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# A Point of Ethics.

Chai Che-gong belonged to the noble army of literati martyrs. By this we mean that he spent all his time wrestling with the problems of Confucian lore and let his wife look out for his support. Perhaps it was she who belonged to the martyr army rather than he. At any rate the family fell into the lower depths of poverty. Fortunately for them, however, they lived in those good old days when letters were in some sense their own reward, for a hard-working merchant next door, named Kim, came to their relief and drew them out of the depths, or at least held them on the brink without letting them fall completely in. During the years that passed the needy family leaned more and more heavily upon him until at last his resources were exhausted and he too joined them in the procession.

But as fortune would have it, the literary gentleman was suddenly raised to comparative affluence by receiving a government appointment. His rise was rapid and before long his knowledge of the Chinese Classics placed him in the governor’s chair in the northern capital, Pyengyang. Under these circumstances it was but natural that the impoverished merchant should follow in his wake like a sea-gull behind a steamship, to pick up such scraps as his generosity might drop. And besides this he may have felt, though he would never breathe it to a soul, that the governor owed him a little consideration.

 [page 2] The governor picked up the thread of life in the provincial capital as if he were “to the manner born” as indeed he was, though long time banished from its more favored precincts. Kim the merchant knew his place and only by his constant attendance impinged upon the consciousness of the governor. The latter gave him a small commission now and again which sufficed to support him and give him hope for something better.

 At last his great opportunity came, the “tide which taken at the flood--.” The son of a wealthy gentleman in the far north, while in his cups, committed manslaughter and was lodged in prison at Pyeng-yang awaiting judgment. The young man’s father hastened up to the city determined to find some flaw in the governor’s mask of rectitude through which he might strike him with a bribe. It was through Kim the merchant that the attack was made but it was quite unavailing. The governor would listen to no words of entreaty even uttered to the accompaniment of rippling silver. The gentleman offered a million cash. He might as well have thrown it at a stone wall. He offered five million but he might as well have tried to dam the Tadong with his cash. The governor was ice and naught would thaw him.

 As a last desperate move the felon’s father placed in the hands of the merchant ten bundles of mountain ginseng which represented a fabulous sum, and begged him to present it to the governor with his humble compliments. The merchant took the costly gift, summoned every last remaining shred of his assurance and entered the presence of the governor. On his knees he pleaded for the condemned man and deposited the ginseng on the floor. The governor eyed it suspiciously.

“What is that stuff?”

“It is only a poor little tribute to your goodness and clemency vouchsafed by the hand of the erring man’s father. It is only ten pounds of mountain ginseng that he begs you to accept.” He said it in great humility but there was a latent gleam in his eye which proclaimed the incredible value of the gift. But the eye of the governor never gleamed. He was far above the reach of riches.

[page 3] He glanced scornfully at the treasure, waved his hand toward a closet beside him and said in the coldest of tones :

“Put the stuff on that shelf and leave me. I will show these people what it is to tamper with my honesty!’’ The trembling man obeyed and slunk from the room. He had taken the tide at its flood and it had overwhelmed him. Doubtless the governor would keep the bribe and kill the offender as well. All was lost. He told the anguished parent and together they waited for the dreadful end of the tragedy.

Early the next morning there was an unusual stir in the governor’s palace. Bugles were sounding and excited messengers were hurrying in and out. Something was about to happen. At ten o’clock a herald announced that the people should congregate in the great open space inside the outer wall of the palace. They came from all directions bent upon curiosity to see what the governor had to say. At the appropriate moment the governor apppeared, clad in his robes of office and supported on each side by a full retinue of officials and retainers. The place was crowded to suffocation but the guards kept a space clear in the center of the court full forty feet square.

The governor spoke a quiet word and a herald cried: “Bring forth the condemned criminal.” Ah! it was a killing they had been sent for, to witness. They almost trod on each other to get a better view. The wretch, was brought out, his arms bound with a cord and his face already grey with the certainty of approaching death. The father, bowed with grief, stood behind him on the edge of the crowd. The governor spoke another word to his attendants, and the herald cried:

“Dig a hole in the ground the depth of a man’s stature.” A muffled “Oh” ran through the crowd. The man was to be buried alive! Quick hands dug the hole. The prisoner writhed and the father wrung his ineffectual hands.

“Fill it half full of burning charcoal.” What! was the man to be burned to death? Horrible! — but interesting. The father, now on his knees, rocked back and forth in an [page 4] agony of apprehension. The son looked on in dumb fear which gripped him too tight for speech.

The burning charcoal sent up its noxious fumes to the nostrils of the crowd and they smelt death in air. The governor stepped forward.

“Before you stands a condemned criminal who merits death. Yesterday at this hour a monstrous bribe was offered me. Shall I accept it or not? Shall I stain the ermine of my office? Nay verily! Bring forth the bribe.” A servant came bearing the ten bundles in his arms.

“Cast them into the fire — first.” Down they fell into the lurid flames of the pit. The governor pointed to the fire.

“That is mountain ginseng!” At this word the people stood dumb for a moment but as the monstrous truth opened upon them that a kingdom’s ransom was feeding that flame to save the honor of their governor the matchless rectitude of the man elicited a roar of approbation that startled the bullock drivers far out on the country-roads.

The smoke of the burning went up to the heavens and a strange sweet odor floated through the palace and over the heads of the wondering crowd. They drew long draughts of it, as one would fasten eyes upon the face of a departing friend, never to be seen again. But the offering was only half complete; the victim was yet to be immolated. The crowd bent eagerly forward to see the final act. The governor raised his hand.

“Such be the fate of all bribes! But be it known that, though I cannot be touched with perishable wealth, I can be touched by pity. Behold the stricken father whose last remaining hope I might crush to the earth. But mercy cries to me with louder voice than vengeance. Cut the prisoner’s bands and let him go!”

The prisoner fell forward to the earth, overcome by the sudden weight of joy; the father still on his knees opened wide his arms and stared about him as if he could not believe the cruel dream. The people, thrilled to ecstasy by this crowning act of greatness gazed at one another in amazement. And then another shout went up, which dwarfed the first one to a whisper and made [page 5] the age-old walls of Pyeng-yang think the Im-jin year had come again when the beleaguered hordes of Hideyoshi manned them against their double foe.

The crowd pressed forward, some to cast themselves with tears of joy before their over-lord while others raised the reviving prisoner on exulting hands and bore him like a paladin forth from the presence of the governor.

But Kim the merchant wended his way sadly homeward. It was all well enough to exhibit these high qualities. They were very pretty but they helped him not a whit to rice and kimchi. Just to think of it, a princely fortune swallowed in the flames just to satisfy a whim; it was monstrous! The more he thought about it the less reconciled he became and after a restless night he arose with a hard resolve in his face. He would give that governor a piece of his mind and then leave the ungrateful man forever.

When he found himself in the governor’s presence he was a little ashamed of his mission but he lashed himself by the memory of his wrongs, and began to upbraid the official for having forgotten the days when he, Kim the merchant, spent his money unsparingly to help the indigent scholar. When he stopped for breath the governor shrugged his shoulders and smiled at him. This fanned his anger to the flaming point.

“Yes all this and more I have borne for you and you turn from me in your day of fortune! What of your boasted mercy in sparing that felon yesterday? You have showed no mercy to me who deserved every thing at your hands. I will leave the place with my curse and shake the dust of this city off my feet.”

“Yes, Kim, I think you had better go home now,” said the governor in a quiet tone.

The merchant turned and quitted the room with a muttered curse between his lips. He packed up his small belogings and fared southward on foot toward his home in Seoul. On the way he was taken ill and it was five months before he reached home.

So it was that, foot-sore, ragged and weary he dragged himself into the capital and drew near his home. [page 6] Here was the street and here the lane that led to his door but there was a great change. The entrance had been widened, and instead of his little door there stood a great gate. Someone had seized his house and torn it down. He stood for a moment dazed by this new misfortune but at that moment, who should emerge from the gate but his own son clad in costly silken raiment. When the boy saw his father he rushed to him and cried.

“Why, father, what does this mean? You are ragged and foot-sore. Is it possible that you have come home on foot?” The father answered in turn : —

“And what does all *this* mean, my son? Who has torn down my house to build this palatial residence and how come you to be clad in this silken garb?’’

“Why father, don’t you know? The governor of Pyeng-yang sent us down *ten packages of mountain ginseng* and all this cost only one of them. The other nine are still intact and we have—”

“Wh-h-what! what!!”

And just here the point of ethics obtrudes itself and leaves us wondering whether, taking it all in all, the governor was justified in his action or not. Sure it is that to this day that governor’s memory is redolent with the perfume of the ginseng which he did not bum.

# The Late Queen Dowager,

The late Queen Dowager whose death occurred on the 2nd of January 1904 was the second queen of King Honjong the twenty-sixth of this dynasty who ruled from 1835 till 1850. His first queen died in 1843 and he married the second in 1844. She was the daughter of Hon Cha-yong who after the elevaticm to the royalty was made Prince Pu-wim. She was bom in Chulla Province, district of Ham-yul, in 1831; so it appears that she was thirteen years old when she became Queen of Korea. The King her [page 7] husband died in 1849 when she was only eighteen. No children had been born to them. The new king, known by his posthumous title of Ch’ul-jong, was nineteen years old when he ascended the throne and his wife, of course, became queen and the former queen, who is the subject of this sketch, became Queen Dowager. At the same time there were two other Dowagers still living, in the persons of the queen of King Sun-jo (1801-1834) and the queen of King Ik-chong who reigned only a few months in 1834 after the death of his father, King Sun-jo. These three Dowagers are known as (1) Queen Dowager Kim who died in 1857 (2) Queen Dowager Cho who died in 1890 and Queen Dowager Hong who died this month. Later there was another Queen Dowager Kim the widow of King Ch’ul-jong (1850-1863) who died in 1878.

In 1897 the Queen Dowager Hong received the title Myung-hon Ta-hu (明憲太后). This was upon the occasion of the elevation of His Majesty to imperial rank. She died in her seventy -third year. Next summer would have been the sixtieth anniversary of her marriage. The great cycle of sixty years would have been completed and a grand celebration would have been held. In the eyes of the Koreans she was greatly to be pitied for three things, first because she was left a widow at such an early age, second that she was childless, and third because she just missed seeing this sixtieth anniversary of her wedding.

 She was a woman of great common sense, in that she never interfered in politics nor became the tool of sorceresses and fortune-tellers. During her long and lonely life she lived quietly through all the alarms that were sounded about her. It was always necessary that she live in the palace where the king resided and there must have been many an anxious day. But she was possessed of great self control and equipoise and none of these things moved her. She died of sheer old age and will probably be buried outside the Northeast gate of Seoul, perhaps beside her husband King Hon-jong, whose body lies at Yang-ju.

 On the 5th the body was removed from the palace to the Heung-duk-jun, behind the British Legation. On the seventh all the officials donned the mourning garb consisting [page 8] of a white head-band, white shoes and linen clothes. The Emperor himself dressed in mourning and will continue to wear it for five months. The officials and people will wear it one year but the surviving concubine of King Hon-jong, the palace women who attended the deceased, the grave keepers and a few others will wear mourning three years. All the female relatives of the Emperor and of the deceased and all the wives of the high officials will wear half mourning for 100 days. A family conclave including all the nearer male relatives of the Emperor and of the deceased was held soon after the death. This is called the Chong-ch’uk Chip-sa. It is their duty to consult about funeral ceremonies in conjunction with other officials specially appointed for the purpose. Among the members of this conclave are such well-known men as Yi Seung-ong, Yi Cha-geuk, Yi Cha-sun, Yi Chi-yong, Hong Sun-hyang and others. Then there is the Ch’ong-ho-sa or Master of the Funeral Ceremonies who has supreme charge of the obsequies. This duty devolves upon Yun Yong-sun, lately Prime Minister. Under him are three Kuk-chang To-gam Tang-sang or Chiefs of the Imperial Burial Bureau. These are Yi Chong-no, Yun Yong-gu and Sung Keui-un. Besides these there are the three San-neung To-gam Tang-sang or Chiefs of the Imperial Tomb. These are Pak Chong-yang, Yi Kun-ho and Kim Se-keui. Three officials, called Pin-jon To-gam Tang-sang or Chiefs of the Temporary Mausoleum, are Hong Sun-hyang, Kim Chonghan and Cho Chong-heui. The Chief of the Tomb-keeping Bureau is Prince Yi Cha-sung. The Commissioner of Posthumous Titles is Kim Pyong-guk, with Min Yung-so as his assistant. Min Pyung-suk is appointed Commissioner of Eulogy and Inscription, with Cho Chung-heui as assistant. Sim Sun-tak is the Commissioner of Obituary, with Cho Pyong-sik as assistant. The Commissioner for burying the tablet before the grave of the Queen Dowager is Cho Pyung-se, with Min Yong-whan as assistant. The Comissioner on Biography is Kim Hak-chin with Yi Chageuk as assistant. Another official is appointed to write the inscription in the tomb. After the casket is deposited in the ground it is covered with earth nearly to the general [page 9] surface of the ground but the last few inches are filled in with lime plaster. When still but partially dry this official writes upon the plaster, with dry charcoal dust, the inscription telling the name, office, age and condition of the deceased and in which direction the head lies. When this is done the whole is covered by the great circular mound. The official appointed to this duty is Yi Keunmyung the present Prime Minister, with Yi Sun-ik as assistant and Hong Sun-hyung and Kim Chong-han as scribes.

The funeral ceremony will take place in May and the entire cost is estimated at $650,000.

# Korean Relations with Japan.

Continuing the description of the Trading Station at Fusan we read that within the wall of the enclosure there was a fire signal station set in a conspicuous place so that it could be seen from every direction and by it news was flashed from mountain top to mountain top all over the country.

There was also a great banquet house of thirty-five kan and a guest house of twenty-eight kan. These two were united, and had a great gate of three kan, a middle gate of a kan and a half and an apron wall inside it. There was a store house for charcoal of ten kan and there was a guest reception hall. In the very center of the enclosure was a council house of forty -four kan and on each side, like wings, were extensions of two kan each.In this building were rooms for a teacher whose business it was to instruct new comers as to the proper etiquette to be observed in the various functions, and there were inner rooms of eight kan for any women, wives of Korean officials who might be there. Besides these there were apartments for interpreters and rooms for examination of goods to or from Japan.

It was in 1679 that these buildings were all erected by Japanese workmen from Tsushima but at Korean expense. [page 10] They were two years in building them. The total cost was 9,000 bags of rice and silver 6,000 ounces. As this station was built close to the sea it was supposed that the houses would deteriorate rapidly, so workmen were permanently stationed there to effect repairs. As soon as the houses were built they were destroyed by fire. This occurred in 1680, but in 1684 the work was again begun and was finished in 1690. Repairs were effected in 1700. From that time on repairs were made from time to time until 1874 when, in the first year of the present ruler, the buildings were repaired for the last time.

SALARIES OF PERMANENT OFFICIALS AT THE TRADING POST.

The two men who acted as masters of ceremonies at all official functions received a monthly salary of one bag and nine pecks of rice, twelve pecks of beans and two pieces of cotton cloth. Besides this, between the third and eighth moons, they received extra for tiffin at noon. These were the highest permanent officials on the post. Next came the secretaries who received one bag of rice and six pecks of beans. The three gate-keepers each received ten pecks of rice and two pieces of linen. The thirty cadets, some of whom acted as interpreters, received each six pecks of rice a month. The man who had charge of the guest house received six pecks of rice. The four messengers received each six pecks of rice. The two grooms received between the third and eighth moon three pieces of cotton cloth or in lieu of this 450 cash. During the rest of the year they received one piece of cotton or 150 cash. The master of the gate keepers received his pay in linen cloth. The men who furnished fuel received for the fuel during spring and summer 1,836 cash and during autumn and winter 2,004 cash. So the total cost of fuel for a year was only 3,840 cash.

PASSPORTS.

Every man who wished to enter the Station had to be provided with a wooden tag on one side of which was [page 11] written the characters \*\*\*\* and on the the other the date and the seal of the envoy who was temporarily in charge. This seal was burned into the wood.

SEATING AT BANQUETS.

Upon the arrival of a Japanese envoy there was first the tea drinking ceremony. At this the Korean commissioner sat facing the south and opposite him the Japanese envoy facing the north while between them on either side were two lines of Koreans and Japanese the former facing the east and the latter the west.

At the banquets which followed this order was reversed, the Korean commissioner facing the west and the Japanese the east.

RECEIVING THE GIFTS.

Upon the arrival of the Japanese envoy the presents which he brought to the Korean Government were carefully examined by the Korean officials, wrapped carefully in paper and placed together in the center of the examination house. Then the Japanese envoy and the Korean commissioner came in their court dress and, standing on either side of the pile of gifts, bowed ceremoniously as if in the presence of royalty. The same ceremony was gone through when the gifts from the Korean Government were to be shipped to Japan.

THE RECEPTION CEREMONY.

When the Japanese envoy disembarked he was ushered into the enclosure of the Trading Station by way of the west gate and took his stand facing the east. The Commissioner sent from Seoul to meet him stood facing the south. The Korean master of ceremonies stood with the envoy. The prefect of Tongna stood with the commission. On the south side stood a servant who burned incense. On the east and west were placed red umbrellas. On either side stood Korean boys who chanted in the Japanese language. Then the Envoy and the Commissioner [page 12] both of whom were in court dress bowed ceremoniously to each other four times. They went into the reception hall and had a feast, where there were flowers, music and dancing. First they pledged each other in nine cups of wine in a solemn manner beginning with the Envoy and going down through the different ranks of Japanese and Koreans. Young Korean boys acted as waiters.

The ceremony of receiving the gifts was as follows. The Korean officials clad in white linen court robes with long flowing sleeves entered from the east and took their places on the north side of the apartment. The Japanese were stationed on the south side and the gifts were placed between the two parties. Candles made of bean oil and beeswax were lighted and incense was burned. Then both parties bowed before the gifts. Japanese interpreters were introduced and through them the ceremonial greetings were expressed.

There also was the ceremony of the exchange of perfumes. A special day was selected from the calendar, that would be most auspicious and on that day the Japanese brought out their perfume and the Koreans brought theirs and a ceremonious exchange was made with many genuflections and mutual compliments.

In cases where the Japanese Envoys could not come to Seoul there was a sort of mock audience arranged at the port, which resembled a real one except, of course, that the King was not present. The governor of the province personated the King at such functions. The Japanese presented such memorials as they had prepared, offered their congratulations and went through the regular forms of an audience. Cheers were given as now with the “Man-se, man-se’’ or the “Ch’un-se, Ch’un-se.’’ The Japanese wore dark clothes but at these functions they wore white badges of some kind to distinguish them.

If the ceremony happened to be at the time when a King had died there was the additional ceremony of the changing of the fo-su or seal which the Daimyo of Tsushima held from the Korean Government. This was prepared in Seoul. It was a brass seal with the name [page 13] Tsushima written on the side. It was inclosed in a bees box, wrapped in cotton and carried to Fusan to give the Envoy.

# Retrospect of 1903.

The past year has been full of important events for Korea. We cannot say that it has been a year of progress but it has seen a steady movement toward an in-, evitable end and as the year opens there is every sign that a crisis in the history of the country has arrived.

In January Yi Yong-ik, who had gone to Port Arthur, returned to Korea without successful opposition. Whether this was for his country’s good remains to be seen, but at any rate it has exercised a tremendous influence over the course of events during the past year, whether for good or ill. As soon as he returned he ordered a large invoice of rice from Annam and by so doing probably prevented a great deal of suffering in the capital. This, among the common people, is his one redeeming act. At about this time Yi Keun-tak began cultivating the good graces of Yi Yong-ik and with such good success that in the latter months of the year he gave promise of superseding his master. These two men dominated the situation and there can be no doubt whatever that the condition in which the country now finds itself is directly due to the policy of this duumvirate. That policy is illustrated by two significant acts which were at least attempted in January. The first was the attempt of Yi Keun-tak to have Mr. Waeber appointed to an important post as adviser to the Korean Government but it was foiled, so report has it, by the opposition of the Russian Minister. Yi Yong-ik, on the other hand, added to his record as a financier by securing the foundation of The Central Bank of Seoul. This of course was in opposition to the Japanese who have always demanded that the Korean Government should have a reliable currency. Japanese trade had been suffering severely because of the deterioration of Korean currency [page 14] and the Dai Ichi Ginko had, with the consent of the Korean Government, issued a bank note to be circulated only in Korea. Yi Yong-ik was always the determined enemy of this movement which looked toward the strengthening of Japanese influence here, and the Central Bank idea which included the scheme of putting out Korean bank notes was a direct act of hostility, and yet could not be taken up by the Japanese, as it did not directly infringe upon their rights.

 In February, however, the opposition to the Japanese bank notes took form in the fatuous placards posted about the city threatening the people with all sorts of dire punishments if they dared to circulate the Japanese notes. As a piece of financiering this act hardly has its parallel in history. It was a severe blow not only at the Japanese but at the Koreans as well, who held hundreds of thousands of this money. The result was an immediate and heavy run on the Japanese Bank, the suspension of many business plans and a general upheaval in the monetary conditions. As a natural result the Japanese Government took hold of the matter with a firm hand and within a few days forced the Koreans to stultify themselves, by taking it all back, apologizing abjectly and posting notices that were diametrically opposed to the former ones. In this same month the budget for the year was published showing that the revenue amounted to about eleven millions in Korean money and the disbursements about an equal sum. This month also saw the appointment of a commissioner to proceed to Whangha Province and investigate the charges made against Roman Catholic adherents. We need not enlarge upon this subject except to say that the charges were proved and a scandalous condition of things revealed which was settled later by the condemnation of several of the leading disturbers of the peace.

March began with a rather significant event. The government subsidized the two native daily papers of Seoul, the only native dailies in the country. It also wasted some of its revenues in the purchase of a so-called man-of-war from Japanese. It later thought better of [page 15] this and tried to get out of it, but without success.

April brought another kind of difficulty. Russia had secured a concession on the Yalu for the cutting of timber. It was understood that Korea was to have one fourth of the net proceeds of the business, but in April when the Russians began to cut the timber it was found that Koreans were not supposed to take any cognizance of the work nor to watch proceedings in their own interests to find out how much timber was cut or what it brought in the market. The most valuable asset of the Korean government was thus definitely and forever lost. The same month saw a quarrel on the island of Quelpart between Japanese and Koreans which necessitated the presence of a Japanese gun-boat.

May saw a further advance of Russia in the north when her first gun-boat anchored in Yongampo. Russia obtained some sort of hold on that port and by so doing demonstrated to the Japanese more clearly than by anything else that Russia did not intend to confine her operations to Manchuria.

The month of June passed with comparative quiet except for the attempt to blow up Yi Yong-ik at the Japanese hospital in Seoul. How this was done or by whom has never transpired. An official census of the capital and suburbs gave the population as 194,100, but this is surely an under-estimate.

The rainy season of July seems to have kept everybody quiet.

August witnessed the departure of Hyun Sang-geun for Europe where he hoped to raise a loan for the Korean government and do some other impossible things. At about this same time there began a discussion as to the opening of Eui-ju to foreign trade. In September the Russians began to carry on operations at Yong-ampo which were believed to be fortifications.

October was an especially busy month. It saw an accident on the Seoul electric road which led to a miniature riot in which a Japanese shop was wrecked. The report arrived that Russian guns were being landed at Yongampo. The Japanese were employed to handle the annual ginseng [page 16] crop. The eighth passed without Russia redeeming her pledge to evacuate Manchuria. A treaty was signed between China and the United States by the terms of which Alukden and Antong were to be, or rather are to be, opened to foreign trade next October. A guard of twenty-six men came to the Russian Legation. A Belgian gentleman was appointed adviser to the household department. Mr. Hagiwara of the Japanese Legation in Seoul went to Yongampo but was refused permission to land. Russia prevented the joining of the Korean Telegraph system with the Chinese. The Home Minister was cashiered for selling offices. Exchange went down to its lowest point, one yen bringing over two and a half Korean dollars. The Seoul-Chemulpo and Seoul-Fusan Railroads were joined under the latter name.

In November occurred a serious riot in Chemulpo between Japanese and Russian sailors which threatend to make complications. The government stopped the coining of nickels. The Russians named Yongampo Port Nicholas. The Western Palace at Pyeng-yang was finished. U Pom-sun the refugee in Japan was assassinated. A riot occurred in Mokpo between Japanese and Korean coolies.

December was spent in efforts on the part of various foreign representatives to induce the Korean Government to open a port in the north. All these attempts were blocked by Russia and the new year opened with Korea firmly impaled upon the Russian horn of the dilemma.

Such are some of the most prominent events during the year 1903 in Korea and they all point one way. They have demonstrated the absolute necessity which faces Japan of showing her hand in Korea, and that in no uncertain way or of seeing her commerce ruined and all her efforts of the past three decades come to naught. We are not desirous of seeing war. Almost anything were better than that. But when two radical ideas come in opposition to each other and are not only different but radicaly incompatible there is little room for compromise. Were Russian and Japanese interests both of a commercial nature there might be some hope of a compromise. [page 17] Were they both of a merely strategic nature they might come to an understanding, but as it is there seems to be little hope of such an issue. It becomes rightminded men therefore to look at the question impartially and decide each for himself on which side right lies, if on either side exclusively, or on which side it preponderates. This suggests several questions.

(1) The success of which contention will bring the greatest good to the greatest number?

(2) The contention of which of the contestants in this threatened war is based upon the tenets of recognized international justice?

(3) What does each stand to lose in case there is no war?

(4) What does each stand to gain or lose in case of war?

(5) The success of which party will mean the most good to Korea?

(6) What has history to say as to the relative benefits that Korea has received from Japan and Russia respectively and what may be argued from the past as to the probable benefits that Korea would receive should either the one or the other withdraw from Korea?

It would be presumptuous for us to attempt to answer questions of such moment as these without having much more data than we have. Our interest in the matter is of two kinds, general and particular. We want especially to know what is best for Korea. There are those who say that in any case Korea must lose her autonomy and become a mere appendage of one of the two hostile powers, and they argue that this would be a good thing, on the ground that this country does not contain material out of which a good government can be formed. This sounds much like saying that New York cannot be well governed simply because Tammany is temporarily in power. We believe that material exists in Korea out of which could be built a fairly efficient government. It may be that outside help might be required for a short time while this material was being hunted up [page 18] and the decks cleared for action, but that it could be done we fully believe.

But there is one difficulty in the way. It would be of no use, for instance, to have half a dozen powers guarantee the independence of Korea and then leave her to her own devices. The same difficulties which now oppress her would come again. In order to have anything like order restored in Korea it is necessary that besides having her real independence declared some one or more of the powers should with her consent be appointed to give her the assistance which she needs in order to get things into proper running order. We are talking now of what Korea needs, not of what she seems to want nor what she seems likely to get in the near future.

Some think that to make Korea a buffer state would settle the difficulty yet it takes but a glance to see that Korea is not in a situation to be a buffer state, for she is essential to the plan of Japan’s commercial and industrial expansion and she is essential to the plan of Russia’s territorial aggrandizement in the Far East. If you put a piece of bread between two hungry men one of two things is going to happen; either they will divide it or else one will get the whole of it. Humiliating and unjust as this may be to Korea it is fact and must be faced. And yet this simile is not wholly applicable to the situation; for while the two hungry men want the bread for the same purpose the interests of these two powers in Korea are of an entirely different nature. As everyone knows, Japan desires to see the Korean government established on a progressive basis and to be administered in such a manner that the people shall have the greatest incentive to industry and enterprise, for in this way alone can the resources of the country be developed both for Korea’s good and Japan’s as well. The railroad which the Japanese are building from Fusan to Seoul cannot but be of enormous benefit to the Korean people in spite of the sneers of some who think that the Japanese are intending to use it as an entering wedge for the accomplishment of some purpose inimical to the interests of Korea. The attitude which the Japanese have taken toward the [page 19] matter of coinage is one that is thoroughly in the interests of Korea. Can anyone deny that the Japanese trade with Korea is a valuable thing for this country? And if so anything that tends to destroy that trade is an injury to the country. The demands for the opening of more ports to foreign trade are also in line with this same idea, the opening up of Korea’s resources.

Again, which one of the points of Japan’s policy in Korea is not in direct line with the policy of the open door? Everything she has done in regard to the currency, in regard to opening ports, in regard to the encouragement of good government is as much to the interest of British, American, German and Russian trade as it is to Japanese trade.

Such is Japan’s evident policy in Korea. As to Russia’s policy the public can not be so sure, for Russia seldom explains her policy in advance; but it is natural to suppose that the development of her vast Siberian domain would be the main point in her Eastern policy. In this great and laudable work the whole world without exception wishes her success. Every acre of arable land added to the grain producing area of the world is a distinct triumph. In the development of Siberia the great railroad that Russia has built must play an important part, nor should anyone object to seeing Russia have a commercial outlet on the Yellow Sea. As this is necessary to the development of Siberia she has a right to it; but Russia is not much interested in Korean trade nor in any object that makes for the direct advancement of the Korean people. We look in vain for any evidence of increasing prosperity in Korea due to the moral ascendency which Russia has exercised during the past three years or more. It would be difficult to explain how the present state of Korean finances and government could injure Russia in any way, while on the other hand they are a serious detriment to Japanese trade.

It should be no small consideration with thinking men that what will conduce to Japanese interests in Korea will also conduce to the welfare of the Korean people themselves.

[page 20] If we ask what Russians interests are in Korea we must frankly confess that we do not know. If we take the Russian press as evidence, it would seem that Korea is strategically necessary to Russia. If it is true that the wants to get a port in southern Korea which she handle as she has Port Arthur, than the Russian press is apparently correct. There is no considerable Russian trade in Korea, and geographical considerations seem to point in the same direction as the Russian papers have pointed. In what way the realization of this policy on the part of Russia will benefit Korea it is hard to see. We do not know that any Russian publicist has tried to show how it would help the people of Korea. In the absence of any difinite statement or any evident plan on the part of the northern power it must be left to time to decide. We wish that someone thoroughly acquainted with the Russian side of the question would give to the world the ways in which predominant Russian influence in Korea would be of benefit to the people of the peninsula. We do not doubt there are arguments, but we have never seen than frankly stated and therefore are not in a position to compare them with the Japanese side. We do know that the demands which Japan makes on Korea do not include a single point that will not work as much to the interests of every other treaty power as to Japan herself. If the advocates of Russian predominance in the peninsula can make as good a showing as this, no reasonable man can object.

# Odds and Ends.

## Lie on the left side

There is a Korean proverb which says “Even if a tiger catches you, if you keep your wits about you, you may live.”This is used when speaking of some great calamity or danger, that there is always some way of escape if one has the wit to find it. The proverb is based upon the general belief that a tiger will not eat a man who lies on [page 21] his left side. This is because *tiger* corresponds to “West”and *dragon* to “East.” Now with the head to the north and the feet to the south a man’s left side will be toward the east, the dragon side, and his right side toward the west, the tiger side. So when a tiger catches you by the ear (that is not complimentary as to the size of your ear, but “that is never mind”) and swings you across his shoulder and makes for his den, just do some tall thinking for a few minutes and when the brute drops you on the ground just roll over on your left side and you will be quite safe. He dare not touch you. Just put this in your note book for future reference. It may come in handy .

## A fortune-teller’s dilemma.

A high official conceived the idea of going incognito to a blind fortuneteller and having his fortune told. Donning poor garments as a disguise he went to the fortune teller’s house and consulted him. The blind man fumbled his book and then opened it at random. His finger rested on the character 問 which means “to ask”but the 門 means “gate” and the 口 means mouth, so the fortune-teller said, “It is plain that you will become a beggar for he opens his mouth in every man’s gate.” The official smiled, paid the fee and departed: The next day he happened to be talking with the young prince and told him the joke on himself, how he was to become a beggar. The prince laughed with him but then said : “We could have a good joke on that fortune teller aud get some fun out of him. Call him in and make him tell my fortune, and when he opens the book tell him that it is this same character that his finger is on. Then we will see how he gets out of telling me that I will become a beggar.”

They did this very thing, the fortune teller prostrated himself and then opened the book. Aha, he had struck the character 問. “Now what do you make of it my good man? Yesterday you interpreted it for somebody, I believe. Let us see whether you can do as much for me.” The poor fellow saw he was trapped but he thought as quick as lightining and said without even seeming to consider the matter :

[page 22] “Circumstances alter cases. Now you will see that this character 問, if looked at from the left side only, becomes \* which means king and if looked at from the other side it is \* or king turned around; so from whichever side you are looked upon the beholder will see king all over you. You will surely succceed your royal father on the throne” The two jokers had to laugh at their own discomfiture and as the fortune teller passed out the gate with a substantial reward in his sleeve he muttered to himself: “Its a mighty small hole that a fortune-teller of my experience cannot crawl out of.”

## Sorcery Exposed.

A Korean gentleman never allows a mudang or sorceress to perform her incantations at his house, but in this case there was an exception to the rule. The gentleman’s wife was so anxious to have it that he reluctantly assented : but he was determined to test the truth of the mudang’s professions. So he secretly removed one the heads of the double ended drum that she would use in her incantation, stuffed a tiger skin into the belly of the drum and then replaced the head. The hour came for the ceremony to being. The mudang arrived in all her fantastic toggery, the food and drink were all placed in order on the tables, and there seemed to be no obstacle to the performance of her ghosth’ function. But when the music struck up, the drum, instead of booming out as usual, only emitted a snarl. This called for immediate consideration. The mudang declared that it was because the spirits were displeased that the food was not good enough, and the silk and cotton cloth used in the ceremony were not sufficient. The gentleman said, “Oh, is that all? Well, give her more food and silk, to her heart’s desire.” This was done but still the drum refused to “go.” The mudang then declared that it was because some of the dishes or utensils were dirty. They were all examined and cleaned but still the drum would only snarl. At last a blind exorcist was sent for. He might be able to solve the mystery. He was told what the matter was and heard the sound of the bewitched drum. Then he cast the dice with which he was accustomed to tell fortunes and [page 23] pronounced the following enigma: “When a tiger catches a dog he roars but when a dog tries to catch a tiger there is only a plaintive whine.” When the gentleman heard this he clapped his hands and laughed a full minute. “Take the head off that drum.” It was done, and out rolled the tiger skin. “You see it was the dog that caught the tiger.” For drum-heads are made of dogskin. The mudang was therefore driven away and all the food and silk were given to the exorcist. The blind are proverbially quick of ear and the man’s ready wit probably divined the cause of the trouble and improvised the clever enigma.

# Editorial Comment.

The Kobe Chronicle has again attempted to discredit the position taken by this magazine relative to Korean refugees in Japan and has challenged us to the following question: If the Korean government were wholly dominated by the Roman Catholic element and a price were put on the head of every Protestant, would the Japanese government be justified in sending back Protestant refugees to be dealt with by their enemies in Korea? We answer no, and in so answering we would ask the Chronicle on what page of the Review it found the statement that Korean refugees ought to be sent back to Korea. The Chronicle should choose its questions with more care. In the second place we challenge the editor of that journal to show us the page where the Review stated that economic and international law do not apply in the case of Korea. We still affirm that those sciences are not like mathematics; that only their most general laws are universally applicable; that each economic or international complication must be treated as a case by itself, arguments pro and con must be balanced and the solution found in the preponderance of evidence. There are other international laws beside that of asylum and when we said that “considering all the facts of the case and all that has occurred during the last two decades we may be [page 24] allowed to wonder that Japan should show such highmindedness at such a cost,” we were referring to events that it is not pleasant to recall but which the readers of the Chronicle know very well. We said there is no question of the high-mindedness of Japan in giving these men asylum, but if, as we fully believe, Japan is interested in the development and progress of Korea it would be fully as high-minded to ask these men to cross to America and thus relieve Japan of the suspicions of the Korean government which are the main obstacle to Japan’s usefulness in the peninsula.

# News Calendar

Yi Chi-yong was made Minister of Foreign Affairs on Dec. 30th1903

On the 20th instant the Korean News Company began the publication of a Daily Bulletin in Seoul, giving telegrams from Tokyo and general news. In case of war they propose to have a number of men with the Japanese army.

About the 21st inst. the Korean Government issued a declaration of strict neutrality in view of the apparent approach of war.

Yi Keun-sang has been appointed Minister to Italy.

On the 22nd a young woman alighted from a chair in front of the palace gate, announced that she was the daughter of Heaven and had come to give the Emperor some good advice as to the proper course to pursue in these troublous times. The police took her in hand. It is rather a pity she was not given a chance!

Yi Yong-ik again became Finance Minister on the 27th inst. And Yun Ung-yul became Minister of War on the 25th.

On the 23rd fifty people departed for Hawaii.

General Ichiji arrived on the 22nd to act as Military Attaché of the Japanese Legation.

Rumors of preparations for a great popular uprising in the south are rife. There is something in them, without doubt, and we are likely to see lively times in the Spring.

A painful accident happened on the Electric road outside the South Gate on the 24th. On a steep grade and frosty track the motorman lost control of the car and it ran into a cartman who had been loudly warned but had insolently refused to budge. A crowd gathered and began to stone the car but United States marines arrived promptly on the scene and dispersed them. The Korean police made no attempt to quell the disturbance.

[page 25] Queen Dowager Hong died on the second instant at the age of seventy-three.

On the fourth inst. the Emperor ordered the Home Office to send a proclamation to all the country districts with commands to make every exertion to put down the robbers which infest the country.

A serious movement has begun in the two Southern provinces of Korea where thousands of *ajuns* have been banding together and preparing to raise an insurrection. This is considered by well-informed Koreans to be more serious than the Tonghak uprising of 1893 because of the greater intelligence of its partisans.

Cho Min-heui has been appointed Minister to Japan to which place he will soon start from Washington. Yun Hon has been appointed Minister to the United States.

Ko Yung-geun the assassin of U Pom-son in Japan has been condemned to death and his accomplice has been condemend to imprisonment for life.

At the end of 1903 there were 6,400 Japanese residents of Chemulpo.

On Dec. 27th fifty more Koreans started for Hawaii to engage in work on the sugar plantations.

The barley imported by the Japanese is estimated by the Koreans to amount to 20,000 bags.

The Italian Minister early in January intimated to the Foreign Office that as the Korean Government had granted gold mining concessions to various other nationalities it would be proper to grant one to an Italian company.

On January 5th a United States Legation guard of thirty-six men arrived in Seoul. The U. S. gunboat Vicksburg and the transport Zafiro from Manila had arrived in Chemulpo a few days before. A protest was made by the Foreign Office on the ground that the Korean soldiers were sufficient to secure quiet in Seoul. The American Minister replied to the effect that such protection was not deemed sufficient and that a further force would be brought in to guard the property of the Seoul Electric Company’s property.

On Jan. 6th thirty additional Russian soldiers marched up from Chemulpo. This also brought forth a protest from the Foreign Office.

According to custom the Korean people of Seoul donned the mourning garb for the late Queen Dowager and proclamation was sent throughout the country ordering all classes to do the same and to turn their faces toward Seoul and wail.

The night of January 6th was excessively cold and owing to this eight Korean soldiers deserted and fled. The rumors of wholesale desertion on the part of Korean soldiers seems to have been false. These eight men were Pyeng Yang soldiers.

Japanese residents of Fusan are said to number upwards of 13,000.

On the eighth inst. a British Legation Guard of twenty men arrived in Seoul and on the following day the Russian guard was increased by the arrival of forty-five more men.

[page 26] Yi Po-hyun bought 2,000 bags of rice at Chemulpo, transported them by sea to Kang-neung on the eastern coast, and distributed them among people who are suffering for want of food. They cannot praise him highly enough, and demand that he be given office.

Early in January the Japanese brought eleven Gatling guns into Chemulpo and immediately transported them to Seoul.

The Emperor of Japan sent a message of condolence to the Korean Court on the occasion of the death of Queen Dowager Hong.

Six hundred thousand dollars have been appropriated to cover the expenses of the funeral of the Queen Dowager.

The gate of the apartment where the body of the late Queen Dowager lies is guarded day and night by thirteen members of the peddlars guild.

All operations have been suspended both by Japanese and Korean pawn-shops. This entails an enormous amount of suffering on the people, thousands of whom depended upon loans from these places. The suspension is of course due to fears of disturbances.

On Jan. 8th the Emperor put forth an edict stating that the condition of the government was anything but ideal and that there must be a radical change. He ordered that all mudang, fortune-tellers and others of the same ilk be expelled from the palace.

On the 9th inst twenty-two Italian soldiers arrived to act as a legation guard in Seoul.

The impression has prevailed generally among foreigners all through the month that there was more or less danger of Korean insurrection in Seoul. This led to extra precautions on the part of most foreigners. The electric car motormen were under strict orders to go slowly for fear of some accident which might precipitate trouble. The common people have been however very apathetic and the curious tirades of one of the daily native papers seem to have caused very little excitement. The Koreans have seemed unable to realize that the coming of half a dozen legation guards is but a precautionary or preventative measure but the wonder has been of a very mild character.

In Yong-in the owner of a fine bullock refused an offer of 900,000 cash for his beast. The man who made the offer sued the owner before the magistrate for charging so much for the animal! The magistrate gave them both a beating and sent them about their business!

Besides the $600,000 appropriated for the funeral expenses of Queen Dowager Hong, the Emperor donated $10,000 out of his private purse for incidental expenses which the commission may incur.

The members of the Household Department in Tokyo have decided to assume mourning for nine days in honor of the late Queen Dowager.

On the 9th inst. thirty-one more Koreans started for Hawaii.

There are one hundred and six prisoners in the central prison in Seoul .

The Whale-fishing Japanese Company have secured a twelve years extension of their franchise.

[page 27] Nine secondary bereaus and commissions have been abolished for reasons of economy. They are the Famine Relief Bereau, Irrigation Bureau, Government Hospital, the Buddhist Monastery Bureau, Bureau of Decorations, Bureau of Surveys, Imperial Library Bureau, Bureau of Weights and Measures and the Supreme Court. The latter has not been actually abolished but merged into the Law Department,

Hyun Sang-geun, who was sent to Europe last Autunm to raise a loan for Korea, returned via Siberia and arrived in Seoul on the 11th inst. strongly impressed with the might and prestige of Russia. We hear that he told the Emperor that Japan would have no chance against the northern power, but we are unaware of his having made a careful investigation of Japanese military and naval resources.

Directly opposite reports are given of the advice sent by Yi Pomchin, Minister at St. Petersburg, to the Emperor. Some say he advised the Emperor to make friends with the Japanese and others say he advised him to cleave to Russia.

On the 12th inst. Yen 4,000 were appropriated for the support of Prince Eui-wha in America.

Great suffering is being caused in Kong-ju by the failure of the semi-annual fair. People are afraid of highwayman and war rumors are rife; so neither buyers nor sellers came up to the fair and the people of the town find it extremely difficult to get rice at any price. A foreigner recently offered to pay any reasonable figure for a few bags of rice but found it impossible to buy. No one would even name a figure.

Kil Yung su advised the Emperor to place Pyeng-yang soldiers as guards of the palace instead of Seoul men and there would be no possibility of trouble. Hardly complimentary to the Seoul soldiers!

Yi Nam-heui, Supreme Judge in Seoul, imformed His Majesty personally that the Japanese were planning to depose His Majesty and place Prince Eui-wha on the throne. For this breach of etiquette the Judge was immediately imprisoned and if the matter is pressed he may lose his life.

The exodus from Seoul, for fear of trouble, has begun though as yet not many have gone. A few high officials have sent their families and valuables to the country.

The number of Korean policemen in each of the open ports has been lowered to thirty except in Chemulpo and Fusan and at these places forty have been left.

There is evidently some anxiety at home over news of possible danger to foreigners in Seoul, as telegrams have been coming to many private individuals inquiring as to their safety. It is a pity that sensational reports should have been sent home at such a time as this.

On the 14th Sim Sang-hun was appointed Minister of Finance.

On the 13th Ex-Prime Minister Cho Pyungse told His Magisty that in the present disturbed state of things it was necessary first to deprive Yi Yong-ik and Yi Keun-tak of power and then matters could be settled on a safe and satisfactory basis.

The annual stone fights have begun outside the East and West

[page 28] gates. It is rather early for this sort of thing but evidently the people feel more enthusiastic about it than is their custom.

On the 10th inst. Baron Gunzberg removed all his effects from his home in Sa-jik-kol to the Russian Legation .

From the Che-guk Sin-mun.

It has been generally believed by foreigners in Seoul that the editorials lately appearing in the Che-guk Sin-mun are offensive and even threatening to foreigners. If so it is a rather serious matter. We have made a careful investigation of the matter both by translation of the editorials and by interviews with the editor of the paper in question. , In the first place the Editor disclaims any intention of speaking disrespectfully or injuriously about foreigners and he disavows any intention of exciting the populace against them. He grants that what he has written might perhaps cause a little feeling against foreigners among the more ignorant people but he claims that they already had that feeling. If he has increased that feeling it was with no intention of so doing. Whether his statement is a candid one or not we do not know but we give it for what ii is worth. And now let us examine briefly what has been said. In the Jan. 12 issue the editorial bewails the condition of the country, saying that though a new year has begun the people have not prepared for it, that robbers swarm in the country because of the oppression of the prefects, that in the open ports many foreigners come, especially Chemulpo, where foreign solders swarm, that Japan and Russia quarrel over Yongampo regardless of the rights of Korea in the matter, that the whole Korean people seem to be asleep, that many foreign soldiers come to Seoul and the Koreans can see no reason for it. Then comes an expression that has been misinterpreted by foreigners. The Editor says “What are the Korean soldiers good for? Why have they been training all these years?” This has been interpreted to mean that if the Korean soldiers had been good for anything they would have successfully opposed the entrance of foreign soldiers; but it is safe to say that no Korean so understands it. It simply means that if the Korean soldiers had been up to the standard, foreigners would have relied on them for protection instead of sending for foreign soldiers. It is simply a criticism of the Korean army, on the ground that foreigners could not put faith in them, The Editor goes on to ask what the ‘‘peddlars” are good for. He denounces them as useless. If there had been any intention of inciting people to insurrection this hardly would have been said. His next statement is open to rather more objection. He says that foreigners go about the town with glowering faces and evidently intent on serious business while the Koreans slouch along as if cowed. The implication is natural that the foreigners are oppressing the Koreans and doubtless among certain classes this statement might be a cause of additional anti-foreign feeling. The term used in describing the foreigners in this sentence just quoted is that there was *sal keui* in their looks. This *sal keui* (\*\*) means “killing [page 29] force.” but this is an hyperbola often used by Koreans in describing the looks of an angry man and so it is not so offensive an expression as its literal force might imply. It is the exact equivalant of our expression “There was murder in his eye.” But even so the sentence is sufficiently offensive, and suggestively so, to excite the people of the lower orders and the Editor is much to blame for indulging in such exaggerations, especially as the facts do not bear him out. There has been no more truculency in the looks of foreigners of late than there has always been. He drew upon his imagination for the whole thing. At such a time as this such statements are doubly reprehensible. He goes on to charge the police with being quite useless, and the people with exchanging falsehoods, (which in view of the above would include his own.) Then after bewailing the fact that there are no officials who will speak the word which will break the deadlock and free the government from the charge of supineness he says there is no man who will shoulder his axe and come forth to help the country . This sounds very incendiary and may be so to some Koreans but very many of the people know that this refers to Choe Ik-byon who in the year 1873, when another high official secured the imposition of a tax upon wood merchants, took an axe. went to the palace gate and placing his written memorial upon the axe waited for it to be presented to His Majesty the present Emperor. The memorial denounced the tax and said “lf my words are not true, take this axe and kill me but if they are true take it and kill the man who proposed this tax.” The editor means there is no man bold and patriotic enough to tell the truth to the Emperor even though it might cost his life. We hold no brief for the editor of the Che-guk Sin-mun and there can be no doubt that his writing in this vein is worse than useless but in common fairness we should give him what benefit of the doubt there may be and in censuring him not follow his own example of exaggeration. But on the 22nd inst. this same editor lashes himself into a verbal frenzy and makes all sorts of absurd charges against the foreigners and gives every evidence of trying to cover up the weakness and pusillanimity of the present officials by an outburst of vituperation against those who because of that very weakness have been obliged to bring in foreign guards to defend themselves. On the whole this attempt on the part of the editor to relieve his pent-up feelings is very foolish, and might be very harmful if the people were in the mood to follow his lead.

A Russian and a French engineer employed in the Korean military shops have been released from service under the Korean Government, their terms of contract having expired.

On the 14th inst. forty-one French naval men arrived in Seoul to act as a Legation guard.

On the 16th inst. sixty-four American marines arrived in Seoul and took up their quarters in the Seoul Electric Company’s building.

The Koreans report that many white hats have been bought by Japanese and their inference is that many Japanese are going out into the country dressed as Koreans.

[page 30] News comes from foreign residents in Pyeng Yang that Korean soldiers and police are breaking into the houses of all the well-to-do people of that city and stealing their goods. The authorities remonstrated but could effect nothing. The soldiers threaten to disband if they are interfered with. The people can get no redress whatever. At the same time the Tong-hak movement is assuming larger and larger proportions and the local government seems almost to be favoring the movement. Foreigners’ houses have not been attacked. Foreigners of long years’ residence in Korea say they have never seen such a state of things in the north. An American missionary was lately driven in from one of the neighboring towns and told that if he showed his face there again he would be killed In this state of things it would not be wondered at that foreigners in the northern city should feel a little uneasy. Our correspondent states positively that the facts as stated, about the soldiers and police, can be fully corroborated.

Many robbers, taking advantage of the frozen river, come across the ice at night and rob houses in the river towns. “Peddlars” have been sent to act as guards for these towns.

There were rumors that the Independence Club was to be revived and so the government sent fifty soldiers to guard the Independence Arch so as to prevent any gathering there. Some former leaders of that Club, so it is reported, desired to start the same movement again under another name, Yu-sin-whe or “Reform Club,” but were warned by the police and gave up the idea.

The machinery for making guns, which was imported from Japan, costs yen 180,000. This is to be paid from the Finance Department by order of the Emperor, but in the present state of the national finances we may confidently expect that there will be a little delay in the payment.

In Musan on the nothern border Koreans failed in an attempt to drive back Manchu robbers, and 394 houses and 19,820 dollars worth of grain were burned.

Pak Chong-yang has succeeded Min Yong-so as Minister of Education. Ku Yung-jo has succeeded Chong Keui-tak as Chief of Police. Yun Eung-yul was made Minister of War on the 23rd.

Because of the severe cold Yi Yong-ik has distributed four hundred dollars among the men of each of the twelve regiments in Seoul.

Great suffering has attended the severe cold of January. Three people froze to death one night and a woman and a baby at her breast were found frozen one morning.

About the 20th inst. it was reported that Russia had suggested to Japan that northern Korea be made a neutral zone and that Japan exercise predominant influence in the south, but that Japan immediately rejected the proposal.

Yun Chi-ho, under orders from the government, came up to Seoul from Mokpo on the 22ud inst. It is generally believed that he will be given an important post in Seoul.

[page 31] Rev. G. L. Pearson of Honolulu Hawaii sends the following for publication, about the Koreans in Hawaii.

The Koreans who have come to Hawaii have found ready employment. With the exception of a few incidents they have received good treatment and they generally are well pleased with their homes, advantages and prospects. A few have come who are not at all fitted for the work, being unused to hard toil, having too little strength or an enfeebled health. A small number of such characters are dissatisfied and are a burden to the Korean community. Men who are unable or unwilling to work find a hard time in Hawaii as do all such per-sons in any country. Nearly all are industrious and are hopeful.

 Our public schools are open to Korean children. Where schools are located near plantations many are able to take the opportunity of learning English. The religious work for the Koreans is being done by the Methodist Episcopal Church, there being no organized bodies of Presbyterians or Baptists. The Hawaiian Board of Missions which aflfiliates with the Congregational Church on the main land, is not intending to give any special attention to this work, thus leaving the field to the Methodists. We have organized a class wherever there is any considerable number of Koreans and are doing work under the supervision of the Presiding Elder, by Korean Local Preachers. Exhorters and Bible Teachers. We are giving it our best attention and are hopeful of conserving the work already done for these people and of carrying on the work of evangelization.

It would be a great advantage to me if all protestant Missionaries in Korea, would send me the names, certificates of membership, and advices concerning any of their members, or flock, who may come to Hawaii. This would enable me to more wisely select men for the responsible positions in our societies, to assign believers to their proper classes and to give special attention to the needs they may severally have.

I am pleased to say that the loyalty, zeal, spiritual power, observance of the Sabbath etc., on the part of the Koreans who are here testify to the thorough work of the Missionaries in Korea.

On Jan. 3rd a great fire occurred in Taiku which threatened the whole city but it was brought under control.

Real estate is going up rapidly in Taiku. This is due to the influx of Japanese merchants. The woman’s winter training class of the Presbyterian mission has grown from fifteen to forty. The present governor is not very friendly to Japanese. The report circulated recently that any Korean who sold land or houses to Japanese would be beheaded. The Seoul-Fusan railway passes the city to the south running east and west but does not touch the city proper nor will it necessitate the tearing down of any houses. The station will be not far from the south gate. The missionaries (Protestant) of Taiku have opened a sleeping-room for the beggar boys and some thirty-five enjoy its hospitality. Nothing could be more pitiable than their lot.

[page 33]

# Korean History.

In spite of the oath that he had taken, the young king built a separate shrine to his father and worshiped at it in the same manner as at the ancestral temple. This was in accord with the letter of the oath, for he religiously refrained from calling his father by that name. He likewise honored the memory of his father by decreeing that if anyone mentioned the fact that he had been enclosed in a box and starved to death it would mean death. He banished the son of the princess who had encompassed his father’s death. The highhanded Hong In-han who had worked so hard to prevent his accession was first banished to Yosan and enclosed in a thorn hedge, and then was poisoned by royal edict.

Being without issue, the king, at the instigation of his mother, took a concubine, the sister of one of his favorites, Hong Kuk-yung. This resulted very unfortunately, for when this concubine died her father was drawn into treasonable operations.

Many of the present customs of Korea date from this reign. The king first made the law that after the closing of the gates, they could not be opened except by special permission from himself.

It was in his first year that the scholar Kwun Chul-sin gathered about him a company of disciples and went to a mountain retreat to study. They possessed one copy of a Christian work. This they diligently studied, and one and all determined to adopt the belief there inculcated. So far as they understood it, they practiced its teachings in secret.

Two years later the king took as a second concubine the daughter of Yun Chang-yun, and Hong the father of the first concubine, because of his opposition to it, was banished .

[page 34] Up to this time very few officials had been drawn from the northern provinces or from Song-do, but now the king decreed that they were as worthy to receive office as any others and said that they should share in the gifts of the government. He ordered that a record be kept of all the decisions in council and that they be preserved in a book called the Il-deuk-rok. Those were days of severe famine in the land and the king did all in his power to relieve the distress, giving from his private treasure large quantities of silver bullion, black pepper and dyewood, things of great value in Korea.

In the year 1783 strange rumors were afloat. It was said that war had been declared against Korea by some foreign power which was about to throw an immense army into the peninsula. No one knew where it was to come from, but many believed it was Japan. The excitement grew so strong that crowds of people fled to the country, and so great was the influx into the southern provinces that real estate rose rapidly in value. Such was the haste of these deluded people that on the road families became separated and children were lost. Out of pity for the latter the king founded an asylum in Seoul for their maintenance.

Yi Tuk-cho of Kyong-ju was one of the men who had accepted the teachings of the Roman Catholic books and in this year he induced a young attaché of the embassy to Peking to look up the missionaries there and get such light as he could on the subject. This young man, Yi Sung-hun. met at Peking the Portugese Alexaudré de Govea of the Franciscan order. He accepted Christianity and was baptized under the name of Pierre. He brought back with him many books, crosses, images, and other religious emblems. Some of these he gave to Yi Tuk-cho who redoubled his studies and at the same time began to do some proselyting. Two of his most celebrated converts were two brothers Kwun Ch’ul-sin and Kwun Il-sin of Yang-geun, thirty miles from Seoul. This town is called the birth place of Roman Catholicism in Korea. Yi Tuk-cho took the baptismal name of Jean Baptiste and Kwun Il-sin that of Francois Xavier. The propagation of the Christian faith soon began in Seoul and from there rapidly spread in the south.

In 1785 the Minister of Justice began active operations [page 35] against the new faith and in the third moon of that year a courtier memorialized the king on the subject. This caused the defection of many of the converts.

In 1786 Kim Yi-so informed the king that when envoys came back from China they brought in their train many Catholic books, which caused a “conflagration” in the country, and he denounced it as a bad religion. He .said the books were flooding the land and that the only way to stop it was to make Eui-ju, on the border, a customs port and have all baggage strictly examined before being allowed to pass.

Many Chinese had settled on Sin Island off Eui-ju but the Koreans on the adjacent mainland resented it. They collected a considerable band of men and crossed to the island where they burned all the houses of the settlers and destroyed all their property. When the king heard of it he condemned it as a brutal outrage. This year was marked by one of the most destructive scourges that ever visited the country. Cholera swept the land from end to end. It is asserted that 370,979 people perished, among whom was the infant Crown Prince. The government found it necessary to undertake the work of interment The king gave out from the dispensary 29,000 pills, and in Seoul alone there were 8,149 recoveries. Knowing as we do the frightful ravages of this disease when it takes a virulent turn, the fact that there were over 8,000 recoveries in Seoul indicates that there must have been at least 60,000 deaths. Probably this was more than half the population of the city at that time. It was during this same year that the great mound in Kang-dong, P’yung-an Province, was found. It is some 680 feet in circumference. It was called, from the first, the grave of the Tan-gun, though there is of course no evidence to show that this is more than the merest fancy.

The king had a half brother named Prince Eun-on for whom he had a great affection; but Hong Kuk-Yung whose daughter had been the king’s first concubine and had violently opposed a second union, now conspired with two other choice spirits with a view to putting Prince Eun-on on the throne. The vigilant Queen Mother discovered the plot and the conspirators were executed. All likewise demanded the death of the young prince but to this the king would not [page 36] listen. He was forced to banish him to Quelpart, but a short time after had him brought back as far as Kang-wha, where comfortable quarters were provided for him.

The king interdicted the use of silk excepting by very high officials and by very old people. He set up stones to mark the place where the great-grandfather of T’a-jo Ta-wang had lived, where his grandfather had fished and where that king himself had once lived, in Ham-gyung Province. Someone found in P’yung ch’ang, Ham-gyung Province, the grave of T’a-jo Ta-wang’s great-grandmother and the king had it repaired and guarded.

Up to that date the women had been accustomed to wear the hair in a great bunch on top of the head as female professional mourners do to-day in Korea. Large amounts of false hair were used and it was decorated with long pins and with flowers. It is said that a full headdress cost as much as the furnishings of a house. The king ordered a change in this expensive custom, and since that day only mourners and palace women have been allowed to wear them.

 The city of Su-wun dates its importance from the year 1789, for at that time the king removed his father’s grave to that place and went there several times to sacrifice. He secretly called his banished brother from Kang-wha, but when his mother learned of it she made such an ado about it that he was fain to send him back. At Ham-heung, near the ancestral seat of the dynasty, there was an immense tree, so large that ten men holding each other’s hands could but just encircle it. The shadow which it cast was “A hundred furrows wide.” So goes the story. The king had it enclosed in a wall, as being the place where his great ancestor practiced archery.

The year 1791 will always be memorable for the persecution of the Roman Catholics. During the preceding year the Roman Catholic converts had sent a man to Peking to arrange for the coming of a priest who could administer the sacraments, for the Koreans had been strictly forbidden by the Catholic authorities in China to administer them among themselves without the services of a regularly consecrated priest. At the same time certain important questions about ancestor worship were asked. A priest was promised to the Korean [page 37] church but the answers to the questions about ancestor worship were very unsatisfactory to the Koreans and in consequence there were many defections. It is much to the credit of the Roman propaganda that from the very first it set its face hard against the practice of ancestor worship. In the fifth moon it is said the, “flame of Roman Catholicism burned high.” In other words it was discovered then what had been going on quietly for many years. Two men of Chin-san in Chul-la Province were caught and killed because they had burned their ancestral tablets. It was only after long discussion and with great hesitation that the order was given for their decapitation, and at the very last moment, after the men had already been carried to the place of execution, the king changed his mind and sent a reprieve; but it was too late. The king called the new religion not Ch’un-ju-hak or “Religion of the Lord of Heaven,” but Sa-hak or “The Deceiving Religion.” The Minister Chon Che-gong advised the king to annihilate all Roman Catholics, but the king answered, “We must do it by elevating Confucianism.” He had found the only rational way to deal with religious differences. He said, in substance, let the fittest survive. This is all that Christianity asks in any land, and the opposition of it by force always has been and always will be an acknowledgment of inferiority. The king knew well that China was the source from which the new influences came and he made a very strict law against the bringing across the border of Christian books. An edict was promulgated threatening with punishment all who did not deliver up their Christian books within twenty days, and the prefect of Chin-san, where the two men hid been working, was cashiered and forty-nine other prefects were degraded one or two degrees, because Christian converts were numerous in their districts. The Roman Catholic writers attribute the numerous defections at this time to the entire lack of pastoral care, the absence of the sacraments and the paucity of Christian literature.

The king did not live up to his advanced ideas about using physical force to combat Christianity, for in the eleventh moon of this year four high officials who had embraced Christianity were seized and put to death, together with a considerable number of the common people.

[page 38] In 1792 the pope formally put the care of the Korean church in the hands of the Bishop of Peking.

Sacrifices were offered at the tombs of Tangun, Ki-ja, Su-ro-wang (the founder of Karak) and of T’a-jo Ta-wang. Whether this was done to aid in combatting Christianity we are not told but it is not improbable. This was a time of general prosperity among the people and it witnessed a rapid increase in the population of Korea. These things were evidenced by the strong colonizing spirit which sprang up. Thousands flocked northward to the banks of the Yalu and to the islands on the coast, and the area of arable laud was largely increased. Two years later this period of prosperity terminated in a terrible famine in all the southern and central provinces, and the government was obliged to dispense 280,000 bags of rice among the sufferers. This same year envoys from the Liu Kiu Islands were well received. The King told them that two hundred years before Liu Kiu officials had been given honorary titles by the king of Korea. In view of the friendly relations that had always existed between Korea and these islands, the envoys were feasted and sent off in grand style. Late in this same year, 1794, the Chinese Roman Catholic priest Tsiou crossed the Yalu and entered Korea. The government was aware of it and his arrest was ordered, but he escaped from Seoul in disguise. Two of his companions were taken, and as they refused to give information as to his whereabouts they were immediately put to death. At the time of his coming the Catholics estimate that there were 400 believers in Korea, but within a very few years the number increased to 6,000.

The year 1796 was signalised by a most important event in the field of letters. In the beginning of the dynasty a fount of 100,000 pieces of moveable copper types had been cast, and these had been supplemented soon after by 200,000 more. Now the king began to add to them. First he put out 50,000 and a year later he added 150,000 more; then 80,000 more were made, and moveable wooden types were made to the number of 320,000. Already during this reign the following works had appeared. “The Gradation of Penalties,” “A Commentary on the Chinese Classics,” “The Proper Conduct of the king,” “The Record of the Decisions in Council,” [page 39] “On Korean Customs,” “On Military Tactics,” “On Forms of Official Correspondence,” “On the Science of Government.” These were now followed by several editions of military and Confucian works, one of which was a digest of all the Confucian Classics in ninety-nine volumes. The King was a great lover of books and gathered all the best books that could be procured. One work whose publishing he superintended in person reached the modest number of 191 volumes.

The Minister of Finance advised the minting of five-cash pieces but all the officials united in a protest against it and advised retrenchment as the alternative. In this they were right, for the policy of meeting a deficit by minting money could not but be disastrous.

CHAPTER XIII.

A peculiar plague .... a peculiar remedy. . . . a new king . . . varions reforms. . . .beginning of the policy of Roman Catholic opposition . . . Christianity and politics. . . .causes of opposition. . . .prisons full. . . . Chinese evangelist killed. . . . a traitorous letter intercepted .... end of the persecution. . . .conflagration . . . eight severe charges . . . the miners’ rebellion . . . .siege of Chong-ju . . . . the mine explodes . . . Catholics send to Peking for a priest. . . a long list of calamities. . . . cholera. . . .taxes remitted . . . Europeans fail to enter Korea . . . nine years’ famine .. terrible suffering... a new king . . . reform . . .French priests enter Korea . . . the persecution of 1839 . . . the first French naval expedition against Korea . . . The Koreans answer the French charges . . . . a new king . . . reforms . . . .rapid spread of Christianity . . . . consternation upon hearing of the fall of Peking. . . . a noteworthy memorial . . . panic . . . a good opportunity lost . . . a women’s riot.

In 1799 a peculiar plague broke out in P’yeng-yang and spread with great rapidity. It began with fever and ague, accompanied by a cough, and death was very sudden. The king decided that if people so afflicted should eat beef they would recover. So he ordered cattle to be killed and the beef to be distributed among the people. The plague suddenly ceased and the people have always believed that it was the [page 40] marvelous acumen of the king that enabled him to see the remedy and stop the ravages of the disease.

Early in 1800 he made his son heir to the throne, and none too soon, for in the sixth moon he sickened and died. It is said that his death was caused by his mourning over the terrible fate of his father, whose cruel and untimely death preyed upon his mind. Others say that the cause of his death was a malignant boil.

The infant king, known by his posthumous title of Sunjo Ta-wang, was of too tender an age to undertake the duties of royalty and so the government was administered during his minority by his grandmother, the woman who had wielded such a strong influence over his father. She began by instituting various reforms. Outside the West Gate, which was then some distance to the west of the present New Gate, there was a monastery where sorceresses and fortune-tellers congregated. The Queen Mother drove them all out and razed the monastery to the ground. The tax by which the palace body-guard was kept up was very distasteful to the people and it was now remitted. Up to this time the government medical dispensary had been supported by revenue in money or herbs from the country, but this tax was also remitted. If we may believe the records when they say that she freed all the government slaves, we can not but confess that in some directions at least this Queen Regent was of exceeding liberal mind.

It is from the year 1801 that we may date the determined and systematic opposition on the part of the government against the Roman Catholic propaganda in the peninsula. Two other factions had grown up in Seoul, the Si and the Pyuk. The latter were violent opponents of the new religion but they had been held in check by the neutral attitude of the late king. But now he was dead, and the Queen Regent, being a member of that faction, determined to give full rein to the anti-Christian prejudices of her partisans. It must be remembered that the Koreans were extremely sensitive to outside influences. The terrible invasion of the Japanese on the one hand and of the Manchus on the other had made the Koreans hate all suggestions of commerce with the outside world, and they sedulously avoided every possible contact [page 41] with foreigners. This is one of the main causes of the opposition to Christianity. But besides this, they had been told that Roman Catholicism struck at the very foundation of the state and was more than likely to assume a political aspect, a charge which, from the very claims which it puts forth to universal temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty, would be somewhat hard to refute. We can scarcely wonder then that there was severe opposition to it. It was looked upon as a danger which menaced the state. It is said that Roman Catholicism had assumed large proportions in Korea. Many were now seized and put to death. Among them were eleven high officials. Release was granted in case the accused would consent to curse Christ. The agents of this persecution went everywhere haling forth believers from city and village. Soon the prisons were running over. Eleven men were executed in April and fourteen in the following month. It is said that two princesses who had adopted the foreign faith were put to death. It was at this time that Tsiou, the Chinese evangelist, whom the Koreans call Chu Mun-rao, was seized and put to death outside the Little West Gate. He had at first fled north to the Yalu and was on the point of crossing, when he suddenly thought better of it, turned back, gave himself up and heroically met his death.

A Korean named Whang Sa-yong had been instrumental in bringing this Chinaman to preach the faith to his fellowcountrymen. Now that the evangelist was executed this Whang sent out a letter to the European residents of China asking that a military expedition be gotten up to come to the shores of Korea, overthrow the dynasty and set up another in sympathy with the Christian faith. This letter was intercepted, the man seized and cruelly torn to pieces. As to the accuracy of these statements it would be rash to vouch. The contents of that letter may or may not have been what is generally believed by the Koreans, but judging from the active interest which European governments rightly take in missionaries from their shores, it is not unlikely that the letter contained substantially what is here stated. The persecution terminated the following year when the government ordered the execution of those already apprehended but ordered that no more Christians be proceeded against. Between three and [page 42] four hundred people had perished and the church seemed to have been crushed.

It was in this year 1803 that a terrible conflagration swept P’yong-yang, and a thousand houses were destroyed. It was repeated the following year, and it is asserted that almost the entire city was destroyed.

Upon the death of the Queen Regent in 1805 the last remnant of persecution ceased and even the law which prohibited the import of books was allowed to remain a dead letter. Corruption in government circles ran riot. The state of things is well epitomized in a memorial which was sent in at this time, (1) The Ministers spend all their time reading books. (2) Nepotism and bribery are the rule rather than the exception. (3) The judges sit and wait for bribes. (4) The examiners of the candidates’ papers receive money in advance, and merit can make no headway against cupidity. (5) The censors have been struck dumb. (6) The prefects do nothing but extort money from the people. (7) Luxury saps the strength and wealth of the land. (8) The whole commonwealth is diseased and rotten to the core.

The year 1811 is marked by an uprising in the north, where Hong Kyong-na attempted to set up a kingdom of his own. He was a resident of P’yung-an Province and was a man of enormous wealth. He was disaffected against the government because the men of his section were discriminated against in the distribution of offices; so he conferred with the miners who were engaged in digging gold in various places, and he told them an exaggerated story of how ill they were being treated by the government. He ended by proposing that, as he had enough money for them all, they set up a kingdom of their own. The hardy miners, 5,000 in number, accepted the proposal with alacrity and war was on foot. This company of undrilled but hardy miners were formidable and at first carried everything before them. They first took the town of Chongju, putting to death the prefect and his whole family. When news of this reached Seoul the king appointed Yi Yohon as general-in-chief against the rebels. Five thousand soldiers were given him with which to do the work. He acted in a characteristic manner, settled himself comfortably at the governor’s house outside the New Gate and called it the [page 43] headquarters From that point he sent to the front Generals Su Kum-bo, Kim Kye-on and Pak Keui-p’ung. Meanwhile the rebels were carrying everything before them. Ch’ul-san, Ka-san, Song-chun, Yong ch’un, Pakch’un and Son-ch’un fell in quick succession. All the government provisions and arms fell into their hands. The main camp of the rebels was in the vicinity of An-ju and they wished to take that place. Here they met with strenuous opposition and it was only after a desperate struggle that they ever took the town. It took ten days to reduce the place; but the back bone of the revolt was broken before the government troops from Seoul arrived on the scene. The various captains and local commanders joined their forces, and by the time the government troops had collected in Pyung-yang the rebels had been driven into their last remaining fortress, Chong-ju, and were being held in siege. During the retreat of the rebels four of Hong’s lieutenants were captured and, being sent to Seoul, were there summarily executed. The reduction of Chong-ju by siege was a work of some time, and the king becoming impatient, supplanted Gen. Pak Kye-p’ung and put Gen. Yu Hyo-wun in his place. The latter immediately decided to attempt to blow up the town of Chong-ju. Constructing a fence, or barrier of some kind, a hundred and fifty paces from the wall, he began, under cover of this, to mine the wall, supporting the passage with beams of wood. When he had extended the passage well under the wall he placed a large amount of powder in it and attached a long fuse. After igniting the fuse the soldiers all hastened out of the mine. No explosion followed. No one dared to go in, for fear that the fuse might be burning slowly and that the mine might explode while they were within. After waiting two days, and finding no one who would venture in, Gen. Yu himself entered and found that the fuse had become wet. He remedied the difficulty and soon there was a tremendous explosion that tore down a long stretch of the wall and buried many of the garrison in the debris. The place was soon taken. Hong was caught, “The Man who Would be King,” and his head was sent to Seoul.

The Christians had now begun to recover in some measure from the terrible persecution of 1801 and a man was sent to [page 44] Peking to urge that a qualified priest be sent to Korea, but the Peking church itself was in great vicissitudes and no help could be promised.

From this time on the reign was one long list of calamities which followed thick and fast upon each other. In 1813 there was a serious rebellion on the island of Quelpart; in 1814 occurred one of those fearful famines that sometimes happen in the southern provinces; this was followed by a flood in Kyung-sang Province which wrecked thousands of houses and cost many lives; Seoul was without rice and the government had to open its granaries and sell at starvation rates; 414,000 bags of grain were distributed to the sufferers in the country and 15,000.000 cash, 5,000 pounds of dye-wood and 500 pounds of black pepper were donated toward relief. The next year thousands who had been made destitute by the famine flocked to Seoul and the government had to feed them till the barley crop was harvested; then the native fever, a kind of typhus, broke out and mowed the people down, and the government had to erect pest houses for their accommodation. In 1816 two thousand houses fell in a freshet in Ch’ung-ch’ung Province and the government gave timber to help the people rebuild. The year 1821 beheld one of the most terrible scourges of cholera that the country ever experienced. It began in the north, and sweeping southward soon involved the capital. Ten thousand people died in Seoul in ten days. In the south it was equally destructive. The government was obliged to appoint a commission to attend to the interment of the dead bodies along the road. The following year it broke out again with unbated fury. Houses were built at intervals along the roads, by the government, for the sake of those who might be struck down with the plague while traveling and gangs of men were kept busy along the main road burying the dead. It even crossed to the island of Quelpart where two thousand people died. In 1824 the government had to remit 69,300 bags of revenue grain in the north because of the depredations of robber bands.

In 1827 the Crown Prince was appointed deputy king and the same year a son was born to him. But troubles continued. The government was obliged to remit taxes of seaweed, salt, ginseng and fish in Kangwun Province. The [page 45] following year a terrible freshet swept away whole villages in Ham-gyung Province and the king sent large quantities of grain to feed the destitute there.

Still troubles multiplied thick and fast. In 1830 the Crown Prince died. He is the grandfather of the present Emperor of Korea. The son who had been born to him is known as the Ta wun gun, who died in the spring of 1898. The building in which the body of this Crown Prince was placed burned to the ground and nothing but the charred bones of the prince were recovered. Two years later, in 1832 an English vessel appeared off Hong-ju and its captain, Basil Hall, sent the king a letter saying that he had come to trade, but the king refused permission. As the flag of the ship bore the device “Religion of Jesus Christ,” some Roman Catholic converts boarded her, but when they found that they were protestants they beat a hasty retreat. It is said that several boxes of books were landed and that some of them were sent to the king, who promptly returned them. The foreigners who made this attempt to enter Korea were Gutzlaff and Lindsay.

During this year there were destructive fires and floods, but the greatest calamity of all was a famine that began at that time and continued for nine successive years, each year being accompanied with cholera. It is said that bodies were piled in heaps inside the South Gate. Many people are still living who remember that terrible time. The next year, in addition to famine and plague, the palace burned down. In the following year there was a devastating epidemic of native fever in Seoul, and a flood in Eui-ju which wrecked 2,000 houses. That summer, the people driven wild with hunger mobbed the government granaries but found nothing in them. They laid the blame on the Prime Minister and threatened his life. He fled precipitately to the country.

 In the last moon of 1834 the king died and his grandson a boy nine years old came to the throne. He is known as Hon jong Ta-wang. His grandmother Kim became regent. She is known as Sunwun Whang-ho. She immediately began a work of reform. The law that made the relatives of prefects’ clerks liable to punishment for their crimes was abrogated. Many burdensome taxes were remitted. The government [page 46] revenue collectors were kept to a strict account for all the monies passing through their hands. A conspiracy, headed by one Nam Ong-jung, was put down with a strong hand. The people were commanded not to slaughter their cattle for food, for the only hope for future crops was the cattle, without which the land could not be tilled. All prefects were commanded to have regular office hours during which they should attend to government business exclusively.

In 1831 Pope Gregory XVI had made Korea a bishopric and appointed M. Brugniere as Bishop. A Chinaman named Yu who was then in Europe was appointed to accompany him to Korea This man Yu went ahead and found means of entering Korea secretly. M. Bruguiere worked three years in the attempt to enter the country by way of the north across the Yalu and at last died on the very border. Yu who had preceeded him desired to hold supreme power in the Korean church, and so put obstacles in the way of the entrance of the Bishop. But in the following year Pierre Philibert Maubant, who had been appointed to Korea, succeeded in entering the country and began work in Seoul at once, but of course in secret. By 1837 two other French priests had arrived, including Bishop Imbert. It is said that at the time of his arrival there were 9,000 adherents of the Roman Catholic church.

While the king was still but fourteen years old, in 1839, there occurred a cruel persecution of the Catholics. Three foreigners were in Korea, as we have seen, and they were known to the Koreans as Pom Se-hyung, Na-ba Do-ru and Chong-a Kak-bak-i.

The persecution began as usual with a change of ministry. Yi Chi-on became Prime Minister. He hated Christianity and averred that the reason why there were so many Christians was that the work of extermination had not been thoroughly carried out in 1801. He demanded a house to house inspection. This was done and soon the prisons were full to overflowing. Hundreds were cruelly beaten, but the yamen runners were not allowed to loot the houses of the prisoners, which cooled their ardor not a little. Finally the three foreigners were arrested. Being ordered to leave the country they firmly refused. Thereupon they were declared high criminals and were executed on Sept. 21st, 1839. This was [page 47] followed by still severer persecutions and even the Koreans themselves grew tired of the horrors that were enacted. It is said that seventy were decapitated and that sixty died of beating and strangulation. This is but a fraction however of those who perished in consequence of this persecution.

The last ten years of the reign were marked principally by events connected with the Roman Catholic propaganda. In 1844 two more French priests entered the country by way of Quelpart after a most difficult and hazardous passage from China in a Korean junk. Two years later the French government sent a message to Korea by a gun-boat, complaining of the death of the three Frenchmen and threatening her with punishment if these cruel actions were continued. This only excited the Koreans the more against Christianity, for it seemed to imply that Roman Catholicism had behind it a temporal power, and was therefore of political significance. In consequence of this a new outbreak occurred which cost the lives of several more Koreans, while the two priests were obliged to hide away very closely in the country.

In the summer of 1847 two French boats, the frigate *La Gloire* and the corvette *La Victorieuse* set sail from the Gulf of Pechili to go to Korea and ascertain what had been the result of the former letter. These two boats both struck a mud-bank and when the tide went down they broke in two. The crews to the number of 600 escaped to the neighboring island of Kogeum off the province of Chulla, and a pinace was immediately despatched to Shanghai for aid. The Koreans gave every assistance in their power and supplied them with food and other necessaries, and even offered to provide boats to take the men back to China. In fact the action of the Korean government was most creditable throughout. An English ship happened to come by and it carried the survivors all back to China. The Korean government, fearing further visits from the French, decided to answer the letter of the previous year. It was couched in the following terms:

 “Last year we received a letter from the foreigners. It was addressed to the ministers of this realm and read as follows : ‘Three of our countrymen, Imbert, Chastan and [page 48] Maubant, have been put to death by you. We come to demand why you have killed them. You will say perhaps that your law forbids foreigners entering your country, but if Chinese or Manchus should happen to enter your realm you would not kill them, but you would have them carried back to their own country. Why then did you not treat these men the same way? If they had been convicted of murder, sedition or a like crime we would have nothing to say, but they were innocent, and in condemning them unjustly you have committed a grave injury against the French government.’ To this letter we beg to reply as follows : In 1839 there were arrested here certain strangers who were brought into the country at a time unknown to us. They wore Korean clothes, they spoke the Korean language, they traveled by night and slept by day; they veiled their faces, concealed their whereabouts and consorted with men whom we consider rebels, godless men and enemies of the government. When brought before the tribunal they claimed that their names were Pierre No and Japanese Gang. Are these the men you refer to? When interrogated, they said nothing about being Frenchmen, and even if they had we could not have sent them back, for we did not know where your country is. What could we do but apply our law, which forbids secret entrance into our kingdom? On the other hand, their conduct in changing their names and wearing Korean dress shows that they had ulterior motives, and they cannot be compared to those who have been shipwrecked upon our shores. Such men we save if possible and aid to send back home. Such is our law. Had your fellowcountrymen been shipwrecked upon our coast, they would have received precisely the same treatment as Chinese, Japanese or Manchus under like circumstances. You say that these men were killed without cause and that we have committed a grave offense against the French government. This is most astonishing. We have never had any communication with France. We do not know even how far she is from Korea. What motive could we possibly have for injuring her? How would you act if a foreigner should enter your country secretly and in disguise and do what you consider evil? Would you leave him alone? If a Chinaman or a Manchu should come here and do as your people did they would be treated in