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# The Fusion of Korean Society.

The casual onlooker can form little or no idea of the enormous changes that have taken place in recent years and that are now taking place, in the mutual relations that exist between the different classes of Korean Society. It is well known that the barriers between the upper and the lower classes have been shaken to their foundations if not, in some respects, entirely broken down; but the causes which have brought this about and the changes it has effected in the running of the social establishment are a sealed book even to many who have lived in the country for years. It is believed by many that in spite of all that has happened during the past three decades, the Korean people are practically where they were previous to that time and that the leaven of so-called civilization has as yet hardly penetrated the cuticle of society. We propose to indicate briefly a few of the evidences which go to prove the contrary.

One of the most powerful factors in this change was the abolition of the national examination or *kwaga* in 1894. The fact that these examinations were an empty form and that not once in a thousand times did they reveal the really superior scholar has little to do with the question. There can be no doubt that they stood between the upper and the lower classes as a real if only imaginary line of demarcation. If it is objected that a thing cannot be real and still only imaginary I would [page 340] [point out that a???] few years ago no one could sell silk or cotton or shoes or hats or in fact any of the staples of commerce except wine, tobacco and a few other things, in Seoul, except he joined the guild. This no *yangban* could do, of course, but when the guilds were disfranchised and competition became possible thousands of gentlemen invested money in these enterprises. The broadening effect of such a change can hardly be exaggerated. Some would consider it a lowering of the standard but we consider it to have been a great blessing. In Western countries gentlemen have scores of ways whereby they rub against their fellows and gain practical experience. The arts and professions afford ample opportunity for all round development; but in Korea the *yangban* was well nigh useless. He had no acquaintance with practical affairs, was helpless in an emergency and unless possessed of wealth was a burden upon his relatives or lived off the labor of his wife. There was no way to earn an honest living. But now all this is changed, and even the *yangban* is beginning to see, though as yet darkly, that it is as little a sacrifice of real dignity to earn a living as to sponge on his relatives and friends.

The radical changes that have taken place in the system of education has had a more far reaching effect than is generally supposed, for after the discontinuance of the *kwaga* and the establishment in Seoul and in the provinces of schools based upon modem ideals the attention of the people has been directed to them as the avenues through which distinction can be attained. But these schools are open to the middle as well as to the upper classes and this helped to demonstrate to the public that the old order of hereditary yangbanism is passing rapidly away. Of course the intermediate stage is one of confusion and friction. The older generation fume and fret because the old dignified standards are being laid aside, and the younger generation fumes and frets because the conservative element still blocks the progress of popular education by ignoring the graduates of the schools in the distribution of offices. It is for this reason that the recent lapse into conservatism has practically emptied [page 341] the schools. The pupils say, and rightly, “Why should we take these liberal courses of study since the government not only fails to recognize the graduates but exercises a system of espionage over the schools as if they were centers of sedition?” There can be no question that these schools have awakened many Koreans to a recognition of the serious lacks which exist in the intellectual ideals of the people. The study of mathematics and its applications, for instance, has shown how little the old-time standards are fitted to prepare a man for practical life; and the study of the sciences, however rudimentary, has revealed the inanity of the Chinese classics. This has bred in many minds a certain contempt for the persons and the opinions of the older statesmen who arc necessarily old school men. The young men are coming more and more to recognize that the future belongs to the survivors of an obsolete system. This is why all such popular movements as that attempted by the Independence Club are led by young men backed by still younger men, and this in turn has made almost inevitable their temporary failure. But it must always be remembered that it is these young men who are gradually taking the places of their conservative elders. Look about and note the sons of many of these older men of influence. In many cases they have travelled and observed more or less widely and they afford the greatest contrast to their conservative fathers. There have been a few startling cases where foreign travel and modem education have failed to emancipate men from the worst forms of conservatism but they are notable exceptions to the rule.

Another factor that is working powerfully to transform existing conditions is the improvement in facilities for communication between the capital and the provinces. The postal system in spite of the fact that it shows a large annual deficit is one of the most paying investments of the government. A necessary preliminary to definite and general reform is the welding of the people into a more homogeneous whole. Through all the past centuries it has been the impression that by leaving [page 342] the Capital a man shakes off his feet the dust of politics and joins the passive majority, but in these times of more perfect intercommunication between town and couutry the people of even the most distant places keep in touch with the events and thoughts of the Capital, and that sullen antipathy between town and country which is bred of ignorance is being ameliorated by the influence of the daily press through the medium of the post-office. It forms an arterial and veinous system, ensuring an intellectual circulation which is in marked contrast with the previous stagnation. As a result of this there has been something approaching a *volte face* in the attitude of the country people. Formerly they were the most conservative and the quickest to deprecate any change, but to-day many of them are waiting eagerly and expectantly for radical changes in the central government. They are learning to realize their own importance to the state and tp push the proposition that the central government has duties and obligations to the provinces that cannot be shifted or ignored. We say this, such a change has begun. It is yet in its infancy and will need years for its complete development, but anyone would be rash indeed to predict a limit to its ultimate transformation of social conditions.

Another factor that has worked powerfully in the direction of social fusion is the work of Christian Missions. In a sense Christianity is a disintegrating force and leads to temporary social confusion. Under certain circumstances, for instance during the regime of the late Regent, the work of Christian missionaries causes a great social upheaval, but in another and far more fundamental sense the Christian propaganda is a welding force. This lies in the fact that it forms a fraternity of interest between the different sections of the country’, brings typical representatives of distant provinces into physical as well as intellectual touch with each other and affords in countless cases a breadth of sympathy and a catholicity of interest which transforms an ignorant provincial into a well-informed and sturdy patriot. One of the significant signs of the times is the fact that in [page 343] hundreds of country villages the men who are wellinformed and who take an appreciative interest in the large affairs of the country as distinguished from petty local matters are the men who have come in contact with the missionary and have read the books which he supplies. The very universality of the claims of Christianity gives a flavor of cosmopolitanism which tends to make men seriously compare their social status and their civic life with that ol other peoples more or less favorably situated. It is the common impression of those who are hostile or indifferent to Christianity that it is a narrowing cult. This is of course the mistaken dictum of those who have never tried it and are incompetent to judge, but whatever may be said of western lands it must be confessed by every fairminded, though unsympathetic, critic that it stings to life the lethargic oriental and makes him do things. It wakes him up. As to whether the things he does are always commendable we do not propose to discuss but none will seriously deny that if there are things to do it will take live men to do them. The village of Sorai on the coast of Whang-ha Province is a case in point. This village is prevailingly Christian. It has a school of a grade as far advanced as any in Korea. It has good sanitation, sidewalks, bridges and other evidences of communal pride. The people there raised a considerable sum of money to send to India at the time of the last famine there, and in many other ways it has shown evidences not only of civilization but of Christian enlightenment. And all the work has been done without the use of foreign money. This village is an exceptional case. We would not claim as much for many, if any, other places in Korea, but it shows what is easily possible when the people wake up.

Another factor in the fusion of Korean Society is the change from barter to sale in the commercial life of the people. From the most ancient times barter formed almost the sole method of exchange of commodities. It was only recently that the government ceased to receive rice as revenue. The country markets are a relic of days [page 344] when if a man wanted a bolt of linen he must pay for it with a bag of rice or a bale of dried fish. This method still prevails to a large extent in the country but the great increase in amount of coin and the rapid change in the ratio of commodities to exchange medium will rapidly do away with the local markets or fairs and the merchant will purchase goods at the point of production or manufacture and transport them to distant parts of the country. This will cause, and is causing, an enormous increase in the number of middle men. This necessarily causes a rise in the cost of goods but it relieves the country farmer of the necessity of wasting his time going to distant fairs every few days, and the extra cost will not be felt. It is a salutary division of labor which will work in the direction of better conditions.

Such are only a few of the factors which are welding the Korean people into a homogeneous whole. There is much still to be desired and as yet only a beginning has been made, but what has already been accomplished refutes the argument of those who claim that a foreign power should seize Korea because she does not advance.

# The Fallow Lands.

In the last number of the Review we stated that the margin of cultivation had lowered during the last few decades; that is, the land now under cultivation is less in extent than it was at the beginning of the present reign. This statement has been challenged by certain of our friends, and we propose to give a few of the reasons why we believe that the statement was correct. It is true that neither we nor anyone else has made a personal inspection of these lands, and all we can go by is the statements of Koreans themselves, and even these are worthless unless they can supported by reasonable arguments. There are several principal reasons for believing that the ground now under cultivation in Korea is smaller in area than at the beginning of the present reign.

[page 345] (1) It is conceded by all that there has been, during these years, a constant deterioration in administrative ethics in Korea. The open sale of public offices has increased to an alarming extent, the breaking down of social barriers has resulted in an influx of inferior material into the personnel of the government and this has resulted in a lowering of the standard of official conduct. As we show elsewhere, this is but a transition stage and time will remedy the evils of it, but we think no one will deny that the ideals of the country prefect have been seriously lowered during the past two decades. The farmers, who provide the great bulk of the revenue, have been ground down more and more by illegal exactions, with the result, as everyone knows, that they have no ambition to produce more than a bare subsistence. The pressure has been all in the direction of a curtailment rather than an enlargement of the range of agricultural industry. Now, the people know very well that agriculture is the most heavily-taxed industry in the land, and that taxes have to be paid whether the crops are a success or a failure; and just as fast as the people in the country come to realize that there may be a way out of their uncomfortable situation just so fast will they give up farming for some other pursuit, which will relieve them from constant and increasing official spoliation. Who does not know that the lot of the farmer who is poor and who has no “pull” at the magistracy is the most pitiable and hopeless of any in the land; and if other people know it the farmer himself will not be long in finding it out. He is finding it out and there is a constant stream of people leaving the farm for some other occupation. But it will naturally be asked what these men all do after giving up farming. The other occupations will soon be overrun. The answer to this lies in two facts, the opening of the country to foreign trade and the enormous change in the currency of the country. It is needless for us to attempt to show that the opening of the ports, the influx of fereign goods and the efflux of native goods has drawn away from other pursuits an army of laborers who are required at [page 346] the ports and in the work of transporting goods to and from these centers of industry. This is one of the avenues by which the poor farmer or the farmer’s assistant escapes the cruel exactions of the officials. Then again the phenomenal increase in the amount of money in circulation has begun to work a revolution in business methods. Heretofore the farmer carried his own goods to the local market and bartered it for other things which he required. There were very few middle-men, comparatively; but now the farmer in many instances finds that it pays better to sell his goods for money, especially since he no longer pays taxes in grain but in money. For this reason an army of middle-men has sprung up. Where only two men were formerly necessary for a bargain three are now necessary. We do not say that this is universal or even thiat it is the rule but it is true that the increasing need of middle-men has opened up an avenue whereby thousands of farmers have left the plow for the jiggy and the abacus. This supposition is all the more reasonable when we note that these middlemen have no taxes to pay. They are quite independent.

(2) A second cause of the shrinkage in the area of land under cultivation is the deforestation of the country and its immediate consequences. As to the general fact of such deforestation we think no one has any doubt. It has gone on to an alarming extent under our very eyes. Population has increased and consequently more fuel must be consumed, more houses built, more implements of all kinds constructed. The character of the Korean soil is such that the denudation of the hills results in their being scoured each year by the rains. To such an extent is this carried that it is impossible for them to be reforested. No tree can gain a foothold strong enough to survive the annual floods. The direct and inevitable result of this is that the country prefects annually report hundreds of rice fields being covered from three inches to a foot deep with gravel, that is washed down from the bare hills upon which even grass can find but an occasional and insecure foothold. When this burden is laid upon the farmer it is nine to one that he [page 347] gives up the struggle in despair. The cost of clearing out such a field is prohibitive in many cases and the possibility of the recurrence of the calamity is utterly discouraging. And then on top of this, if the magistrate secures a remission of the taxes on the ruined field, he (the magistrate) is pretty sure to be haled before a fake tribunal some years later and forced to pay the amount which he never collected from the farmer. Is it natural to suppose that the magistrate will wittingly take the chances of the pecuniary loss and the disgrace of such a proceeding?

(3) A third reason for believing that agriculture is on the wane in Korea is the fact of the wholesale export or consumption of cattle. Thousands of these animals have been exported to Vladivostock and from there to a score of other places in Siberia. Most of them have come from the northeast province. In addition to this the increase in luxury in Seoul and the provincial centers, the demands of the foreign populations of the open ports, and the supply of steamships, has resulted in a steady drain upon the cattle of Korea. It is well known that agriculture here depends as much upon the bullock as upon his driver. The culture of rice cannot be carried on without the bullock. If the land under cultivation were increasing or even holding its own we do not believe the demands for beef for local consumption and for export would be so easily supplied and at such low figures. This goes on uninterruptedly except when, every few years, the cattle plague carries off from ten to sixty per cent of the cattle. It makes no difference whether the curtailment of cultivated land throws the cattle on the market or whether the sale of cattle throws the land out of cultivation. Both are true to some extent probably, but the fact remains that the large and steady and increasing sale of cattle indicates a falling off in the agricultural industry.

(4) A fourth reason, and one which may seem farfetched, though we believe it to be genuine, is the increasing demand for grave space. When we remember that in Korea the graves are preserved and cared for with [page 348] sedulous care by at least half the people for a period of four generations or more, and that the space required for the grave of even a middle class person is three or four times as great as in western countries we will readily see that an increase in population will steadily require an increase in grave space. This argument will appeal most strongly to those who know Korea best. It will be no refutation of this argument to say that the graves are made on land that would not be cultivated in any event, for every one who has travelled at all in Korea knows that very many of the graves of middle class people are found so near the edges of the fields that they preclude the possibility of enlarging the cultivated land, and prove an efficient barrier to the advancement of the margin of cultivation.

But if we admit an increase in population we shall be confronted with the argument that this itself implies an increase in cultivated land, for this surplus population must be fed. The answer to this objection lies in the fact that this increase in population has resulted in a distinct lowering of the grade of living of the Korean people. Even two decades ago professional mendicancy was practically unknown. Korean history asserts that year after year in times of plenty people could travel anywhere without expense because rice was so common and cheap. It is probable that the lowering of the grade of comfort of the common people is quite commensurate with the increase in population. But there is another consideration. When the government received taxes in kind it was accustomed to store up enormous quantities of rice in the different fortresses and storehouses and keep it there until the following season. Thus a considerable amount of food was annually withdrawn from consumption, but of late years this has not been the case and this grain has gone to feed the surplus population. This argument is somewhat weakened by the fact that when the new grain was substituted for the old the latter was distributed among the officials or soldiers and was consumed; but even so the loss by water, vermin and other causes was very great, and in many cases, through [page 349] indirection, the old rice was left in store for six or seven years until it was wholly worthless. Such is no longer the case. For these and other lesser reasons we believe that the increase in population has resulted in no increase of cultivated land, at least during the past forty years.

(5) A fifth cause of the shrinkage of land under cultivation has to do with the Crown lands. Of these there are or were two recognized varieties. The first was called *yuk-t’o* or “post-lands’’ and the second was the *tun-to* or “camp-lands.” The former was land set aside for the support of the *yung-ma* or horse relay system which was the forerunner of a postal sytem. It was from the proceeds of this land that the system was kept up and the importance of the system made it quite certain that the land would be cultivated in approved style. The “camp lands” were set aside for the support of garrisons, guards and police in the country. The exact extent of these lands we do not know but there was some in each of the three hundred and fifty prefectures. The best land was not usually selected for this purpose. A special official was detailed to oversee the cultivation of these lands in each district and it was thoroughly done, if only for the squeeze that was to be derived from it. Ten years ago this system was abandoned and these lands being no longer under the eye of a responsible party were cultivated by the men who had formerly done so but without any oversight or restrictions. For a time they enjoyed immunity from taxation but after a few years the Imperial Household began to send men down to the country to collect money in the interests of the Imperial privy purse. The lands were exempt from the regular government taxes but their last state was worse than their first, for there was not even a semblance of order in the method of the imposition and collection of the private tax. The growing needs of the Household increased the disabilities of the farmers and the taxes were collected in such a capricious and arbitrary way that many of the men who had to stand the brunt of it gradually’ moved off the land while many others worked in a discouraged and half [page 350] hearted manner which shrunk the total to a fraction of its former amount. Much of this land is subsequently taken up by others still more desperately situated but all the time a certain amount of it is lying fallow.

(6) The sixth and last cause that we shall mention is the result of seditious uprisings in various parts of the country. The country has not yet recovered from the tonghak uprising of ten years ago. The tonghak were themselves farmers and for the time being they deserted their own lands and terrorized those who did not join them, and looted and destroyed on a scale which has never been explained to the world at large. Hundreds of them were killed and thousands of their victims also fled or were cut down in large sections of the south.

# What Korea Owes to Japan.

The statement has been made in various places that Korea is under obligations to Japan, but no one seems to have thought it worth while to specify the particulars of this obligation. It is a private expression of the Japanese that Korea owes them a debt of gratitude and on this they base their claims to extraordinary consideratioil on the part of the Korean people. As Japan is now seeking to secure a payment of this debt in the shape of exclusive privileges it may be worth while to examine the claim and see wherein it is true and wherein it is imaginary.

From the time Japan opened up her new national regime in 1868 it was her policy to uphold by word and deed Korea’s independence of China. The Japanese believed that China had no more claim to suzeranity over the peninsula than Japan had. This belief had no true historical basis, for there never was a time when Korea recognized the suzerainty of Japan or paid her tribute. The exchange of goods between Korea and Japan through Fusan never assumed the character of tribute [page 351] and the rules which governed that interchange would argue Korean suzeranity over Japan as easily as it would prove the opposite. Korea never was a vassal of Japan in any sense. The reputed conquest of Korea by the legendary Empress Jingu is about as historical as “The Taking of Lungtumkin.” The ancient histories of Korea which are very complete make no mention of such an invasion.

But however that may be, Japan definitely recognized the independence of the country and concluded a treaty of peace with Korea in 1876 on terms of complete equality. In 1884 occurred the serious emeute in which the would-be reformers were backed by the Japanese. Whatever may be said against the methods adopted by the reformers they were for the time being successful and if the Japanese troops had held firm, in spite of their small numbers, the revolution would have been accomplished and an enormous impetus would have been given to the progressive idea. As it was the Japanese weakened when they found that the king was eager to go over to the Chinese and so they gave up the point and retired, This may be said to terminate the first period. Several other Powers, following Japan’s example, had already signed treaties of equality with Korea and it may fairly be said that it was Japan that brought about this definite opening of the country, for had not the treaty of 1876 been signed we doubt very much whether the others would have been proposed. This Korea may be said to owe to Japan in a sense, but it created no obligation payable in such coin as the Japanese are asking now, for the opening of Korea benefitted Japan far more than it did Korea. Japan secured adequate reward in the opening up of commence with the peninsula, of which she enjoys to-day the lion’s share. She has profited largely by the export of food stuffs to Japan and by the enlarged market for her industrial products.

The second period of Japanese influence extends from 1884 until 1896. During that time she found herself thwarted at many points by the strong proChinese sentiments of the Korean Court and people [page 352] and these sentiments at last resulted in the China-Japan war whereby China was thrust out of her position in Korea and the land was declared independent and so recognized by China. In the months following the war Japan attempted to institute reforms. Many excellent changes were made which have remained until today and are now proving of benefit to the country but the virtue of these good reforms was totally eclipsed, in the Korean mind, by the mistakes which were made. The Japanese complained that the Koreans were unresponsive and did not want reform. It was the business of the Japanese to have carried out such reforms, and in such a way, that the Koreans would have responded. The events of 1895 brought the influence of Japan in Korea to its lowest ebb, and the flight of the king to the Russian Legation in February 1896 closed the second period of Japan’s influence in Korea. During that period she had once and for all destroyed the very real but very indefinite suzerainty of China and had practically transfered it to Russia. The country was very little better off in any essential particular than she had been before. But the opportunity had been given her to work out her own political salvation. There can be no doubt that Korea missed a great opportunity just after the China-Japan war. If she had grasped the opportunity and utilized it there would have been great hopes for her, but she showed herself so insensible to Her priviliges that she exasperated the Japanese to acts of extreme resentment, injurious alike to herself and to Korea. It can scarcely be said that Korea owes Japan anything for the events of that second period. She needed not only the opportunity to reform but she needed the wisest guidance in the matter. The opportunity alone without the wise guidance can scarcely be called a benefit.

The third period of Japanese influence extends from 1896 to the outbreak of the present war. What has been done during these years is known to all. Japanese trade has increased by leaps and bounds and thousands of Japanese have largely profited by this trade. On the other hand the predominance of Russian influence negatived [page 353] all proposals for reform. The Independence Club movement, which must have been favored by the Japanese, resulted in disastrous failure except in so far as it educated the people in the principles of intelligent government. The currency of the country rapidly deteriorated, largely through the work of Japanese counterfeiters in Osaka and elsewhere, who thereby inflicted upon their own countrymen in Korea a severe blow, for the consequent fluctuation of exchange was ruinous to trade. The Japanese authorities seem to blame Korea for this but while it is true that the government thwarted the Japanese as much as possible the real trouble lay in those Japanese felons who flooded the country with spurious coin. The Japanese authorities made laudable and successful attempts to stop this nefarious work but great harm was done before the counterfeiters were brought to book, and even yet we hear of an occasional raid on them. During all this time the influence of Russia was always in the direction of national ruin. It is impossible to point to a single measure advocated by them which will stand a moment’s scrutiny. Compared with them the Japanese were altruism itself, for the measures that the latter proposed would have been as beneficial to Korea as to themselves. At last matters got so bad that Japan could endure the strain no longer and war was the result. Just as the king put himself in Chinese hands in 1884 and remained there until the encroachments of China precipitated the war of 1894, so he remained in Russian hands till the situation became intolerable for the Japanese and it became once more necessary to take Korea out of Russian hands *vi et armis*.

Thus has been ushered in the fourth period of Japanese influence in Korea. It must be confessed that every one of these deliverances has been distasteful to the Korean court. They did not want to come out of their seclusion in 1876; they did not want to be taken out of Chinese hands in 1884 or in 1894; they did not want to be taken out of Russian hands in 1904. We speak of the court, for it is not known what the people wanted. They were divided and every man wanted what would [page 354] bring him the most personal advantage irrespective of the welfare of the state.

This latest plucking of the brand from the burning presents one entirely new feature. Korea is in Japan’s hands just as she was in 1884 and in 1894 but this time there is no one to whom she can appeal or into whose arms she can throw herself. Japan has come stay, if the present expectations as to the war are realized. The civilized world recognizes Japan’s right to put a definite veto upon a repetition of that policy in Korea which has persistently played her into the hands of Japan’s enemies. And at this point we arrive at the first thing that Korea really owes to Japan, namely straight-forward friendliness— not blind partisanship but an open and frank attitude of genuine good will. In spite of any mistakes of method which Japan may have committed and in spite of any seeming crudities of administration, her consistent and steadfast championship of Korea’s independence merits Korea’s friendship. That it does not receive it as yet should not astonish the Japanese nor make them cry out that Korea is without gratitude. Korea does not know what independence means. Gratitude for a gift is always proportioned to the appreciation of it and what Japan needs is patience to teach Korea the value of the gift that has been conferred. We repeat that the one and only thing that Korea owes to Japan at the present time is an atitude of friendly receptivity, a willingness to be taught. And she owes this to Japan not only because of Japan’s long championship of her independence but because of the more selfish reason that in it lies her own personal safety. Japan has declared the independence of Korea now for the third time. If Korea does not accept the gift and use it she will never be offered it again. As a mere matter of duty to herself, her own autonomy, Korea owes to Japan an attitude of friendliness. She owes Japan nothing else, neither waste lands, nor mines, nor fisheries, nor coolies. These are things which Japan will eventually enjoy the products of without doubt when the proper time comes, but as yet Japan has given Korea nothing that we can call an equivalent for these concessions.

[page 355] We have heretofore said that Korea owes it to the world at large to develop her agricultural resources, but this gives Japan no right to demand that these resources be turned over to her. We deny the oft made statement that Korea has proved that she will not progress. She has never really been given the chance, for though all restrictions to such progress were removed she never was given the impulse to reform. It is a thing that must be developed and brought out. It can only be done by the wise and firm guidance of the dominant power, Japan. This brings us to the other side of the question. If Korea owes something to Japan, Japan also owes something to Korea. If Korea owes to Japan an attitude of friendly receptiveness which will make it possible to bring out her latent abilities, Japan owes to Korea a wise and temperate policy which will conciliate the people, lay at rest their immemorial prejudice against Japan and gradually evolve a genuinely enlightened government. The ultimate fruits of such a firm but temperate and patient policy will be all and more than all that Japan has lately demanded. If Japan wants these things within five years she can get them only by a policy of military force and in the face of the intense hostility of the Korean people, and even then she will get but meager returns. If on the other hand she will begin at the foundation and build up a genuine and mutual friendship between ‘herself and Korea, the benefits which she will reap in the long run will be a hundred times as great, and instead of having in the peninsula a dissatisfied people ever on the lookout for an opportunity to betray her to an enemy she will have a genuine ally and an enormous field of commercial and industrial exploitation.

One thing that the Japanese must get rid of is the contemptuousness with which they look upon the Korean. If they make up their minds that there is no possibility of good in the Korean every plan for mutual benefit which they can devise is doomed from the start. Contempt for a nation of ten or twelve million people, however weak and ignorant they may be, is a sign of weakness. The English had a far better right to be [page 356] contemptuous of the Indian but they were not, and in that very fact lies the unique ability of the English to colonize. On what basis do the Japanese claim that the Korean people are incapable of enlightened government? Is it because officials are prone to mutual jealousy? Time was when Japan suffered from the same cause and in still greater measure, yet she grew out of it. Is it because of a lack of intellectual ability? Such lack has yet to be proved. The Korean is as good a mathematician as the Japanese, given the same opportunities; and this exact science forms a good gauge of intellectual capacity.

This contemptuous attitude on the the part of the Japanese in Korea lies at the basis of the rough treatment that Koreans receive at their hands. The Japanese know that they can ill-treat Koreans with impunity. Do they think it is because the Koreans are a craven lot? If so they make a great mistake. It is simply because in case of retaliation the Korean has no court to which to appeal. The number of cases of assault upon entirely innocent Koreans is so great that no consul could begin to attend to them all even if he wished, and of late there have been several cases of assault upon foreigners, quite unprovoked. The contemptuous attitude of the Japanese has extended to others besides Koreans. We mention the matter not by way of complaint but only to show wherein the Japanese need instruction before they will be able to make a success of their policy in Korea.

It is much to be regretted that a policy has been adopted recently which tends to alienate the good will of the Korean people. The Japanese have no right to demand the fallow lands of Korea; they have no right to take Koreans by force and compel them to go to Manchuria as coolies, and the pity of it is all the greater because the injury thus inflicted must all be undone before Japan can genuinely profit by her influence in Korea, She is putting stumbling-blocks in her own way.

England’s colonial system was built up not so much by the sword as by wise conciliation and if Japan wants to emulate England’s example she must do it by making friends and not by alienating them.

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# Review

*La Code Pénal de la Corée* by Laurent Cremazy, Ancien Avocat à la Cour d’Appel de Paris, Premier Président de Cour honoraire, Conseiller Légiste a Séoul; pp. XX and 182; 1904.

We have received a copy of this work from the author and have read it with extreme interest. The work is published privately in Seoul and each copy is issued under the signature of the author. The form and get up of the book are deserving of great praise and does great credit to the printers, Hodge & Co., of the Seoul Press. The work contains (1) A translation and an analysis of the six hundred and seventytwo articles of the Korean penal code, (2) A comparison of the text of the code with that of the Chinese code and the Annamite code, (3) Notes upon the institutions, usages and customs of Korea, (4) A resumé of the penal reforms submitted to the grand Korean Council of State, (5) A very complete index. The book is addressed or dedicated by the author “A Son Excellence, Monsieur Collin de Plancy, Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la République Francaise in Corée. Hommage de reconnaissance et témoignage de respectueux dévouement.”

In order to indicate the scope of this scholarly piece of work it will be necessary to give a short precis of the contents. The first portion of the book, which contains the Korean penal code, is divided into five sections. The first deals with the general rules for the application of penal law, under which we find the rules for the method of application of the penal code, judicial competence, arrest of suspects, taking of evidence, privileges accorded to arrested individuals, the limits of legal delays, the general rules governing places of burial, titles, the augmentation or diminution of the degree of punishment according to the rank of officials inculpated or according to degree of relationship. The second section deals with “règles de droit criminel,” namely concerning punishable acts and their legal effects, several infractions of the [page 358] law by one individual, crimes committed while under detention, repetition of a crime, several individuals guilty of a single crime, thieves, old men and minors, attempted crime, exemption from punishment. The third section deals with the execution of sentences, under which are explained the different kinds of punishments, the instruments of punishment, the execution of grave penalties, instruments of corporal pimishments inflicted for public or private misdemeanors, parents or others who fail to denounce or who conceal a criminal, misdemeanors of men under detention, punishment applicable to a man who has committed several crimes, punishments for attempted crime, royal clemency, augmentation and diminution of punishments, the execution of sentences, the duration of punishment, restitution, commutation of punishments, tentative liberation under caution. The fourth section contains eight chapters dealing with rebellion, crimes committed by officials in the performance of their functions, suits and judgments, frauds and trickery, the spirit cult and regard for the dead, the degradation of autels, access to the palace, mourning and funerals. The fifth section on penal legislation contains six chapters dealing with homicide and assault, adultery, marriage and succession, thieves, rules concerning goods, various infractions of law.

This gives but a very inadequate idea of the very interesting nature of the work, for it gives no details but it is remarkable how much one can learn of Korean society from a perusal of these laws and the punishments inflicted for their infraction.

Following this we find a list of proposed reforms in this code, presented to the Council of State. They suggest the abolition of beating as a punishment for officials who have committed errors in the administration of the government, and they suggest the substitution of other penalties such as a reprimand, a fine, suspension or dismissal. The second is a recommendation to do away with the incarceration of a complainant and his witnesses until the time of trial. The third relates to the addition of a law dealing with contempt of court. The [page 359] fourth seeks to add a law granting a man damages for unmerited punishment. Another proposes to give a judge the right to refuse any commutation of sentence. The next recommends that the judge be ordered to quote the law in passing judgment on any case. The next seeks to abolish general confiscation of a criminal’s property. The last would suppress the 672nd law of the code, which says that a man who does anything that he ought not to do shall be punished with forty blows. The application of this is so broad that “il est de nature à rendre superflues toutes les autres dispositions pénales” which seems quite evident.

The book ends with an index so complete that it fills forty-five pages out of the 182.

This work shows a perfect grasp of the conditions which obtain in the legal field in Korea, and the government is to be congratulated upon having in its employ a man who takes such pains to acquaint himself with the actual status of the service to which he is attached. No one who reads this book will fail to learn many interesting things about Korea that he never heard or dreamed of before. There is but one criticism that we would make. In the “Bibliographie” which the author gives, he includes among others the works of Rockhill, Landis, von Mollendorff, Allen and others but makes no mention of *The Korean Repository* or *The Korea Review* in which have appeared numerous articles bearing on social customs and laws. We venture to say that a perusal of the four volumes of the *Korean Repository* will afford more information about Korea than any other work, and while we would not claim so much for the *Korea Review* we venture to suggest that it merits at least a humble place in any bibliographic of Korea that pretends to give the sources of information about the customs of this country.

Impronte di Bellezza. Erzerum, Acquerelli Umbri, Tlemsen, by A. Monaco, Rome, 1904; pp 360.

We have received from the author a copy of this beautifully published work containing extended dissertations on the four subjects enumerated in the title. As these essays have no bearing upon Korea we do not feel [page 360] justified in using space in the Review to give them a full notice, but we judge from the title and from the general appearance of the book that it must be well worth reading.

# Editorial Comment.

He was a very sanguine man who telegraphed to one of the Tokyo papers that there had been a great change for the better in the attitude of the Koreans toward the Japanese claims and that the Waste Lands scheme would again be pressed, implying that it would now be easy of accomplishment; but, as we have already intimated it is one thing to obtain the consent of the Korean Government and another and different thing to gain the consent and co-operation of the Korean people. Mr. Nagamori’s aphorism “Treat a fool like a fool,” is not a good augury of success. It is likely to become as notorious as Vanderbilt’s exclamation “The Public be —” well, anything but felicitated. The truth is there are two ways of treating a fool. One is to take advantage of his foolishness, the other is to help him to get rid of it. Mr. Nagamori evidently considers the former method the proper one.

The foreign press in Japan and a considerable portion of the Japanese press consider this scheme a mistake and have said so frankly, but they say it must be carried through at any cost in order to save the prestige of the Japanese Government. We believe this to be a very bad principle of action. It is poor statesmanship to urge that a bad measure must be carried through simply to save the face of the party that planned it. In the long run such statesmanship will inevitably be discredited. We would like to ask the people who urge this argument one simple question. Did it injure the prestige of the United States to pay back to Japan that Shimonoseki indemnity after it was decided that it was unjust? That act was an acknowledgment that the United States had done Japan a wrong in forcing her to pay the money. Is there anything more lowering to the dignity of a nation in making restitution for a wrong than for an individual to do so? We believe not; and while some people may have thought the United States Government was Quixotic and sentimental in thus letting go of that money it is a very well established fact that that one act did more to give Japan confidence in the integrity [page 361] and the friendship of the United States than decades of diplomatic talk could have done. It did not lower the prestige of the United States by the fraction of a hair’s breadth, and the Japanese woulcl be the first to say so. Why then should it be beneath the dignity of the Japanese Government to withdraw this claim entirely, now that it is generally acknowledged to be a mistake? The history of the scheme affords a strong argument against it. Mr. Nagamori had tried to carry out a similar plan in Siam and had failed. It was transferred bodily to Korea without, apparently, the smallest consideration of the prejudices of this people. It was looked upon as a great industrial problem merely, whereas it is even more a sociological problem. One might as well say that all that stands m the way of colonization of Palestine by the Jews is the difficulty of raising the money with which to buy the land, while as everyone knows, that is the least of the difficulties.

The difficulties which have attended the securing of Korean coolies to work with the Japanese army in Manchuria are three-fold. In the first place the ignorance of the coolie has been played upon by certain parties and the impression has gone forth that the coolies will be put in the front rank of the battle as food for Russian powder, and after the ammunition has been exhausted the Japanese will advance to an easy victory. The government has done what it could to counteract such foolish rumors and with partial success. The second reason is that in spite of the large pay offered, the Koreans do not consider it very tempting. One dollar and a half is offered, but any coolie can earn a dollar at home, and the higher cost of living in the north, the separation from their families and especially the necessity of working every day, all combine to make the average coolie rather skeptical. In the third place the way that common Koreans are treated by the Japanese about Seoul and its suburbs does not tend to make the prospect of working under Japanese overseers very appetizing. It is well known to the Koreans that money easily earned is easily lost and in such work as that in the north the temptation to gamble and to waste money in even less commendable ways is very great indeed. It can be confidently affirmed that the wives of these coolies will be a unit in their opposition to their going, for not one in ten will bring any money home with him, in all probability.

We cannot forbear a word in regard to the attitude of the missionaries towards the gestions at issue as between Korea and Japan. The missionaries (Protestant) [page 362] have been besieged with Korean Christians who ask for advice as to what attitude they shall take and what they shall do. Shall they join a society for the protection of Korea’s rights? Shall they forcibly resist impressment into the ranks of coolies for the north? Shall they do this or shall they do that? So far we know the missionaries have handled these questions in a very conservative way. They have told the Christian Koreans that if they mix in any of these attempts it must be merely as individuals and not as a church. It is the fixed determination of the missionaries to prevent the church as such from becoming identified with any special political movement. In every case the Christians have been advised to refrain from violence but rather to submit even to injustice, unless a question of conscience is involved. The Christian Church is not in Korea to reform the government or society except through the propagation of the principles of Christianity. It is quite apart from politics, and we trust always will be.

# News Calendar.

The Law Department has asked the Supreme Court to deal with the Korean miscreant who dug open the grave of one of the kings of the last dynasty at Song-do, extracted some pottery and sold it to a Japanese for four dollars.

The Home Department has declined to give the Japanese 1,000 tsubo of land at Chemulpo for a meteorological observatory.

The prefect of Chang-yun reports that he has arrested Kim Tak-po a prominent Tong-hak leader who is guilty of seven different offences; arson, theft, robbery, sedition, &c., &c., and he asks for instructions.

Some two months or more ago a special irrigation bureau was established, apparently for the purpose of giving some officials fat positions and exploiting the resources of the country for selfish purposes It is believed that it was through this clique that the matter of waste land concession was pushed. This bureau was abolished about the end of July.

The Emperor of Korea sent a message to Japan about the first of August asking that Marquis Ito come to Korea to act as general advisor to the Government. The reports as to whether he will come or not are conflicting. It is to be hoped for Korea’s sake as well as Japan’s that he will come.

It is reported that the Emperor is very desirous that Yi Yong-ik should return from Japan and aid in the administration of the Government. Whether the Japanese will comply or not is as yet a vexed question.

A Japanese Commission composed of twenty-four gendarmes under command of a Major are going to Kang-wun Province on a tour of inspection, and the Korean Home Office has sent to the various prefects ordering them to give every facility to the Commission.

[page 363] On July 30 Sim Sang-han the Vice Prime Minister and Yi Ha-yung the Foreign Minister visited the Japanese Legation under insructions from His Majesty to secure a definite withdrawal of the waste lands demand. The matter was temporarily arranged but the Japanese authorities have not withdrawn the claim definitely.

The Japanese desire to put up a telegraph line between Ch’ol-yung, in Kang-wun Province, and Wonsan. They ask that the Korean Government give the 570 telegraph poles that will be required.

The Japanese military authorities have seen fit to put up at the street corners wooden guide posts. There can be no possible harm in this but it appears to have been done without consulting the Korean authorities, and so the Korean Chief of Police sent to the Foreign Office asking that the Japanese be told to remove the posts.

The Governor of Pyeng-yang reports that the people of Kasan are much exercised over the seizure of large tracts of land in that district by the Japanese ostensibly for railroad purposes. They describe the land thus taken as forty li square. As this involves the loss of the standing crops the people are desperate and desire relief.

On the nth inst., a cave-in occurred in the tunnel which is being driven under Namsan outside the South Gate and one Japanese was killed and one Korean was severely injured.

About the 12th inst. the apportionment of the number of coolies to be drawn from each province was made. Kyung-geui, South Ch’ungchung, North and South Chulla, North and South Kyung-sang each give 1,200 coolies and North Ch’ung-ch’ung gives 800. This makes 8,000 in all. It is hardly necessary to say that these men are not forthcoming as yet. The Japanese posted a communication in Seoul giving the terms on which coolies would be engaged, (1) Wages to be one and a half Korean dollars a day, (2) five dollars to be given in advance for the coolie to leave with his family, (3) the place of service to be north of Pyeng-yang, (4) food provided from day of contract but wages to begin when actual work is begun. (5) transportation to be provided free of cost, (6) each coolie to provide his own Jiggy. (7) fifty cents a day to be paid to anyone who enrolls fifty coolies, (8) overseer of fifty men to receive two dollars a day, (9) If any coolie is ill he is to receive medical care, (10) no violence will be allowed in the treatment of the coolies, (11) remittances to coolies’ families to be sent faithfully by the Japanese, (12) the food will be plentiful and of good quality, (13) the final date of enlistment is August 20th, (14) limit of enrollment is 10,000 men, (15) anyone who attempts to interfere with the enrollment of coolies to be severely punished

The Supt. of Trade at Chinnampo reports that a Korean engaged on the railway, having committed some offence, was shot by the Japanese

The Home Minister having ordered the various provincial governors to acquaint the prefects with the terms under which coolies are to be secured by the Japanese, the Governor of Kyung-geui sent to the prefects saying that in accordance with the order of the central government he has informed the people of the terms under which the coolies are to go but that erroneous reports have been circulated to the effect that the coolies would be forced to fight the Russians and that for this reason the people refuse to go. The people must know that these reports are false and that the coolies will not be sent within a thousand li of the actual fighting. They must know that the wages are good, the food excellent, medical care efficient and postal facilities sufficient. He adds that the offer of the Japanese is generous, that Koreans have an opportunity to earn splendid wages and that he trusts that the 6,000 men required will be soon forthcoming.

[page 364] The prefect of Yong-in reports that while he was collecting the eighty men required from his district some Japanese gendarmes and the local ajuns went to the market place and seized three Koreans and im mediately all the inns were deserted and the people fled. One other man was seized. That night five or six thousand people came armed with clubs and demanded of him why he wanted to kill them and demanded the release of the four men. He complied and got the Japanese gendarmes out of the place as best he could, to save their lives. After this the excitement subsided. Not a single coolie was obtained there.

Early in August the Belgian authorities applied to the Korean Government for a gold mining concession, basing the request upon the fact that other nationalities had been given concessions.

The governor of South Ham-gy’ung Province announces that twenty-four districts of the province will be unable to pay the house tax owing to great disturbances due to war, whereby many houses have been deserted and the peaceful avocations of the people have been suspended.

Memorials continued to pour in charging Kwon Chung-suk with being a traitor in trying to sell the country to the Japanese. This was because he was understood to be one of the instruments used by the Japanese in the waste land propaganda. Kwon denies that he is culpable and has singled out one of his detractors to sue him before the Supreme Court. The man selected is Yun Si-yong and this gentleman so far from shrinking from the ordeal is eager to engage the doughty Kwon before the bar of the Supreme Court. The court will shortly sit and then we shall see what we shall see.

Now that the Electric Company is a joint American and Korean Company a Korean joint manager has been appointed in the person of Yi Keun-sang, formerly vice Minister of Agriculture; and two other overseers namely Hong U-gwan and Nam Chung-gyu.

Some time ago it was decided to send abroad a number of Korean young men to be educated. At first only sons of officials were offered the opportunity but they unanimously declined, so now it is being offered to men of lower social standing.

On the seventh inst. the prison doors were opened and some one hundred and twenty men were set at liberty. It is said that most of these were men who had been imprisoned through private spite or party animosity. It is with great pleasure that we note the final release of Mr. Yi Seung-man whose long imprisonment of more than five years has been a constant source of grief to his foreign friends. They have known all the time that he was no more guilty of any crime than scores of others who were long ago released. Many of these men came out of prison without other clothes than their prison uniform of blue. Some wealthy merchants at Chongno subscribed enough money to buy each of them a suit of clothes. We call attention to this as a striking example of the innate kindness of the average Korean. These prisoners had no claim on the merchants, and the latter had nothing to gain by giving this money except the consciousness of having helped strangers who were in desperate need.

On the 7th of August began the Japanese demands upon the Korean Government for coolies to go to Manchuria. The prefects of Changyun, Mung-wha, Sin-chun and Eul-yul were asked to furnish 6,000 coolies. The prefects referred the matter to the governor and he in turn sent to Seoul where the authorities ordered the request to be honored.

The people along the Yalu complain that the Korean soldiers are useless as against the Chinese raiders who have been active since the [page 365] passage of the Japanese army. They ask that they be allowed to organize the tiger hunters as a border guard. The request has been granted.

The southern portion of the Seoul Fusan Railway has been opened for traffic as far as the town Ch’ong-do which is only about fifteen miles from Taiku.

The native press tells us that a boat loaded with 18,000 railroad ties for the Seoul Fusan R.R. was wrecked off Ulsan on the 29th of July.

A telegram from Wonsan on the 6th inst. says that on the 2nd 400 Russian cavalry arrived at Ham-heung at eight o’clock p. m. Thirteen of them seized the telegraph office. It is said that they travelled by night and rested during the day. They had three field guns and 400 extra horses and brought a large amount of ammunition and other supplies.

It is said that the fishermen off the northeast coast lost $80,000 worth of fish at the time of the Russian raid out of Vladivostock and the bombardment of VVonsan. The loss was caused by the hasty flight of the fishermen who gave up everything to secure their personal safety.

Cho Min-heui, the Korean Minister to Japan, returned to Korea on furlough on the 25th inst.

The Governor of Pyeng-yang reported on the 9th that the attempt of the Japanese military authonties to secure coolies for Manchuria in Chinnampo and Yong-gang would result in a general uprising if persisted in and he urged that the Japanese be asked to discontinue the attempt.

The Emperor donated yen 15,000 to the Japanese Relief Fund, to which Min Pyung-suk added yen 100 and Cho Chung-yun yen 500.

The Chief of Police complained to the Foreign Office about the stationing of Japanese guards at the city gates and claimed that it is an insult to Korea. He asks that the Foreign Office take steps to have this discontinued.

On the 8th inst at one o’clock in the afternoon the Japanese and Russian outposts came in touch with each other between Wonsan and Tuk-wun. A sharp skirmish ensued, in which the Japanese drove back the Russians but there were no casualties. Two horses fell into Japanese hands. The next morning at a very early hour the Russians appeared again at the mouth of the Tuk-wun River just north of Wonsan, perhaps two miles distant from the Custom-house, but the Japanese were ready for them there also and after a short sharp fight the Russians again retired leaving three dead in Japanese hands. It is said that seven other Russians were wounded but were carried away by their comrades.

The special Northwest Railway Bureau has been done away or rather has been merged in the general Railway Bureau in Seoul.

Some time ago a Korean Company was formed under the leadership of Su O-sun to build branch railways from Kunsan and Mokpo to the Seoul-Fusan line, and it has lately taken steps to get to work, but the Japanese Minister sent to the Foreign Office saying that this will be an injury to the Seoul-Fusan line, that these Koreans cannot raise the money to carry out the work properly, and that these branch roads should be included in the concession for the Seoul-Fusan line.

The Minister of Law has been compelled by the delinquencies of the clerks of his office to impose a list of fines and punishments for nonattendance.

[page 366] On the 27th ult. the Foreign Minister sent back to the Japanese Legation all the papers that had passed relative to the Land Scheme, but the Minister sent them back saying that the incident had not as yet been closed and the Foreign Office should keep the papers in hand.

A scheme was gotten up by a few self-interested Korean officials to pawn the resources of Korea for ten million dollars, ostensibly for the establishment of a Korean Bank by the Household Department. Kwun Chung-hyun memorialized the throne saying that it was a foolish plan, that the Koreans who were trying to put it through were looking merely to the squeeze, that they were a pack of thieves and they deserved severe punishment. The loan was to have been for thirty years at five per cent. This protest took effect and the loan was not made.

Some Japanese fishermen at Yung-duk, Kyung Sang Do, seized the fish which had been caught by two Koreans, and in the quarrel which ensued killed the two Koreans. The Home Office asked the Foreign Office to communicate with the Japanese Minister about it.

The Governer of Kang-Wun Province reports that a Japanese military officer at Wonsan has asked for information as to the various products of the province, the places where each is grown, the amount of rice raised, the number of houses, and other statistics As the matter is of national rather than local import the Governor refers the Japanese to the central Government for enlightenment.

The governor at Ha-ju, also, is asked to give the number of people, pigs, chickens and other commodities of his province and is asked to be in readiness to give the Japanese whatever they asked for. It is not anticipated that the governor will count the hens of his province in person.

Early in August the Japanese authorities asked the Korean government whether it was true that Mons. Henry was to be made Adviser to the Household Department. The answer was a decided negative. A couple of weeks later the gentleman named left Seoul for China.

On the 13th inst. the Japanese Minister in audience with His Majesty urged the following considerations. (1) The selection of good men for official position, (2) abolition of useless public offices, (3) reorganization of the monetary system, (4) payment of salaries in gold money, (3) appointment of a Japanese adviser to the Finance Department and of an American as adviser to the Foreign Department.

It was reported on the 14th that 1,200 Russians had arrived at Mach’un Pass north of Ham-heung.

The rumor which circulated in Seoul about Aug. 20th that Yi Yongik was to be brought back to Korea seems to have been quite false.

About the middle of the month the Japanese Minister suggested to the Emperor that it would be a good thing to recall all Korean Ministers from foreign countries. No definite reason seems to have been given for this rather singular suggestion.

Mr. Kato, the Adviser to the Department of Agriculture, etc., returned from Japan about the middle of August.

On the 16th inst. Japanese gendarmes entered the palace grounds and made a careful survey of them. This caused some uneasiness among the Koreans who surmise that it means a Japanese body-guard for His Majesty.

The Governor of Pyengyang reports that certain Koreans have come back from Manchuria and report that the Korean coolies are pressed into active service and put into the firing line and that many have been killed. These reports have caused consternation among the people especially among the relatives of those who have gone as coolies to the north. The report is of course absurd.

[page 367] The Japanese military authorities caused notices to be posted on the hills along the river above Yongsan saying that as these were needed for military purposes no one must buy or sell any land there. One of these was set up on Dr. Underwood’s property at Hankang but when it was learned that it was American property the Japanese courteously expressed regrets and promised to remove the notice from that point.

Some Japanese fishermen have been killing fish in the Han river with explosives. This is a thing that would not be permitted for a moment in Japan and steps should be taken to have it stopped here.

On the 22nd inst. Sim Sang-hun, Acting Prime Minister and one of the strongest men that the present regime can boast, made a powerful appeal to the Emperor to drive from office four men namely Hyun Yung-un, Cho Pyung-p’il, Yi Pong-na and Yi Keun-tak. He gave various reasons for the necessity of such action and asserted that if this was not done he would throw up his portfolio and retire from public life. It is said that the Japanese Minister and leading military men have asked him to reconsider this decision and remain in office. His withdrawal from public life under these circumstances would doubtless add very much to the growing sentiment of the people against the Japanese.

The rumor is aboat that the Korean government has been asked by the Japanese authorities not to employ any foreigner without first consulting them.

Mr. Yun Chi-ho has been appointed Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In pursuance of a new policy of the government in appointing men to office, the Educational Department called up all those who hold diplomas showing their graduation from the various schools and made a list of their names and then sent to the different government offices stating that if men were needed the Educational Department would nominate men from among these graduates. This is the one and only way by which the schools of Korea can be revived. The knowledge that graduation will put them in line for the civil service will fill the schools as nothing else could do.

On July 30 the Governor of South Ham-gyung stated that 300 Russian cavalry came from Yi-wun to Puk-ch’ung and a Korean Major at the latter place reported that 150 Russians went from there to Ham-heung.

On Aug. 3rd the Chief of Police reported to the Foreign Office that he had received notice from the police at the West Gate that ten Japanese soldiers and seven gendarmes passed the gate having in charge three Koreans, Sin Hyung-gyun, Won Se-sung and Yi Pomsak, leaders of the National Protective Association. The hair of these men had been cut and they were being taken to An-ju to be held in durance because of the agitations against the Japanese demands.

The Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, etc. has sent to all the thirteen provinces ordering that no timber must be cut without permission being obtained from the central office.

The Governor of Pyeng-yang reported on the 4th inst. that the Japanese tried to get 1,000 coolies at Chung-ju but on account of the farm work not a single man would go.

The Chief of Police sent to the Foreign Office asking that an effort be made to have the Japanese turn over to the Korean authorities the persons of Yi Chi-wha and Kil Yong-su who had been leading members of the Peddlars guild and are held in durance by the Japanese at the barracks in front of the palace.

[page 368] Reports came from the north on the 5th inst that 135 houses had been burned by the Russians at Ham-heung, fifty-nine houses at Kowun and eight houses on Mun-Ch’un and that one man was killed in Ko-wun and four at Chang-jin.

Early in August the chief of Japanese gendarmes sent to the Home Department asking that 2,000 coolies be provided from the four provinces of Kyung-geui, Ch’ung-Chung, Chul-la and Kyung-Yang.

About the middle of August Major Pereira D. S O. started on a trip to Pak-tu San on the northern border, not being quite sure whether he would be stopped by Russians en route.

The Koreans who lost $8,000 worth of dried ling by the sinking of the Goyo Maru have sent to Seoul asking the government to collect this little sum from the Russian Government!

The Governor of North Ham-gyung reports that many of the people have run away owing to the necessity of pressing them into the service on the roads which the Russians ordered built from the north to Sung-jin.

In the Seoul tennis tournament the doubles have been finished. Messrs Davidson and Porter beating Messrs. Lapeyriere and Hulbert in the finals. The score was 6-4, 11-9. The second set was a severe contest as the score shows. The singles have yet to be finished as Messrs. Davidson. Porter and Hulbert have tied for first place. It is expected that these will be played off early in September.

As an illustration of our statement that the deforestation of the country is causing a shrinkage in arable land because of the scouring the hills we note that the prefect of Sam-ga in Kyungsang has reported that a violent rain storm there caused the covering with sand of fields which required 886 measures of seed grain for sowing or about sixteen bags. This is no small tract of land and it is rendered quite useless. This sort of thing is going on all over the country every rainy season.

The number of men engaged in repairing the road between Seoul and Wiju is as follows, by sections, between Wiju and Sun-chun 5,572; between Sun-chun and Chong-ju 1,903; between Chong-ju and Kasan 640; between Kasan and Anju 4,250; between Anju and Seoul 11,500. This makes a total of 23,862 men. It is said that when it is finished there will be a fine smooth road all the way to the northern border.

Yun Eung-yul has resigned the portfolio of War and Min Yunggeui has been appointed in his place.

Kim Ka-jin resigned the Ministry of agriculture etc. and Yi To-ji has succeeded him.

On the 22nd a new society was formed called the Il-jin or “Straight Progressive” Society. It met at Chong-no in the Cotton Guild. Yun Si-byung was appointed President with Yu Hak-chu as second. Outsiders were not admitted. The place was guarded by Japanese gendarmes. The Korean police came at first and attempted to stop the meeting but the Japanese interfered and protected the meeting from disturbance. This caused the report to spread that the society was working in the interests of the Japanese.

[page 369]

# Korean History.

The body was wrapped in some sort of blanket, saturated with petroleum and burned at the edge of a pine grove immediately to the east of the pond which lies in front of the royal quarters.

The Royal family had been aware for two days of the danger which threatened. The guards at the palace had been reduced, the arms had been taken away and the movements of Japanese troops were very suspicious. The King advised the Queen to go to a place of safety and she said she would do so if the Queen Dowager would also go, but the latter refused. Chong Pyung-ha who had been raised to high office through the patronage of the Queen but who had struck hands with the Japanese urged with great insistence that there was no danger to Her Majesty’s person and it was the confidence expressed by this traitor that did the most to set at rest the apprehension of the King and the Queen.

At about the time when the Queen was being killed the Ta-wun-gun came into the presence of the King and took the direction of affairs at the court. As might be supposed, both the King and the Crown Prince were in anything but an enviable frame of mind. They had been pushed about and insulted by low Japanese and felt that their lives were momentarily in danger. Col Yi Kyung-jik the Minister of the Household Department had taken his stand at the door of the Queen’s apartments and had there been cut down by the Japanese or Koreans but succeeded in making his way, desperately wounded, into the presence of the King. He was there stabbed to death by the Japanese before the eyes of His Majesty. This did not tend to reassure the King and the Crown Prince but the coming of the Ta-wun-gun tended to quiet them somewhat. Of course they had no idea as yet that the Queen had been despatched.

Before dawn began to break the King learned that Japanese troops were pouring into the barracks in front of the palace, and as some semblance of order had been restored in the immediate presence of His Majesty, a note was sent in [page 370] haste to the Japanese Minister asking what all this meant. The messenger found Miura and Sugimura already up and dressed and sedan chairs at the door. Miura told the messenger that he had heard that troops had been marched to the barracks but did not know why. The Minister and his secretary thereupon proceeded rapidly to the palace. Immediately upon their arrival all the disturbance suddenly quieted down and the soshi dispersed and left the palace grounds. The Japanese Minister and secretary immediately sought an audience with His Majesty, accompained only by an interpreter and another Japanese who had led the soshi. The Ta-wun-gun was also present.

Three documents wee prepared by those present and placed before His Majesty for signature, one of them guaranteeing that the Cabinet should thereafter manage the affairs of the country, the second appointing Yi Cha-myun, the King’s brother, as Minister of the Household in place of Yi Kyung-jik who had just been killed, and the third appointing a vice-Minister of the Household. These documents the king perforce signed. Whereupon all Japanese troops were removed from the palace and only the Japanese-trained Korean troops were left as a palace-guard. Later in the day Ministers of War and Police were appointed in the persons of Cho Heui-yun and Kwun Yung-jin, both strong partisans of the Japanese and doubtless privy to the attack upon the palace and the murder of the Queen. In other words the King and court was surrounded by men every one of whom were in sympathy with the movement which had been planned by Viscount Miura.

Very early in the morning, while it was still scarcely daylight, Mr. Waeber the Russian *Chargé d’Affaires* and Dr. Allen the American *Chargé d’Affaires ad interim* came to the palace and sought audience with the King but were told that the King was unwell and could not see them. They insisted, however, and succeeded in seeing His Majesty, who told them that he still had hopes that the Queen had escaped, and besought their friendly offices to prevent further trouble. Other foreign representatives were received later in the day.

It soon became evident that the Japanese authorities intended to deny any responsibility for the outrages committed. [page 371] Miura stated in his dispatches to his government that the origin of the emeute was a conflict beween the Japanese-drilled Korean troops, who desired to lay a complaint before His Majesty, and the palace guards who tried to prevent their entrance into the palace. Miura even sought to strengthen his disclaimer by obtaining from the newly appointed Minister of War a definite official statement that the rumors of his (Miura’s) complicity in the affair were without foundation. The document that the Minister of War sent in reply proved altogether too much and defeated its own purpose, for it stated baldly that there was not a single Japanese in the palace on the night of the eighth of October, when the Queen was murdered. As this Minister was a creature of the Japanese and as the presence of Japanese in the palace was clearly proved subsequently it is evident that Miura, by this sort of trickery, only succeeded in further implicating himself.

On the ninth, the day after the emeute, a full cabinet was appointed composed entirely of Japanese sympathisers, but with one or two exceptions they were not privy to the assasination of the Queen, though they were willing to profit by that crime in accepting office at the hands of the perpetrators. The men appointed were Yi Cha-myun, Kim Hong-jip, Kim Yun-sik, Pak Chong-yang, Sim Sang-hun, Cho Heui-yon, So Kwang-bom and Chong Pyung-ha.

One would have supposed that the enemies of the Queen would have been satisfied by her death, but not so. On the eleventh, three days after her assassination, an edict purporting to have originated with His Majesty and signed by the full cabinet appeared in the Court Gazette. In it the Queen is charged with having interfered in public matters, disturbed the government and put the dynasty in peril. It is stated that she has disappeared and that her guilt is excessive; therefore she is deposed from her rank as Queen and reduced to the level of the lowest class.

There can be no doubt that this edict is fraudulent. The King never gave his consent to it and several of the members of the Cabinet knew nothing about it, notably Sim Sang-hun who had already thrown up his position and run away, and Pak Chong-yang who denounced the nefarious business and resigned. It was put through by a few of the Cabinet who [page 372] were thoroughly subfervient to the Japanese. The Japanese Minister in reply to the announcement of the Queen’s degradation, affected to sympathize with the Korean Government but thought it was done for the good of the State. The United States Representative refused to recognize the decree as coming from His Majesty, and in this he was seconded by all the the other Foreign Representatives except one.

Meanwhile the Japanese government began to learn something of the truth in regard to the Queen’s death and felt called upon to defend itself from the charge of complicity in the outrage through its accredited Minister. Consequently it recalled Miura and Sugimura and upon their arrival in Japan they were arrested and charged with complicity in the matter. The fact of their arrest and trial was a distinct disclaimer on the part of the Japanese government that it was accessory to the crime; and in spite of the utter inadequacy of the trial and its almost ludicrous termination we hold to the theory that the Japanese government was not a party to ihe crime excepting in so far as the appointment of such a man as Miura can be called complicity.

 But the vigorous action of Japan in arresting Miura and putting him on trial had a strong influence upon the course of events in Korea. The Korean public and all the Foreign Representatives were demanding that the occurrences of the eighth of October should be investigated and the responsibility for the murder of the Queen placed where it rightly belonged. This itself bore strongly upon the Cabinet, but when in addition to this the Japanese government itself seemed to be weakening and it appeared that Miura’s acts would prove to have been unauthorized things begun to look rather black for the men who were enjoying office solely through Miura’s influence, and although the fiction was still maintained that the Queen was not dead but in hiding somewhere, the situation became more and more strained until at last it became evident even to the Cabinet that something must be done to relieve the situation. Accordingly on the 26th of November the Foreign Representatives and several other foreigners were invited to the palace and it was announced in the presence of His Majesty that Cho Heui-yon the Minister of War aud Kwun Yung-jin the Chief of Police were dismissed, [page 373] that the edict degrading the Queen was rescinded and that the facts connected with the attack on the palace would be investigated by the Department of Justice and all guilty perssons tried and punished. At the same time the death of Her Majesty was formally announced.

The popular feeling against the Japanese-trained troops was so strong that they were dismissed and another guard summoned but as a matter of fact this new guard was composed almost entirely of the very men who had formerly composed the Japanese-drilled corps.

The position of His Majesty during the months succeeding the attack was anything but comfortable. He had no voice in the direction of affairs, and he considered himself practically a prisoner in the hands of the Cabinet. He even feared for his life, and for weeks ate no food except what was brought to him in a locked box from friends outside the palace. He had requested that two or three foreigners should come to the palace each night and be at hand in case of trouble, feeling that their presence would exert a deterrent influence upon any who might plot injury to his person.

The half-way measures adopted on Nov. 26th by no means satisfied those who wished to see His Majesty freed from practical durance at the hands of men thoroughly obnoxious to him, and a scheme was evolved by a number of Koreans to effect his release by forcible means. The purpose of these men was a laudable one but the execution of it was ill-managed. On the night of the 28th upwards of a thousand Koreans demanded entrance into the palace. They had arranged with one of the members of the palace guard, inside, to open the gate to them, but at the last moment he failed them and they found themselves balked. The palace was in some confusion, the King had called into his presence the three foreigners who, at his request, were on duty that night, but in spite of their assurances that his person would be protected it was only natural that excitement should run high. The crowd without were shouting wildly and attempting to scale the high wall, and the members of the cabinet, before the King, did not know at what moment the guard might betray them to the assailants, and they knew that once betrayed they would be torn to pieces without mercy. They [page 374] tried therefore to induce the King to remove to a distant part of the palace where he could hide for a long time before he could be found even though the crowd should effect an entrance. The night was bitterly cold and the King was but lightly clad, and as the King’s person was safe in any event, the foreigners who were with him opposed the move strongly and at last were compelled to use physical force to prevent the change, which would certainly have endangered the King’s life. The purpose of the cabinet was thus thwarted but as the hours passed it become evident that the men outside would not be able to effect an entrance. The shouts gradually died away and at last the crowd dispersed leaving in the hands of the palace guard three or four men who had scaled the wall but had not been followed by their confreres.

In view of the attitude of the Tokyo Government the Japanese in Seoul were now entirely quiescent and the government was standing on its own base. The cabinet held its own by virtue of the palace guard which was composed of the soldiers trained by the Japanese. This cabinet and guard held together from necessity, for both knew that should their power fail they would be denounced as traitors and under the circumstances could expect little help from the Japanese. The cabinet had to make a show of investigating the attack of Oct. 5th and someone must be killed for having murdered the queen. At the same time punishment was to be meted out to the principals in the attempt on the palace on November 28th.

Three men were arrested and charged with being directly implicated in the crime of regicide. Of these one was certainly innocent and while the second was probably privy to the crime, being a lieutenant of the Japanese trained troops, there was no evidence adduced to prove his actual participation in the act of assassination. He had not been reinstated in his position in the new guard and he knew altogether too much about the existing cabinet. Their choice fell upon him as one of the scapegoats. The third was Yi Chu-hoe formerly Vice Minister of War. There was no evidence adduced against him at the trial, though from other considerations be seems to have been implicated in the outrage. He was chosen as the principal one to bear the [page 375] obloquy of the crime, probably because ( 1 ) he was a bitter enemy of the existing cabinet and (2) because it was necessary for the sake of appearances to convict and execute someone of rank and reputation. As a fact the court did not know and never discovered who the actual perpetrators were. The three men were executed before the end of the year.

Though only three men were arrested in connection with the assassination of the queen thirty-three men were arrested in connection with the comparatively trivial affair of November 28th. Their trial proceeded simultaneously with that of the other three. Two of them were condemned to death, four to exile for life and four to three years imprisonment. To show the kind of evidence on which these convictions were based we will cite the case of Prince Yi Cha-sun who was proved to have gotten hold of some compromising documents and to have shown them to the King only, instead of to the proper authorities, namely, of course, the cabinet. On these grounds he was sentenced to three years imprisonment!

December and January saw matters move to an inevitable climax. The cabinet forced upon the people the edict ordering the cutting off of the top-knot, the distinctive mark of Korean citizenship. The whole country was in a ferment and the people, almost to a man, were gnashing their teeth at the cabinet. The finding of the Hiroshima court claimed to have freed Miura and his fellows from blame and it was rumored that several of them were to return to Korea to take office under the government. Chong Pyung-ha, a proved traitor, had been reinstated in the cabinet as Minister of Agriculture and Cho Heui-yun as Minister of War. and it was reported that Kwun Yong-jin who had fled to Japan would be made again Chief of Police. It was perfectly evident, therefore, that the grip of the Japanese upon the king through the Goaler Cabinet was tightening and that there was no escape from it except through heroic measures. These measures the king was prepared to adopt rather than longer endure the humiliating position to which he seemed condemned. At that time the principal men in the cabinet were Kim Hong-jip, Chong Pyong-ha, O Yun-jung, Yu Kiljun. Of these O Yun-jung seems to have been far less [page 376] culpable than the rest. The king had great confidence in him and had he not met his fate at the hands of the people he would probably have been called back to office.

But now we come to the important step taken by His Majesty to free himself from his unpleasant position. He determined to find asylum in the Russian Legation. C. Waeber was the Russian Minister, a pronounced friend of the dead Queen, and a man of great ability. Just how he was approached and his consent gained to the king’s scheme is not generally known but in view of subsequent events and the part that Russia intended to play in Korea it is easy to see how the Russian Representative would welcome an opportunity to do the King such a signal service and one which was of such a personal character as to render it certain that it would never be forgotten.

The plan was carried out successfully in every detail. Women’s chairs were caused to be sent in and out the palace gates at frequent intervals by day and night until the guards had become quite accustomed to them. Then on the night of the eleventh of February the King and the Crown Prince without escort slipped by the guards in common women’s chairs and were taken directly to the Russian Legation where they were courteously received and given the best portion of the Legation building. This act was of course a grievous lapse from the dignity that befits a king but under the circumstances there is much to say by way of excuse. On the whole it must be considered a mistake so far as the country at large is concerned, for it set in motion a new set of factors which probably did more harm than the temporary enforced seclusion of the King could have done. It acted as a potent factor in embittering the Japanese against Russia and opened the door for Russian intrigue which finally hastened if it did not actually cause the war at present waging. Had Japan been able to preserve the predominance which she held in Korea just after the China-Japan war she might have looked with more or less complaisancy upon the Russian aggression in Manchuria, but when Korea itself became disputed ground the war was inevitable.

At seven o’clock on the morning of February 11th the King and the Crown Prince entered the Russian Legation. [page 377] Several hours elapsed before the Cabinet in the palace became aware of the fact. During that interval active operations were going on at the Russian Legation. The organization of a new cabinet was hastened by summoning from various parts of the city such officials as the King could trust. Pak Chong-yang was made Prime Minister. No time was lost in putting out a Royal Edict deprecating the necessity of taking refuge in a foreign legation, promising to punish the real authors of the Queen’s assassination, rescinding the order for cutting the top-knots. This was posted on the gates of the Legation and at various points throughout the city.

Chapter XXIL

The King at the Russian Legation . . . . A Royal edict . . . Massacre or flight of cabinet miuisters . . . . an excited city . . . . Japanese consternation . . . provincial uprisings . . . party reorganization . . . The Independence Club . . . trial of Queen’s murderers . . . Appointment of Dr. Brown as adiviser to Finance Department . . .The Independent . . . . The Waeber-Komura Convention . . . . material reforms . . . reaction . . . The Independence Arch . . . . Seoul-Chemulpo railway concession . . . . The new palace planned . . . . retrogressive signs . . .postal and other administrative reforms.

When the public awoke to the momentous fact, a thrill of excitement and, generally, of approval went through the whole population of Seoul. The city hummed with excited humanity. The streets swarmed with the crowds bent upon watching the course of such stirring events.

Later in the day the King put forth an edict calling upon the soldiers to rally to his support and urging them to bring the heads of the traitors Cho Heui-yun, U Pom-sun, Yi Tuwhang, Yi Pom-na, Yi Chin-ho and Kon Yong-jin. But later still this was toned down to read that these individuals should be seized and turned over to the proper authorities for trial.

The reason why the names of Kim Hong-jip, Chong Pyong-Ha and others of the former cabinet were not included was because they had already met their fate. As soon as it became known in the palace that the King had fled, these [page 378] men saw that their lives were forfeited. O Yun-jung managed to escape to the country but was set upon and killed by the people, Cho Heui-Yun escaped, Yu Kil-jun was spirited away to Japan by the Japanese; but Kim Hong-jip aud Chong Pyong-ha found no way of escape. Being seized by the Korean soldiers, were immediately rushed by the crowd and killed. Their bodies were hauled to Chong-no where they were stamped upon, kicked, bitten and stoned by a halfcrazed rabble for hours. A Japanese who happened to be passing was set upon by the crowd and killed and several foreigners drawn to the spot by curiosity were threatened.

The King was shocked when he heard of the summary execution of the two ministers, whom he intended to give a fair trial. Two days later an edict was promulgated by the King deploring the impoverished state of the country and laying the blame upon himself; and concluded by remitting all arrears of taxes due up to July 1894. The new cabinet consisted of the following men Pak Chong-yang, Yi Yun-yong, An Kyung-su, Ko Yong-heui, Yun Chi-ha. Yun Yong-gu, Yi Wan-yong and Cho Pyung-jik.

To say that the Japanese were nonplussed by this coup on the part of the King would be to put it very mildly. All their efforts to consolidate their power in Korea and to secure there some fruit of the victory in the war just finished, had been worse than thrown away. The King had thrown himself into the arms of Russia and the whole Korean people were worked up to a white heat against Japan, comparable only with the feelings elicited by the invasion of 1592. It was a very great pity, for Japan was in a position to do for Korea infinitely more than Russia would do. The interests of Korea and Japan were identical or at least complementary and the mistake which Japan made in the latter half of 1895 was one whose effects will require decades to efface.

When the King thus wrenched himself out of Japanese hands the Japanese papers in Seoul bewailed the fact that the country was without a ruler, and almost directly advised the people to put someone else on the throne, and this without censure from the Japanese authorities. And it is well known among Koreans that there was a strong faction among the Koreans who were willing to attempt to put Yi Chun –yong, [page 379] the grandson of the Ta-wun-gun on the throne, had that ambitious young man been possessed of the requisite amount of assurance. Fortunately such was not the case and the country was saved from further upheaval.

But the Japanese authorities though thrown into consternation by this radical movement of His Majesty did not give up hope of mending matters. The Japanese Minister saw the King at the Russian Legation and urged upon him every possible argument for returning to the palace. His Majesty, however, being now wholly relieved from anxiety as to his personal safety, enjoyed the respite too thorougly to cut it short, and so politely refused to change his place of residence. A large number of Japanese in Seoul became convinced that Japan had hopelessly compromised herself, and left the country, but the Japanese Government itself by no act or word granted that her paramount influence in the peninsula was impaired and with admirable sangfroid took up the new line of work imposed upon her by the King\*s peculiar action, meanwhile putting down one more score against Russia, to be reckoned with later.

 The country was suffering from the excitement caused by the news of the Japanese diplomatic reverses, and the people in many districts rose in revolt and declared that they would drive all the Japanese out of the country. These efforts were however scattered and sporadic in their nature and were successfully quelled by Korean Government troops sent down to the various disaffected districts for this purpose.

Now that it was possible the King hastened to order a new investigation of the circumstances attending the death of the Queen. It was feared that this would result in a very sweeping arrest of Koreans and the punishment of many people on mere suspicion, but these fears were ill-founded. The trials were carried through under the eye of Mr. Greathouse the adviser to the Law Department and a man of great legal ability. Thirteen men were arrested and tried in open court without torture and with every privilege of a fair trial. One man Yi Whi-wha was condemned to death, four banished for life and five for lesser periods. This dispassionate trial was not the least of the signs which pointed toward a new and enlightened era in Korean political history.

[page 380] Not only in the country but in Seoul as well tbe prestige of Japan had suffered greatly by the events of the winter of 1895-96. After the Japan-China war the Koreans were divided into two distinct factions, one holding strongly with the Japanese and the other advocating a more conservative policy, but gradually as the political situation began to crystalize these two split into four, namely the Japanese faction, the King’s faction, the Queen’s faction, and the Tawon-gun’s faction. This is merely another way of saying that every strong political possibility will have its own faction in such a land as this, according as each man fancies that his champion will get supreme power and reward those who have followed in his train. The number of men who follow the standard of this or that party because of any altruistic or purely patriotic consideration is so small as to be a negligeable quantity. When, therefore, it appeared that Japan’s star was setting in Korea there was a hasty shifting of political platforms and soon it appeared that there were only two, one of which favored Russian influence and the other conservative and very quiet, for the time being, until the extreme pro-Russian enthusiasm should subside somewhat. Of course the Ta-won-gun’s had disappeared with the waning fortunes of the Japanese and the Queen’s faction had gone over to the Russians. It was the conservatives alone that held to their former position and desired no foreign interferance whatever. But many of those who had favored the Japanese joined the conservative party but unlike the “mossback” conservatives wanted to do something actively to counteract Russian influence. They therefore worked to bring English and American influence into greater prominence. In the heart of this movement was born the “Independence Club.” It will be remembered that ever since the previous year Dr. Philip Jaisohn had been acting as adviser to the Privy Council. This council enjoyed considerable power at first but gradually fell to a secondary place, but now that new conditions had sprung up the element combatting the Russian influence took advantage of the presence of Dr. Jaisohn and other Koreans who had been educated abroad. The Russians seemed to look with complaisance upon this movement and in the Spring of this year, seem to have made no [page 381] effort to prevent the appointment of J. McLeavy Brown, L.L.D., as Adviser to the Finance Department, with large powers; which seemed to bear out the belief that the Russian Minister was sincere in his statement that Russia wished the King to be quite untrammelled in the administration of his government. It is this generous policy of Mr. Waeber that is believed to have caused his transfer later to another post, to be replaced by A. de Speyer who adopted a very different policy. However this may have been, things began to take on a very hopeful aspect in Seoul. Needed reforms were carried through : torture was abolished in the Seoul courts, a concession was given to an American company to construct a railway between Seoul and Chemulpo, Min Yong-whan was appointed special envoy to the coronation of the Czar, work was begun on the American mining concession granted the year before, various schools were founded, and the outlook on the whole was very bright indeed. It looked as if a solution had been found for the difficulties that afflicted the state and that an era of comparatively enlightened government was opening.

For some time there had existed a more or less secret organization among the Koreans, the single article of whose political creed was Independence both from China and Japan, or in other words Korea for Koreans. Now that the King had been relieved of Chinese suzerainty by the Japanese and of Japanese restraint by himself, this little society under the leadership of Dr. Philip Jaisohn blossomed out into what was called The Independence Club. The name but partially described the society, for while it advocated the complete independence of Korea it still more insistently advocated a liberal government, in the shape of a genuine constitutional monarchy in which the royal prerogative should be largely curtailed and the element of paternalism eliminated. At first the greater stress was laid upon the general principle of Korean Independence and to this the King in the joy of his newly found freedom heartily agreed. The royal sanction was given to the Independence Club and it was launched upon a voyage which had no haven, but ended in total shipwreck. This club, society was composed of young men many of whom were doubtless aroused for the time being to something like patriotic [page 382] fervor but who had had no practical experience of the rocky road of Korean politics or of the obstacles which would be encountered. The cordiality of the King’s recognition blinded them to the fact that the real object of their organization, namely the definition of the royal prerogative, was one that must eventually arouse first the suspicion and then the open hostility of His Majesty and would become the slogan of all that army of self-seekers who saw no chance for selfaggrandisement except in the immemorial spoils system. These young men were armed with nothing but a laudable enthusiasm. They could command neither the aid of the Korean army nor the advocacy of the older statesmen, all of whom were either directly hostile to the movement or had learned caution through connection with previous abortive attempts to stem the tide of official corruption. The purpose of this club. so far as it knew its own mind, was a laudable one in theory but the amount of persistency, courage, tact and self-restraint necessary to carry the plan to a successful issue was so immensely greater than they could possibly guess, that, considering the youth and inexperience of the personnel of the society, the attempt was doomed to failure. They never clearly formulated a constructive plan by which to build upon the ruins of that system which they were bent upon destroying. Even had they cleared the way to such construction they could not have found a statesman in Korea of recognized standing and prestige, to act as master-builder, whose previous record would have made him acceptable to themselves or a fit exponent of their principles.

On April 7th the first foreign newspaper was founded by Dr. Philip Jaisohn. It was called *The Independent* and was partly in the native character. From the first it exerted a powerful influence among the Koreans and was one of the main factors which led to the formation of the Independence Club.

 Both Japan and Russia were desirous of coming to an understanding as to Korea and on May 14th there was published the Waeber-Komura Agreement which was modified and ratified later under the name of the Lobanoff-Yamata Agreement. According to the terms of this convention both Powers guaranteed to respect the independence of Korea and not to send soldiers into the conn try except by common consent.

[page 383] The summer of 1896 saw great material improvements in Seoul. The work of clearing out and widening the streets was vigorously pushed and although much of the work was done superficially some permanent improvement was effected, and the “squatters” along the main streets were cleaned out, it is hoped for all time. In July the concession for building a railway between Seoul and Wiju was given to a French syndicate. From subsequent events it appears that there was no fixed determination on the part of the French to push this great engineering work to a finish but merely to preempt the ground and prevent others from doing it. Russian influence doubtless accomplished this, and from that time there began to spring up the idea that Korea would be divided into two spheres of influence, the Japanese predominant in the south and the Russians in the north.

In spite of the favorable signs that appeared during the early months of 1896 and the hopes which were entertained that an era of genuine reform had been entered upon, the coming of summer began to reveal the hollowness of such hopes. The King himself was strongly conservative and never looked with favor upon administrative changes which tended to weaken his personal hold upon the finances of the country and he chafed under the new order of things. In this he was encouraged by many of the leading officials, who saw in the establishment of liberal institutions the end of their opportunities for personal power and aggrandisement. The old order of things appealed to them too strongly and it became evident that the government was rapidly lapsing into its former condition of arbitrary and partisan control. Open and violent opposition to such harmless innovations as the wearing of foreign uniforms by the students of Foreign Language Schools indicated too plainly the tendency of the time and the Russian authorities did nothing to influence His Majesty in the right direction. Judging from subsequent events it was not Russia’s policy to see an enlightened administration in Seoul. The political plans of that Power could be better advanced by a return to the status ante quo. The act of the government in substituting an Independence Arch in place of the former gate, outside the West Gate, which. commemorated Chinese suzerainty, was looked upon, [page 384] and rightly, by the more thoughtful as being merely a superficial demonstration which was based upon no deeper desire than that of being free from all control or restraint except such as personal inclination should dictate. The current was setting toward a concentration of power rather than toward a healthful distribution of it, and thus those who had hailed the vision of a new and rejuvenated state were compelled to confess that it was but a mirage.

Pressure was brought to bear upon the court to remove from the Russian Legation, and it was high time that such a move be made. As a matter of urgent necessity it was considered a not too great sacrifice of dignity to go to the Legation but to make it a permanent residence was out of the question. The King was determined however, not to go back to the palace from which he had fled. It held too many gruesome memories. It was decided to build the Myung-ye Palace in the midst of the Foreign Quarter with Legations on three sides of it. The site selected was the same as that which King Sun-jo used in 1593 when he returned from his flight to the north before the armies of Hideyoshi. He had lived here for some fourteen years while the Chang-dok Palace was building. The present King however intended it as a permanent residence, and building operations were begun on a large scale, but it was not until February of the following year that His Majesty finally removed from the Russian Legation to his new palace.

All during the latter half of 1896 the gulf between the Independence party and the conservatives kept widening. The latter grew more and more confident and the former more and more determined. Dr. Jaisohn in his capacity of adviser to the Council of State was blunt and outspoken in his advice to His Majesty and it was apparent that the latter listened with growing impatience to suggestions which, however excellent in themselves, found no response in his own inclinations. The Minister of Education voiced the growing sentiment of the retrogressive faction in a book called “The Warp and Woof of Confucianism” in which such extreme statements were made that several of the Foreign Representatives felt obliged to interfere and call him to account. A Chief of Police was appointed who was violently anti-reform.