slowly wound its way out of the deserted city amidst the clamorous grief of the people. Wang-gon met him in person at the gate of Song-do. He did not want the ex-king to bow to him but the courtiers had decided that as the country could have but one king this must be done. So the new arrival did obeisance. Wang-gon gave him his daughter to wife and made him prime minister, set aside the revenues of an entire district to his use and conferred high rank upon the Sil-la courtiers.

 And so ended the ancient kingdom of Sil-la which had existed for 992 years, from 57 B. C. to 935 A. D. Her line of kings included fifty-six names, which gives an average of about eighteen years to each reign. From that day the capital of Sil-la was called simply by the name Kyong-ju. We believe that history shows few instances of greater generosity, forbearance, delicacy and tact than are shadowed forth in the life of this same Wang-gon. Does history show a nobler act [page 381] than that of providing a comfortable home where his old enemy Kyun-whun might spend his last days in comfort and ease? Does it show more delicacy than was shown by Wang-gon when he took every means to cover the chagrin of the retiring king of Sil-la by treating him as a royal guest?

**Chapter II.**

Kyun-whun’s sons defeated.... Buddhist teachers from China.... The Emperor recognizes Koryu.... Wang-gon refuses to treat with the Kitans.... makes ten rules.... king marries his sister.... plot detected.... practical Shogunate.... Buddhism flourishes.... P’yung-yang.... Chinamen take office in Koryu.... slavery.... examinations.... Chinese favored.... official garments.... incapable king.... retrogression.... reform.... Confucianism.... Kitan growing.... bureau of history reorganized.... equilibrium between Confucianism and Buddhism.... Uk is banished.... quarrel with Kitan.... concession.... dispute.... China refuses aid.... the provinces.... the “Emperor’’ of Kitan gives the king investiture.... first coinage.... reforms.... conspiracy crushed.

Before leaving the kingdom of Sil-la to be swallowed up in antiquity we must notice a few corollaries. We will notice that Sil-la was the first power to gain the control of the whole peninsula. It was the language of Sil-la that became at least the official language of the entire country. The yi-t’u, or system of diacritical marks; tended to stereotype the agglutinative endings, so that we find to-day the general characteristics running through the grammar of Korean are those which characterized the language of ancient Sil-la. This fact, clearly grasped, goes a long way toward opening a way for the solution of the question of the origin of the language.

As the year 936 opens we see king Wang-gon with his two former rivals, the peaceful one and the warlike one, gathered under his wing, and the only cloud upon his horizon the attitude of Kyun-whun’s sons in the south. This was soon settled. The king in company with Kyun-whun, at the [page 382] head of an army of 87,000 men, marched southward and engaged the pitiable force that was all the malcontents could now muster. When they saw this tremendous army approaching and knew that Kyun-whun was there in person, surrender was immediate. Wang-gon’s first demand was “where is Sin-geum?” He was told that he was in a fortress in the mountains with a small force and was prepared to fight to a finish. He was there attacked and 3,200 men were taken and 5,700 killed, which shows now desperate the battle was, Sin-geum and his two brothers were captured. The two other sons of Kyun-whun were executed, because they had driven their father away, but Sin-geum in some way showed that he had not been a principal actor in that disgraceful scene and so escaped what we may well believe was merited punishment. There on the field the old man Kyun-whun died. It is said that his death was caused by chagrin that Sin-geum was not killed with his brothers.

It was in 938 that Wang-gon went outside the walls of the capital to meet a celebrated monk named Hone-bum, who had come originally from Ch’un-ch’uk monastery in the land of Su-yuk.

All this time interesting reforms were in progress. The names of all the prefectures throughout the country were changed. This has always been customary in Korea with a change of dynasty. The next year, 939, the new king of Koryu was formally recognized by the Emperor who sent and invested him with the insignia of royalty. The crown prince of T’am-na, on Quelpart, came and did obeisance at the court of Koryu. A redistribution of the farming lands throughout, the country was effected, by which, the records say, the worthy received more while others received less. It would be interesting to know in what way the test of worthiness was applied.

In 942 the Kitan power in the north tried to make friendly advances and sent a present of thirty camels. But Wang-gon remembered the way in which Kitan had feigned friendship for Pal-ha and then treacherously seized her; and for this reason he showed his opinion of Kitan now by banishing the thirty men and tying the thirty camels to Man-bu bridge and starving them to death. [page 383]

King Wang-gon was now sixty-five years old. His life had been an active one; first as a warrior and then as the administrator of the kingdom which he had founded. Feeling that his end was approaching, he set himself to the task of formulating rules for his successor. As a result he placed in the hands of his son and heir ten rules which read as follows:

(1)Buddhism is the state religion.

(2)Build no more monasteries.

(3) If the first son is bad let the second or some other become king.

(4)Do not make friends with Kitan.

(5)Do honor to P’yung-yang, the ancient capital.

(6)Establish an annual Buddhist festival.

(7)Listen to good men and banish bad ones.

(8)As the south is disaffected towards us do not marry from among the people of that section.

(9)Look after the interests of the army.

(10)Be always ready for emergencies.

After urging his son to lock all these precepts in his heart the aged king turned to the wall and died. These ten laws are typical of the man. They inculcated reverence for the best religion that had come under his notice, but in the same breath forbade the disproportionate growth of priest-craft, for he had seen what a seductive influence lay hidden within the arcana of this most mystical of all heathen cults. He advised temperance in religion. He forbade the throning of a man simply because he was the king’s firstborn. By so doing he really proclaimed that the king was for the people and not the people for the king. He hated treachery and forbade making alliances with the forsworn. He believed in doing honor to the best of the old traditions and ordered that the ancient city of P’yung-yang be remembered. He believed in loving his friends and hating his enemies and forbade descendants taking a wife from among the people of the south who had so desperately supported the claims of Kyun-whun, the one-time bandit. He was a military man and believed in having a strong army and in treating it in such a way as to insure its perfect loyalty. It was in the last injunction, however, that he struck the key-note of his character. Be for emergencies. Reading his character in the light of his ac- [page 384] tions we can well imagine one more precept that would have been characteristic of him; namely, that it is better to make a friend of an honest enemy than to kill him. And so in the year 942 the great general, reformer, king and administrator was laid to his fathers and his son Mu reigned in his stead. The latter’s posthumous title is Hye-jong.

The reign of this second king of Koryu starts with the statement that the king gave his own sister to his brother for a wife. It was one of the peculiar institutions of the dynasty that whenever possible the king married his own sister. In this instance he gave his sister to his brother, but the king had probably already married another of his sisters. This custom, which has prevailed in other countries besides Korea, notably in ancient Egypt, rests upon the assumption that by marrying one’s own sister more of royalty is preserved in the family and the line is kept purer, the royal blood not being mixed with any of baser quality. We are told that, in order to make it seem less offensive, the sister, upon marrying her brother, took her mother’s family name. This shows that the custom was looked down upon, else this device would not have been resorted to. We find also that the kings of Koryu were accustomed to have more than one real wife, contrary to the custom of the present dynasty. We read that this king, who had none of the elements of his father’s greatness, took as His sixteenth wife the daughter of one Wang-gyu and by her had a son. Through her influence Wang-gyu had risen to the position of prime minister and it was his ambition to see his daughter’s son ascend the throne. It had been the king’s plan to give the throne to his brother Yo and the prime minister began by plotting against the life of this possible successor. The king learned of this and frustrated it by immediately abdicating in favor of his brother. Wang-gyu seems to have possessed considerable power independently of the king for we learn that he not only was not punished but that he continued to plot against Yo even after he had assumed the reins of power. An assassin whom he had hired to kill the king was himself killed by the king while attempting to carry out the deed. When the king fell ill he was advised to move secretly to another palace for safety.