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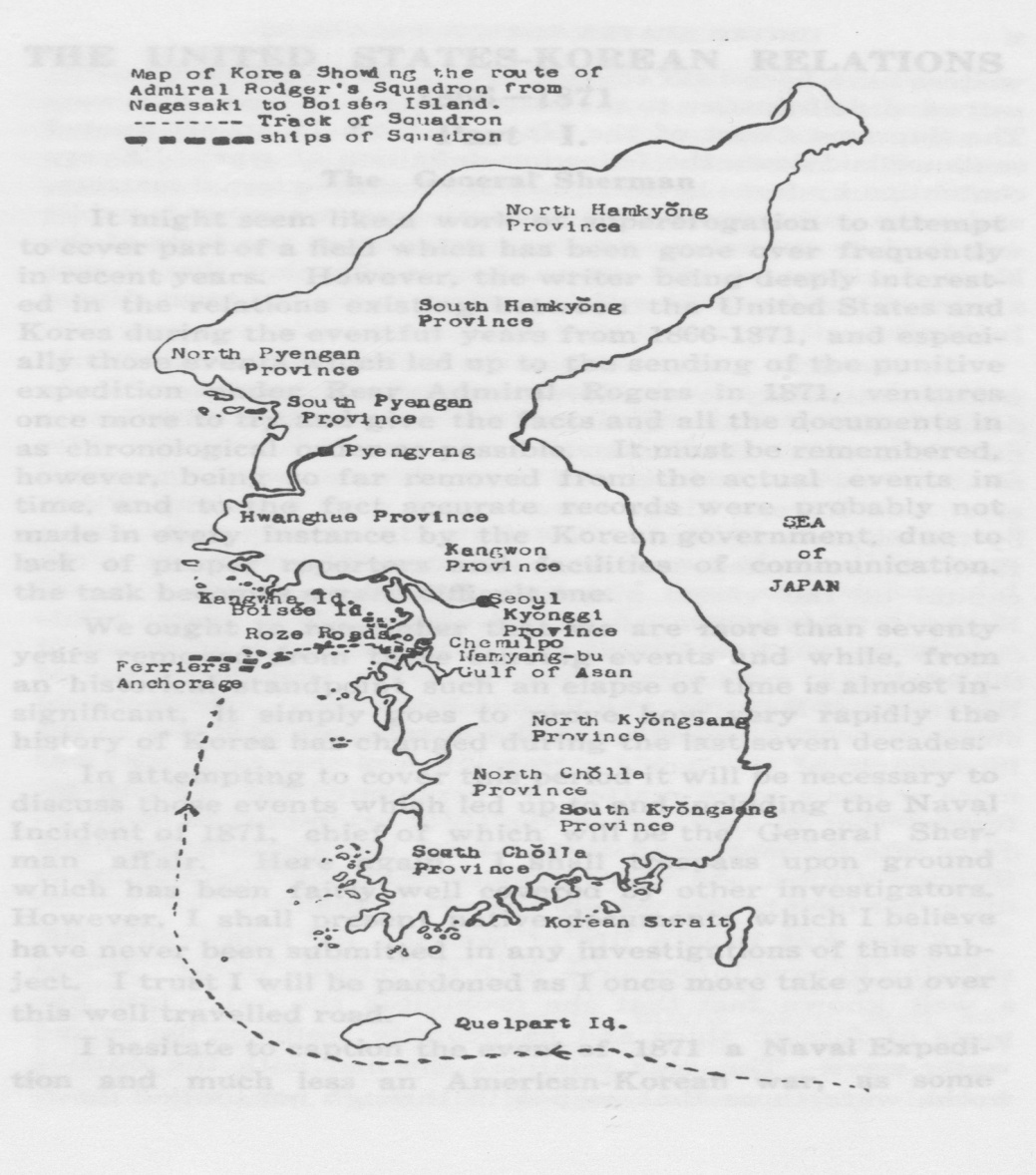
PREFACE

The preparation of this investigation of the United States Korean Relations from 1866 to 1871 has occupied my spare time for several years. It is now presented in printed form and I trust it will be of interest and profit to those who are interested in the early relations of the United States with Korea.

This investigation has been a great pleasure to me and would have been impossible without the help of a good many individuals, both in Korea and the United States of America. Practically all the documents both Occidental and Oriental have been examined and the field of source material has been pretty well exhausted. The only original source material I was not able to get at was the Yi Dynasty Annals from 1871-1872. These are in the Library of the Keijo Imperial University and are not open to the scrutiny of Occidentals. However, I have been informed by Korean scholars that The Unofficial History of Korea (Chosen Yasa) covers this period and contains the same evidence as the Yi Dynasty Annals for the same period.

I wish to acknowledge my debt to Mr. Thomas Hobbs for helping to read the proof; to Homer B. Hulbert for securing the valuable photos and the Excerpt of the Diary of Lieut. A. S. Snow; to the U. S. Navy Department for the excellent photos of the vessels composing the squadron of Rear Admiral Rodgers and the Map of Military Operations; to Mr. Han Chul Shin of the Chosen Christian College Literary Department ‘33; to Mr. R. P. Choi A. B., and P. H. Pak of the Class ‘36 Chosen Christian College who helped in the translation of the Oriental Source material; to G. M. McCune of the University of California for his assistance in the Romanization of the Oriental names and places in this work and to Dr. D. W. Lee for the Lunar Calander dates of Sin Mi.

E. M. CABLE.



[page 1] **THE UNITED STATES-KOREAN RELATIONS 1866-1871**

Part I.

The General Sherman

It might seem like a work of supererogation to attempt to cover part of a field which has been gone over frequently in recent years. However, the writer being deeply interested in the relations existing between the United States and Korea during the eventful years from 1866-1871, and especially those events which led up to the sending of the punitive expedition under Rear Admiral Rogers in 1871, ventures once more to try and give the facts and all the documents in as chronological order as possible. It must be remembered, however, being so far removed from the actual events in time, and to the fact accurate records were probably not made in every instance by the Korean government, due to lack of proper reporters and facilities of communication, the task becomes a very difficult one.

We ought to remember that we are more than seventy years removed from these stirring events and while, from an historical standpoint such an elapse of time is almost in-significant, it simply goes to prove how very rapidly the history of Korea has changed during the last seven decades.

In attempting to cover this period it will be necessary to discuss those events which led up to and including the Naval Incident of 1871, chief of which will be the General Sherman affair. Here again, I shall trespass upon ground which has been fairly well covered by other investigators. However, I shall present native documents which I believe have never been submitted in any investigations of this subject I trust I will be pardoned as I once more take you over this well travelled road.

I hesitate to caption the event of 1871 a Naval Expedition and much less an American-Korean war, as some [page 2] writers have been bold enough to da Both these are misnomers and do injustice to the actual facts. It was not a war. The Supreme Court of the United States in an oft quoted sentence laid down the following definition of war: “Every contention by force between two nations in external matters, under the authority of their respective governments is public war.” I do not believe for one moment that the facts of the Naval Incident of 1871 warrant us in affirming that it was a war. Therefore, the writer prefers to use the term, Naval Incident.

In the first place, neither the United States nor China, whose suzerainty over Korea was ever questioned, made declarations of war. It should be remembered that Korea had been under the domination of China for centuries. Its relation however, was one of loose affiliation with that country. The Korean kings were vested with authority to rule by the emperor of China. We are told that when emissaries from the respected and feared Court of Peking came to the capital of the vassal kingdom, His Majesty, the King of Korea, left his palace, went humbly outside the gates of his city on the road to Peking and at an arch of stone raised in the highway, exchanged bows with the representatives of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of China. This political status was maintained until the opening up of Korea to the intercourse of the world. Nevertheless this vassalage was more or less a mere matter of ‘ceremony’ for we are informed that in 1867, when the U. S. attempted to make inquiry into the matter of the loss of the General Sherman through China, she was informed that the relationship of the governments was merely one of ceremony.

Korea had lived a life of isolation for many centuries, refusing to have intercourse with the outside world. It was a well known fact that she prohibited the entry into her ports of foreign ships and particularly traffic on her inland water-ways. The only relations she had with the outside world, were those that seeped in through her limited inter- [page 3] course with China. Very little was known of her people, her resources, and her powers. Even those living in the immediate vicinity of the country had not the faintest idea of its people, its products, and its real condition. The idea seems to have gained prominence, as has been said, “that its inhabitants were giants in stature, that their strength was herculean, their fierocity inferior only to that of the tiger; that their guns were of the latest type, and their markmanship equalled by that of the William Tell of fable; their courage was comparable only to that of the defenders of the historic Thermopylae”.

The reports of the treatment of ship-wrecked sailors upon her dangerous and inhospitable shores were replete with acts of barbarism. To be wrecked upon the shores of Korea, was paramount to being subject to a terrible death of torture.

In this connection writers have cited the stories of Wetteree of the “Hollandra” and Hamel of the “Sparrow Hawk.” To be sure these men and their companions did suffer much at the hands of the Koreans but to cite only these, without at the same time mentioning the hospitable treatment of men under like circumstances, hardly seems fair to Korea. No doubt the United States had some misgiving and fear that some of her sailors being wrecked upon the dangerous coasts of Korea might suffer fates such as Hamel and Wetteree.

We are very happy to record the fact that not all ship-wrecked sailors shared such a fate as mentioned above. On June 24th, 1866, the American schooner, Surprise, while sailing off the coast of North Pyengan Province was wrecked and lost It should be recalled, too, that this happened at a time when the whole country was deeply stirred over the massacre of the French Catholics and their followers, and the people might have been expected to show hostility to any and all westerners cast upon her shores. However, the skipper of the Surprise, McCaslin, and all his crew were safely landed [page 4] and conducted to \*Ch’olsan where they were carefully questioned by the local magistrate, and later by a special commissioner from Seoul, and then feted, presented with tobacco, medicines, and clothing. By special order of the Taewon’gun, (reigning regent) who it must be remembered was notoriously hostile to foreigners, they were safely conducted to Uiju and after being feted once more, were then led to the border Gate (Shan Hai Kwan), and set free. Perhaps this act of kindness upon the part of the Taewon-gun, was only an apparent one, and was done out of fear that another experience with foreigners, such as he had had with the French in 1866 at Kangwha, might prove his undoing. However this is only mere conjecture.

In connection with the wreck and treatment of the crew of the schooner Surprise the following documents might be of interest.

Dr. S. Wells Williams, Secretary of the Legation of the United States at Peking, in writing to Mr. W. Seward, Secretary of State in Washington, on October 24th, 1866, says;

Sir: I have the honor to bring to your notice the case of the shipwrecked crew of the American schooner Surprise, the treatment which they received at the hands of the Corean and Chinese officials, and the kindness extended toward them by a French missionary who met them on their journey. I have condensed the principal facts of their history from the narrative of McCaslin.

On the 24th of June the crew left the schooner in a sinking condition, and reached an island, whose inhabitants

\* Korean names are Romanized throughout this monograph according to the system of Romanization devised by G. M. McCune and E. O. Reischauer. A complete explanation of their Romanization, including simple rules for its use, will be published in the forth-coming Transactions of this Society. Mr. McCune has kindly arranged the Romanization throughout this monograph. It should be noted that certain names have been Romanized according to their traditional spelling, such as Seoul, Pyengyang and Kangwha.

[page 5] supplied them with rice, but wished them to leave as soon as they had eaten it, which, however, a storm prevented their doing until the next day. Going on nearly twenty miles toward the north-west, they saw a village on the main land, which they thought best to reach, if possible, in order to obtain food and rest On approaching it from the beach, they were surrounded by about 200 natives, who would not allow them to move until an officer arrived and was ready to receive them. This was done in the open air, and by means of the Chinese cook they were able to make him understand their condition, after which they were comfortably provided for during two days. Another official then arrived who likewise interrogated them minutely, but would not let them leave the village, keeping the party under a guard of soldiers within a small inclosure. On the fourth day a third officer came from the capital, bringing with him a Chinese interpreter, who henceforth took charge of them, giving them abundance of good food, tobacco, and even medicines for the sick.

After remaining in this village for 24 days, a special courier arrived from the capital to conduct the whole party to the Chinese frontier. The first day’s journey of 14 miles on foot, over a rugged mountainous country, brought them to a large city, Chulsan, where they were courteously treated, furnished with suits of clothes, and well fed. From this place, two days riding, brought them to the large frontier town where they were comfortably lodged until notice could be given to the Chinese, and another escort arrived on the tenth day. Meanwhile they were placed in a government building, under a guard, and each man furnished with a suit of clothes. Chickens, beef, corn, and rice were served out to them, and on three occasions they were invited to dine with the authorities of the town, when each of them received a catty of tea and a fan.

Two days journey on horseback from this city, through a wild and uninhabited country, brought the party to a wall 30 ft long, and 20 ft high, in which was the gate that di- [page 6] vides Korea from China; they stopped in a town near it that night, and the next morning went to a walled town about ten miles off, where they were delivered to the Chinese authori-ties, and remained two days. Their food was insufficient, and of the poorest quality : and during the journey to Mukten, which city they reached after six days of hard travelling, they only had an allowance of millet and corn. The officer at Mukten would give them nothing, and the escort took them to an inn outside of the city, where a French missionary, hearing of their distress, sent for them; but the escort refused to let them go. However, Captain McCaslin and two others did go, and were kindly received and supplied with a good meal. The next day the authorities again declined to receive them, and they all went back to the inn to spend the night; but before going to bed all went on to Pere Gillie’s house, who furnished them with a dinner.

Next morning they were again brought before the city authorities, who gave them in charge to four people, one of whom furnished mats for sleeping, and the others took them to kind of a lock-up, where several hundred criminals were detained. The filthiness of the place was unendurable, and some of the men managed to rush about and get outside of the enclosure, from whence they all ran beyond the city gates, and reached Pere Gillie’s house only a few moments before the policemen came to carry them back. He refused to let them go, until a proper place for lodging was provided, and sufficient food. After two days, he went with them into the city to the authorities, and according to McCaslin’s belief. it was entirely owing to his energetic remonstrances and intervention that the party were saved from death through starvation and exposure in Mukten by being immediately sent on to Yingtsz after seven days journey, they were delivered to the United States Consul nearly two months after they were ship wrecked.

S. WELLS WILLIAMS.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

[page 7]

Later the United States government through Mr. Williams, the secretary to the American Minister in Peking, sent the following communication to Mr. Bellonet, the French charge d’affaires in Peking. It reads as follows :

Mr. S. W. Williams to Mr. H. Bellonet,

Legation of the United States,

Peking, September 15th, 1866.

Sir:

It affords me very high gratification to be the medium of conveying to you the thanks of Captain McCaslin, as given in the inclosed narrative of the humane conduct of the Rev. Pere Gillies, who successfully assisted a company of ship wrecked American sailors belonging to the schooner Surprise, late under his command, in their journey across Manchuria to Nieuchang. The consciousness of having been the means of preserving the lives of these unfortunate mariners, as they state was the case, will be of itself a great satisfaction to Pere Gillies; and I wish to add my own sincere thanks to him for his kindness to my countrymen in their trouble. Will you, Sir, oblige me and them by conveying to him this expression of our united thanks, either through Bishop Mouilly or otherwise, as you deem proper, and I shall make known his noble conduct, so courageous to his sacred calling, to the President.

I sieze this occasion to renew the expression of the high consideration with which I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

S. WELLS WILLIAMS.

Henry Bellonet Esq.

French charge d’affaires.

Following closely upon the wreck of the American schooner, Surprise came the alarming news that the American schooner, General Sherman with foreign notions for the purpose of trading with Korea had been lost on the Korean coast and word reached the United States capital at Washington that the vessel had been lost and its crew murdered by the Koreans. [page 8]

At this time it must be remembered the country was in a state of intense excitement due to the persecution and massacre of the French priests and their Korean converts by order of the Taewon’gun. Anti-foreign feeling was running high and this bitterness was only increased by the sending of a French punitive fleet to Korea during the same summer of 1866, shortly after the destruction of the General Sherman.

The General Sherman was owned by Mr. Preston, whom we are informed, was making the trip for his health. The vessel was consigned to Messrs. Meadows and Company, a British firm in Tientsin, and arrived in that port late in July, 1866. When she had unloaded her cargo an agreement was made by the above mentioned firm for Mr. Preston to load her with cloth, glass, tin plate, etc.-goods that would possibly be salable in Korea in the hope that such a voyage might mean the opening up of Korea to commercial intercourse. This would seem to indicate that it was purely a trade mission; but there were those even at that time, who entertained some misgivings as to the real object of the adventure.

It would seem that the communication of the British firm of Messrs. Meadows and Company in Tientsin to Mr. Burlingame on October 27, 1866, make quite clear the purpose of the visit of the General Sherman to Korea.

It read :

“During the latter half of July last an American schooner, the General Sherman arrived at this port, and was consigned to our care by Mr. Preston, the owner, who had come as a passenger on the vessel for his health. After we had taken delivery of the inward cargo, Mr. Preston and we came to an agreement that we should load her with a cargo of foreign merchandise, and on the 29th of July last she left Tientsin.”

The personnel of the General Sherman consisted of three Americans and one Englishman, besides sixteen Chin-[page 9]ese and two Malays. The owner of the vessel was Mr. Preston, the Master, Mr. Page , and the Mate, Mr. Wilson, and Rev R. J. Thomas, an English missionary. It would be indeed interesting if we could find out definitely just what was Rev. R. J. Thomas’s motive in coming: on the General Sherman. Mr. M. W. Oh in his study of the life of Rev. Thomas would have us believe that it was purely missionary. He says,

“He came to Korea neither as a pilot nor as a mere student of the language. He came to perfect his knowledge in order to preach the Gospel and establish a Protestant Mission in this land.”

I sincerely hope he is correct in his hypothesis. We do know that Rev. Thomas had come into contact with refugee Koreans in Chifoo and had made some study of the Korean language. The presence of these refugee Koreans in Chifoo was due to the terrible persecution of the Roman Catholic Christians in Korea by the Taewon’gun (Prince Regent).

The General Sherman sailed from Tientsin, July 29th, 1866, and first proceeded to Chifoo where she took on Mr. Hogarth, an Englishman as super-cargo and a Cantonese schroff belonging to the firm of Meadows and Company. We are told that Mr. Hogarth had preceded the General Sherman to Chifoo. The General Sherman left Chifoo on August 9th with the complement of five foreigners and nineteen Chinese and Malaymen. The vessel bore a west northwesterly direction toward the mouth of the Taedong river. On the way we are told that the vessel called at White-wing island, one of the Sir James Hall group. Those who summer at Sorai beach know the island well In this connection Mr. Oh says:

“The spot at which it anchored was Tumo-jin (豆毛津). On hearing of the arrival of a foreign vessel at that place, the Mandarin in charge of this island ordered his garrison to attack it.”

[page 10]

From here the vessel took a more northerly direction and anchored at Totchom. At this point Mr. Oh says, “Rev. R. J. Thomas here met the Chinese sailor Yu Wen Tai, who had brought him to Korea the year before. Mr. Thomas asked the sailor to guide the General Sherman up the Taidong river, to which the sailor agreed; but when they had reached Moon U-Koo, some of Yu Wen Tai’s crew objected to his going as far as Pyengyang; for they apprehended some danger of his being associated with foreigners in their attempt to enter the “Hermit Kingdom”. For this reason Yu Wen Tai refused to go further and returned to Chifoo.”

From this point it would be exceedingly interesting and helpful if we could know exactly the movements of the General Sherman, but as we are compelled to rely largely upon Korean reports made at different times and from different locations, and since most of the old names have disappeared, the question of absolute accuracy becomes extremely difficult. It is the writer’s purpose to give translations of the reports in the Annals of the Yi Dynasty and from other sources as to the movements and investigations of the General Sherman in her progress up the river and her fate at Pyengyang.

[page 11]

**THE YI DYNASTY ANNALS CHAPTER XXII**

I. Korea and America

In the sixth month (August) an American schooner entered the Taedong river laden with foreign notions to ex-change for Korean commodities. Inquiry indicated that the vessel was English and that on the ship was a man by the name of Ch’oe Nanhyon (Thomas) who could speak a little of the Korean language. He inquired of the Koreans why they were persecuting the Catholics and asked them if they did not know that the Catholics were a branch of the Christian Church engaged in the propagation of the Gospel He also asked the Koreans the meaning of the white marble Buddha in Seoul and wanted to know whether it was not used for the purpose of the worship of Buddha.

This Ch’oe Nanhyon (Thomas) appeared to be a Chris-tian missionary in China who had previously been in com-munication with Koreans there and had been able to learn a little of their language, and was more or less familiar with Korean affairs The Koreans were a little doubtful as to whether Ch’oe Nanhyon was his real name. Upon question-ing Ch’oe Nanhyon he informed the Koreans that the name of the vessel was the same as that of an American General, the General Sherman.

The Americans relied upon the strength of their ship and its excellent equipment They looked down upon the Koreans as a weak and inferior people and proceeded upon their way surveying the river, and all the time pretending they were going to Pyengyang for the purpose of trade.

Ch’oe Nanhyon being able to speak some of the Korean language took charge of affairs. The ship went far up the river and grounded in shallow water. There was quite a number on the ship.

[page 12]

II. The Record of the Investigation of the Foreign Ship at Pyengyang

It was reported that the ship that visited Pyengyang was a French vessel because that year the French fleet had committeed barbarous acts off the coast of Kangwha island and had approached the capital It was inferred from this that the vessel that had reached Pyengyang must have been a French ship. However, this report founded upon hearsay, proved to be incorrect.

The following year, 1866, when the French fleet was engaged in the survey of the sea-coast off Hwanghae province, a Catholic missionary by the name of Ch’oe Nanhyon entered the Taedong river on a small vessel Pak Kyusu (朴珪壽) was governor of Pyengyang Province at this time. The governor ordered boats to be loaded with wood, set on fire and floated down the river to where the vessel was anchored. The French ship opened fire with their cannon on the approaching fire-boats. However, the fire boats set the vessel on fire and the ship was seized and the crew killed.

III. The record of the Foreign vessel at Pyengyang taken from the Kwanson Ilssongnok Kisa (官撰日省錄記事)

1. This record is from a report made by the military officer, Yi Yongsang (李容象) on the investigation of the foreign vessel (General Sherman) at Yonggang-hyon.

“On July 15th, 1866 (Tuesday, August 25th), six foreign vessels anchored at Yonggang-hyon, Tami-myon, Sangch’il-li, Chuyong-p’o (龍岡縣多美面上七里珠英浦). The village people said that on the 7th, three small sized boats put out from the vessel and went to Samhwa (三和) while one large vessel headed for the “Water-Gate”. From the point it pro-ceeded along the shore and arrived at Pongjin (奉津).

“On the opposite side of Pongjin is the territory of Hwangju (黃州). Here the water runs very rapidly and it is about ten li between Pongjin and Hwangju. However, since this vantage point was not under the administration of [page 13] Hwangju it was difficult to make inquiry. Since the matter was of such grave importance, and I could not make an accurate investigation, I called a man skilled in such matters and thoroughly familiar with the water in this region, and ordered him to go and make investigations. He reported “The vessel is surely a foreign vessel As I approached the ship the men on the ship called to me, put out their hand and helped me to get aboard. After introducing himself, the man who seemed to be in charge of the vessel and knew a little of my language, gave me his name, but as he did not speak very intelligibly I had some difficulty in recording it He then handed me a glass of liquor saying, “This is from Peking,” and requested me to drink it without having any anxiety. The taste was certainly very excellent. Then they all drank. When I looked at their faces they were very strange. They were like giants and they wore red caps coming down to their eyebrows. The faces of two of those standing about them were black and their eyes were like those of fierce wild animals. They were all dressed in either black or white and held sharp spears in their hands. Mr. Ch’oe Nanhyon (崔蘭軒) told us that they were foreigners but that the others standing around them were from Peking.

“ ‘They told me that the ship was anchoring there for only a very short time and that they intended to go to Pyengyang. Then they asked me about the character of the country in Pyengyang, whether there was much wealth in the country and in what city I lived. I replied in writing, “My city is strongly fortified but the country does not possess any very great wealth.” Then they said, “Is it possible for seven of our people to be murdered by your countrymen? Some of our vessels have gone to the South river Han-gang (漢江) near Seoul, but we are going on to Pyengyang.”

“ ‘Then they showed me a book. The first part of it con-tained a complete map of Korea while the second part was a relief map showing the counties, mountains and streams in [page 14]black, like the embroidery women do. The letters were like seal characters and I was unable to read them. Then I was asked to go on the upper deck of the vessel where I saw hats, caps, clothes and the like, either spread out on the deck or hung upon lines. They showed me pistols of two and six chambers, about six inches long, and told me that they hit the mark every time they were discharged. Then they asked me to play on the piano. The melody that came from it was wonderful,’ The report made by this man was exactly as above stated.

“The vessel had already entered the Pyengyang water- gate and would probably sail in a day or two for Pyengyang. Therefore, it was necessary, that we call men who were capable and able to help solve this problem, and as opportunity afforded station them along the river bank. They came back and reported that the ship had already entered the Pyengyang Water-Gate. This investigation is without doubt corrects.”

The mayor of Pyengyang, Sin T’aejong (申泰鼎) ordered the soldiers to go to where the vessel was and investigate the reason for its presence and movements and to come back and report.

On the 6th of July, (Sunday August 16) the Sinyong(臣 營) ordered Pak Inhwan (朴麟焕) to take soldiers and investigate the affair. They returned and Pak Inhwan made the report. In the report it says, Three small boats had already gone to Samhwa and there should have been a report from the official of that place, but there was none, and it was difficult to understand this oversight So I made inquiry of the officer of the place, Chong Chihyon(鄭志鉉).

“Tami-myon, Sangch’il-li, Chuyong-p’o (Port) is the first point from the entrance of the bay after having passed Samhwa. It is about sixty li from the official’s office and on the opposite side is Anak (安岳). The Water-Gate from Chuyong-p’o is about twenty-five li and on the opposite side is Hwangju. [page 15]

“The vessel had two masts and four sails. It was difficult to estimate the size of the ship as one could not see it all. It was larger than our largest ship and very different How it was propelled and operated I do not know. It had a foreign name but we could not make out what it was. We might have learned the name by writing but as there was no one skilled in our language sufficiently it could not be done. It was impossible to determine the number of the crew as they were in side the ship.”

(2) The Report of the Investigation made of the Foreign Vessel at Hwangju.

The Record of the investigation of the Foreign Vessel by Pak Sunghui (朴承輝) governor of Hwanghae (黄海) province.

In the report of Pak Sunghui it says that the governor of Hwanghae province reported that the foreign vessel arrived and anchored off the coast of Samjonbang (三田坊), Song- san-ni (松山里). In the report of the officer at Hwangju, Chong Taesik (丁大植), it says that on July 7th, (Monday August 17th) an officer, Sin Yonghan (申永翰) together with the officials Yi Yongsuk (李容肅) and Chi Myongsin(池命臣) arrived where the vessel was anchored on the 8th of June, (Tuesday August 18th.)

“We delivered the Governor’s message inquiring the reason of the presence of the vessel. They replied to our communication in Chinese characters, saying, ‘Come and see’. On approaching the vessel we observed that there were twenty or thirty men who came out on the deck with guns and swords in their hands to resist us if necessary. We were finally allowed to go on board. Some of the men were sitting down on the deck while others were lying down sleeping. We were invited to sit down and then we asked them in writing from what country they had come and the object of their visit. They also replied in writing, ‘The members of our crew are from several countries. Among those sitting here are Ch’oe Nanhyon and Hogarth who are Englishmen; Mr. Preston there is from America, and Mr. Page is from Denmark.’ [page 16]

“They all had deep set eyes and large noses. The color of their hair was light and their eyes blue. There was no doubt about their being foreigners. Mr. Ch’oe Nanhyon not only spoke Chinese but also some of our language. He seemed to be in charge of the ship. Among the others of the crew were men from Shantung and Shanghai. We next inquired the name of the vessel and were informed that that was none of our concern. We next asked them from what place they had sailed and they told us from the. West They said that they had come several thousand miles and had left Shantung on the 7th and passing Paengnyon-do (白翎島) (White Wing Id.) they were on their way to Pyengyang. ‘Our vessel has the appearance of a man-of-war but really it is only a trading vessel and we have come to Korea to exchange our cloth, iron, and machinery for Korean paper, rice, gold, ginseng, and tiger skins. We have no intention of doing harm to anyone and when we have completed our mission at Pyengyang we will return at once.’ They then asked us if any foreigners had ever traded with Korea and we informed them that they had not We told them that it was all right for their ships to anchor in the seas off the coast but that the King of Korea had forbidden any foreign vessels to enter the inland waters of the country. They then replied, ‘Who can prevent us from going to Pyengyang and we intend to sail as soon as a favorable west wind comes up.’ We then asked them if any other vessel had accompanied them to which they replied, ‘It is none of your business, that is a question only for the government to ask,’ and refused to make any further statements.

Ch’oe Nanhyon was thirty-six years old, seven feet and five inches tall, thin face, light hair, and black beard. He wore a grey uniform, white topee, black shoes, leather belt around the waist, and carried a pistol and a sword. He was a military officer from England.

“Mr. Preston was forty eight years old, seven feet and five inches tall, thin face, light hair, and curly whiskers. He wore a black uniform of mohair cloth, white silk shirt, [page 17] pongee silk trousers, old shoes, and carried a pistol and a sword. He was an American military officer.

“Mr. Hogarth was thirty seven years old, seven feet tall, thin face, light hair, and wore a beard. His uniform was of white material. He wore a cap, trousers made of pongee silk, slippers, leather belt, and carried a sword. He was an English military officer.

“Mr. Page was forty five years old, seven feet five inches tall, thin face, light hair and whiskers, wore a dark uniform, black shoes, leather belt He was armed with a sword and pistol and was a military officer from Denmark.

“We then inquired the names and ages of the other members of the crew, but as Ch’oe Nanhyon refused to answer any further questions, saying that they were only servants, we were not able to secure any more information. We observed, however, that their hair, beards, faces and clothing were truly those of Orientals.

“The ship was about 180 ft long, 50 ft wide, and 30 ft high. It had two masts; one was about 130 ft. high, and the other 50 feet There were two large white sails and two smaller ones. We saw many other things on the ship but as we did not learn the names of them we cannot make a definite report The small boats were about one or two Pa (one Pa is six or seven feet) in length and were painted blue.”

(3) The Record of the investigation of the Foreign Vessel by the military official, Yi Yongsang (李容象), on July 18th (August 28th) 1866.

The report says, “The object of the anchoring of the Foreign Ship at Pyengyang, Choribang Irijang Sa-p’o (草里坊二里場沙浦) has already been mentioned. On the 13th (Sunday August 21st, 1866), an official from Pyengyang, Sin Taejong, the Soyun (庶尹) or mayor of Pyengyang, and Pang Igyong (方益鏞), the Yonggwan (領官) or Lieutenant-General, left on the 11th, and came to the place where inquiries concerning the ship had been made, but the [page 18] vessel had already moved and anchored at Ponbu Sinjang- p’ogu. It was night when we arrived at the place and so waited until daylight the next morning. Then with Chun Yongni and Kim Naksun we visited the ship and asked the object of its visit Their reply was given us in writing and asked us to come and find out for ourselves. We then got into a small boat and rowed out to the vessel and anchored near it Some of them with spears in their hands arose and asked us to come aboard. We communicated with them in writing, asking them from what country they had come, and the reason of their visit One of the men who seemed to have more authority than the rest said, ‘My name is Ch’oe Nanhyon and I am an Englishman. Cho Nungbong (趙凌泰) there is from Peking, and Cho Pangyong (趙邦用) is a Bible colporteur, and Yi P’alhaeng (李八行) (Page ) is from Denmark. We are Westerners and are on a commercial mission. We sailed from Shantung about the 1st of July and after passing several islands off the coast of Hwanghae we came to Hwangju, and after a day or two of rest, we intend to go to Pyengyang.’”

IV. The Report of Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang

On the 22nd (Tuesday September 1st) the Pyengyang military official, Yi Hyonik (李玄益) who surrendered his office and the official who had previously delivered us his office were rewarded.

In the report of Pak Kyusu it says,

“The vessel which had anchored at Hantaan (閑灘) proceeded to Hansa-jong(閑似亭). It’s anchorage had already been reported. Then the mayor of Pyengyang, Sin Taejong, received the report and it said, Yesterday afternoon between five and seven, six foreigners came to Yujong from Hansa-jong and anchored. Here they got into a little green boat and began to ascend the river. An officer from that place took a small boat and followed them. All of a sudden the foreigners turned round, seized the boat, arrested the official, and took him on board the foreign vessel. Hearing of this, Sin [page 19] Taejong got into a small boat and went out to where the foreign vessel was, and remained all night, begging that the foreigners return the official but without avail. Between 9 and 11 of that day, after the vessel had set sail, and was proceeding up the river, it began to discharge its guns recklessly, and finally arrived and anchored at Hwanggang-jong (黄江亭) Then five foreigners got into a small green boat and as they were proceeding towards Mat’an (馬灘) to survey the river, the people of the village gathered on the river bank calling loudly, ‘Give us back our Colonel.’ Then they returned to the village, demanding that the officer be given up. All the populace became greatly excited and began to cast stones. Some of the village men skilled in archery shot arrows and some of them fired guns at the foreigners. The foreigners hastily left their little green boat and fled to the upper part of the island of Yanggak (羊角) and finally returned to the ship. Then the foreign vessel pro-ceeded to the lower end of the island of Yanggak and anchored. The little green boat in which the foreigners had ridden was taken and left in the river.

“Between three and five o’clock that same day, the offici- als of the city, Pak Ch’un’gwon (朴春權) who had surrendered his office, together with some of the military officials under the Colonel, courageously ventured out to the foreign vessel in a small boat and rescued the Colonel The Colonel’s official seal had been taken away from him. It is not known whether the official Pak Ch’iyong (朴致永) and Yu Sunwon (俞淳遠) who accompanied the Colonel on the day the latter was seized, were thrown into the river from the foreign vessel or not but were never seen again. It is not definitely known whether they survived or not.

“It is my purpose to report on the attitude and the extreme carefulness with which the foreign vessel was observed.

“The crafty and beast-like foreigners entered the inland waters of the Taedong, and in a few days, came and anchor-[page 20]ed near the city without manifesting the least signs of fear. Their attitude was so threatening that one could not help but being terrified. Being strangers from a distant foreign country they should have approached us in a courteous and friendly manner if they intended to enter the city in the interests of trade. On the contrary they acted in such a way as caused us to have great suspicion. They seized our Colonel and kept him imprisoned all night on the ship. All their actions were such as to give cause for suspicion and revenge. It would not have been difficult to have destroyed the ship which was ground in the middle of the river, but realizing that the ship would not attempt to remain long in such a condition we waited hoping that it would soon withdraw. Not only was the Colonel, Yi Hyonik, imprisoned on the vessel but the loss of his official seal was all the more alarming.

“Since the official seal was lost there was nothing left to do but to have the Colonel surrender his office and report the matter to the government I pray that the Ministers of State will adjudicate this matter as soon as possible. This is the report of the mayor of Pyengyang upon the investigation and guarding of the foreign vessel at Pyengyang.”

V. The Ministers of State deliberations as to howto deal with this serious question.

“In order to preserve the honor and dignity of the Orient we must destroy the trespassing foreigners.’’

The Ministers of State met on July 25th, (Friday September 4th), 1866, in the Huijong-dang (熙政堂). Minister Kim Chwagun (金左根), who had investigated the matter of the foreign vessels at Kangwha had returned, but as there were other matters to look into, it was not known whether he would come again or not However, the actions of the Foreign Vessel which had anchored at Pyengyang were truly terrible and gave cause for complaint The report of the Chinese government to Korea is really a cause for great concern. It can only be decided after all the particulars are [page 21] fully known. There is no other method of deciding the matter.

Yi Kyongjae (李景在) said, “Foreign vessels have had the right to navigate the sea off our country before but this is the first time one ever entered our inland waters and truly its attitude is very lamentable. The foreign vessels which anchored off Kangwha (江華) have all gone but the one at Pyengyang still remains, and gives us great cause for complaint and alarm.” The King said, “That is very true. No foreign vessel has ever entered our inland waters before, even though they have sailed our seas.” Kim Pyonghak (金炳學) replied, “Indeed this is the first time.” Then the King said, “This is due to the fact that we have dealt with them too generously,” to which Cho Tusun (趙斗淳) replied, “Yes that is certainly true.” Then the King said, Send word to the eight provinces and the four large cities to guard carefully and sternly against such dastardly fellows.’’ Kim Pyonghak replied, “Yes we must once more deal very severely with such men. There is no other way but to go in to the particulars of their case very carefully and deal with them sternly. The foundation and perpetuity of the nation is in its righteous principles. If the proper law is administered in such an emergency as this, such lawless fellows will naturally disappear. If the acts of such vicious men as these take place within our borders how can our country be considered a civilized nation? Therefore, we must in this crisis administer the proper law. I beg your Majesty to give careful consideration to this important matter.” Cho Tusun said, “What Minister Kim has just said is truly correct The administration of righteous law is certainly the proper thing to do.” Finally Kim Pyonghak said, “I beg of your Majesty the King, that in as much as this matter is a most serious one we meet again tomorrow, and decide quickly to apply the proper law in this case.” The King replied, “I shall think about the matter.”

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VI. The Foreign vessel plunders merchant ships and kills Koreans.

The report made by Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, on the plunder of Korean merchant ships and the murder of Koreans by the foreign vessel.

The report says, “It had been previously reported that a foreign vessel had arrived and anchored off the Pang-susong, Pyengyang, but that it had been directly reported to the military officer and magistrate, Paek Nagyon (白樂淵) of Ch’olsan (鐵山) and Sin Taejong, mayor of Pyengyang, that on the 25th of June, (Friday September 4th), the foreign vessel did not appear to have any intentions of withdrawing but occasionally plundered provisions from Korean ships, recklessly discharging its guns and killing seven and wounding five Koreans. There has never been such a thing as a foreign vessel entering the inland waters of the country and remaining for a number of days. They say they are going to threaten the Koreans with violence in order to force them to trade with them. Therefore, seeing their determined attitude, we could not help but be afraid of them. However, since they had come from such a far country, we preferred to speak to them kindly, and have them depart with a sense of gratitude, rather than to force them to go by the means of applying the law so we treated them generously many times with food but they did not go and finally acted in a barbarous way, capturing and imprisoning our Colonel They also discharged their guns killing and wounding not less than twelve of our people, so that nothing remained for us to do but to destroy the vessel.

“This report was made by myself who went out to the river and made observation.

“Through the instrumentality of the Tongsik (董飾) and the Chunggun (中軍), together with the mayor of Pyengyang, they attempted to destroy the vessel either by cannon or fire rafts. However the foreigners on the vessel used great strategy by placing wire and nets to ward off the fire- [page 23] rafts. In the struggle that followed, Kim Pongjo (金奉調) killed a member of the crew. After fighting all day the foreigners’ ammunition was: exhausted, and the ship being grounded on a shoal, it could not move. The members of the crew, though not many, were not easy to capture because of their very clever maneuvering and use of dangerous weapons.

“The populace were very angry and only waited an opportunity to destroy the entire crew. The military too, became greatly incensed over the matter, and used all their ingenuity to assist the populace in the accomplishment of their desired object”

VII. The magistrate of Pyengyang orders the destruction of the foreign vessel.

By order of the Western Province the foreign vessel was to be destroyed as soon as opprtunity offered.

The Minister of State replied, “I have just sent the report of the governor of Pyengyang, Pak Kyusu, which says, “The foreign vessel plundered Korean merchantmen and killed and wounded many of our people. It behooves us to destroy the vessel as soon as opportunity offers. Furthermore, since foreign devils have invaded our country, committing such terrible acts of violence, who could harbor any regrets concerning their destruction? We had thought at first to treat them kindly and urge them to withdraw out of a sense of gratitude. However, they misinterpreted our purpose, captured our Colonel, and finally killed and wounded a number of our people. Because of this the wrath of our people knew no bounds. The military also became very much excited over the matter and resolved on a plan to destroy the vessel as soon as the opportunity offered.”

VIII. The Report of the Destruction of the Foreign Vessel.

On July 27th, 1866 (Sat Sept 6th), Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, reported upon the destruction of the [page 24] foreign vessels. The report says, “The foreign vessel anchored at Pyengyang carelessly discharged its guns, killed and injured a number of our people. In contemplating a plan for the destruction of the vessel it was finally decided to try and set it on fire by the use of fire-rafts. When the fire-boats approached the vessel, Ch’oe Nanhyon and Cho Nung-bong, came to the prow of the vessel and jumped into the river, at the same time, begging to have their lives spared. They were both seized, bound and brought to the shore, where they were at once beaten to death by the enraged people and military. They then proceeded to kill the remaining members of the crew. When the last member of the vessel was despatched the anger and excitement of the people subsided.

“The magistrate and military officer from Ch’olsan, Paek Nagyon and the mayor of Pyengyang, Sin Taejong exerted all their ingenuity and strength with the result that the vessel was destroyed.

“Their virtue was most extraordinary and ought to be duly rewarded. It was a most difficult task. No one was able to prohibit the Foreign Vessel proceeding up the Pyengyang riven It seized and imprisoned our Colonel, so that nothing remained to do but to destroy the foreigners. They were treated most generously in the place where once a great king had lived, and though they, like ourselves, were human beings, they acted most immorally and did such horrible things, that they greatly annoyed us. They say that Pyengyang is the place where Kija lived. The customs of the people were refined; they were loyal to the nation. The subjects practised virtue, and there were a multitude of families, for many generations, as virtuous as the nation itself. But now these vile foreigners have come up the Taedong River, seized and imprisoned our Colonel, killed and wounded a number of our people, and committed other violent acts. Even though we lack courage in arms, there was only one thing left for us to do in view of all this. The [page 25] military then considered plans to destroy the foreigners when the opportunity offered. The populace, military, and officials heartily united in the act of killing the crew. This brave act was magnificent

“We, Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, Paek Nagyon military and civil official of Ch’olsan, together with Sin Tae-jong mayor of Pyengyang, present this report.”

IX. The Report of the Destruction of the Foreign Vessel to the Chinese Government.

In reporting the affair to the Chinese government the Korean authorities said, “We have sent full particulars of the whole matter of the destruction of the foreign vessel and request that they be forwarded to the proper authorities.”

X. The Burning of the Foreign Vessel.

On August 8th (Thursday September 17th), Pak Kyusu governor of Pyengyang made a report on the burning of the foreign vessel and the confiscation of the metal of the ship. The report says, “The burning and destruction of the foreign vessel that grounded on the shoal near the Pang Su-song (防水城) in Pyengyang has already been mentioned. After the destruction of the vessel by fire, the metal in the vessel which was not melted, was salvaged, such as cannon, nails, anchor chains and the like. The material salvaged was placed in the arsenal for preservation and future use. The following is a specific list of the material:

3 Cannon and shells

2 loads of iron

162 Pa (about 1,000 feet) small and large chains

1300 lbs. of tin

2250 lbs. wire

2145 lbs. miscellaneous metal.

XI. The Inquiry Concerning the Foreign Vessel.

On November 5th, 1866, (Tuesday Dec. 16th), the Sungmunwon (承文院) reported in Seoul that it had just seen the Inquiry from Peking concerning the Foreign Vessel.

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The inquiry said that the United States Minister, Mr. Williams, reported that a two masted schooner had proceeded to Korea, grounded on a shoal, and that the Korean General had burned the vessel, taken the crew prisoners, and that he did not know whether they were dead or alive.

XII. The Report of the Inquiry in Seoul.

“On July 7th, 1866 (Monday August 17th), a foreign vessel arrived and anchored in Pyengyang. It seized and imprisoned the naval officer and killed and injured a number of the people, extorted much material, and recklessly fired its guns until it finally grounded on a shoal and was destroyed. Among those who were drowned were the self-styled Englishmen, Ch’oe Nanhyon, and Yi P’alhaeng. Formerly there was no two masted American schooner grounded on the shoal, burned and its crew killed. If one considers the report of Mr. Williams carefully he will find that there is no good ground for such a report The ship of which he speaks was not an American but an English ship.”

The Christian Church and Foreign Relations.

The “Christian Church and Foreign Relations” by Yi Nunghwa says, concerning the General Sherman, “Shortly after the wreck of the American sailing vessel Surprise, the General Sherman owned by Mr. Preston came loaded with goods the Koreans much desired : cotton goods, glass ware and many other articles. It left Chefu and sailed for Korea. The owner of the vessel was Mr. Preston and the captain was Mr. Page and Rev. R. J. Thomas was the interpreter, altogether five Europeans and fifteen Chinese and Manilla- men, making a total crew of nineteen

The Arrival of the ship at Pyengyang.

The vessel arrived by way of Hwanghae and Pyengan provinces on August the 11th and began to ascend the Taedong River to the city of Pyengyang. Therefore the General sent a Changgyo, Kim Naksu, to inquire into the reasons for the arrival of the vessel. Rev. Thomas came and told [page 27] them that they had come to trade with the Koreans and to secure food. On August 18th the vessel reached Hansa-jong by nightfall, and after dark it put out a small boat and advanced up the river.

The Vessel captures the General.

“The Pyengyang Adjutant, Yi Hyonik, seeing the small vessel ascending the river got into a small boat and tried to follow it But the foreign boat suddenly turned around and seized the boat Yi Hyonik was in and took it to the vessel. The Adjutant was taken and imprisoned on the General Sherman. The Korean authorities were greatly alarmed and sent the Lieutenant Governor of Pyengyang, Sin Taejong, to the General Sherman to demand his release but the foreign ers refused to give him up. The news of the imprisonment of the Adjutant on the foreign vessel spread to all the populace and they gathered like a cloud on the banks of the Taedong River to witness the strange foreign vessel. They called to the vessel to restore Yi Hyonik to them. The foreigners replied that they would consult with the Mayor of Pyengyang the next morning. The people gathered on the shores of the river became very angry and began carelessly to throw stones. Therefore Pak Ch’un’gwon. a retired officer, took a small boat and went out to the General Sherman and rescued Yi Hyonik, and reported that the seal which had been thrown into the water by Yi Hyonik had been seized by the foreigners.

The Foreign Vessel continued to go up the river.

“On account of rain for several days the river had risen very high but the foreigners thought that this was the natural height of the water in the river and so went carelessly on up the river. After a few days the water began to recede and the vessel grounded. The situation became more serious and since it was impossible to communicate with the Koreans the food of the vessel ran low and the foreigners began to forage, so that it was necessary for the Koreans to destroy them.

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The Destruction of the Foreigners.

“The Governor of Pyengyang reported the actions of the foreigners to Seoul and then began to consider plans for the destruction of the vessel with the officer of Ch’olsan, Paek Nagyon. On September the 3rd the Koreans prepared fire- boats, tying them together and let them float down the river to the Sherman and soon she was on fire and the smoke and fire of the vessel reached unto heaven. The foreigners came out on the prow of the vessel and begged to be saved but the Koreans would not listen to them and they were taken ashore and murdered before the populace and soldiers.

The Foreigners Destruction.

“The news of the murder of the crew of the foreign vessel was reported to the capital and the Taewon’gun was greatly elated. He ordered the officials that had had anything to do with the destruction of the crew to be re-warded and proposed that Pak Kyusu, who had been gov-ernor of Pyengyang, should go to China and inform the officials there of the matter.”

Pyongin Record.

The following is Yasa (野史) Unofficial History, from a small work called “Pyongin (丙寅) Record” (1866). It gives some interesting information concerning Rev. Thomas and the destruction of the General Sherman.

On July 7th, 1866 (Monday August 17th), Pak Kyusu governor of Pyengyang, made a report and it says, “The mayor of Pyengyang, Sin Taejong, reported that a foreign vessel had anchored at Sinjang-p’o, Chori-bang, Pyengyang Prefecture.

“The Adjutant of Pyengyang, Yi Hyonik (李鉉益) and Sin Taejong, made an investigation in which it was said that one of the men on the vessel who spoke some Korean was called Ch’oe Nanhyon, and he was an Englishman. Cho Nungbong (趙凌奉) and the colporteur, Cho Pangyong (趙方鏞) were from Peking. Yi P’alhaeng (李八行) was the [page 29] captain of the ship. The captain said, ‘We intend to visit Pyengyang in order to exchange our foreign notions for Korean commodities.’ The Koreans replied, ‘It is against the law of our country to trade with foreigners.’ Ch’oe Nanhyon replied, ‘On the 21st (Friday August 21st) of this month, did I not send a letter from China, inquiring whether it would not be possible to trade with Korea? We arrived here on June 22nd (Saturday Aug. 22). Why is it you are persecuting and driving out the Roman Catholic Christians? Our Protestant church too, makes good and upright men through the teaching of the truth. However, I would have you know that Protestantism is not the same as Catholicism.’

‘The Koreans replied, ‘Both of these forms of Christianity are prohibited by our country.’ Then Ch’oe Nanhyon asked, ‘Why did you kill the French Bishop, Priests and the Koreans who believed in their doctrines?’ The Koreans replied, ‘According to the laws of our country, foreigners who dress in different cloches and travel through the country deceiving our people and treacherously plotting are to be punished with death, and, as for taking the lives of our people, that is no concern of yours.’ ‘How many are there with you?’ they then asked. Ch’oe Nanhyon replied, ‘Five foreigners, thirteen Chinese, and two negroes (Manilla-men).’ They said their food was exhausted and upon their repeated request for help, we supplied them three different times with rice and meat.

“They next went to Pyengyang and once more demanded food. On the 18th of June (Tuesday August 18th), six of the men from the vessel boarded a small blue boat and began to ascend the river. Yi Hyonik was pursuing them in order to observe what they intended to do. All of a sudden the foreigners turned, seized the Colonel’s boat, took it to their vessel, imprisoned the Colonel on the ship, and refused to let him go. The next day some of the soldiers went to rescue the Colonel when the foreigners opened fire on them, killing [page 30] and wounding thirteen Koreans. The foreigners said, ‘If you will give us 1,000 bags of rice, gold and silver, together with a number of Koreans as hostages, we will deliver to you your Colonel.’

“The people of the city were terribly incensed at this outrage and on the 24th of July (Thursday September 3rd), the foreign vessel fired upon our ships. Consequently their boat was set on fire and twenty foreigners were either burned to death on the vessel or jumped into the river and were drowned.”

A History of the Korean People.

In addition to the official reports of the disaster of the General Sherman we give the testimony of an eye-witness. This is recorded in the “A History of the Korean People”, Chapter 37, written by Dr. James Gale. We give it here in full as it quite coincides with the substance of the official reports.

Mr. Chung Heuijo (鄭羲祖), of Pyengyang, who had seen it as a boy and told it as only a beholder can tell. “As the American ship,” said he, “came up the river, news of its approach was sent by courier post”. The governor at that time was a great scholar and highly-honoured gentleman, Pak Kyusoo, whom Yuan Shi Kai once called si-che-sa-ram; Man of the times! Mr. Chung went on to say, ‘Little by little the boat came further up, the water being exceedingly high at that season. When the news of it got abroad the people of the city fled for their lives out of the gates, and when they were ordered shut, over the walls. Many like myself, however, were moved by curiosity and desired to see who Choi Nan Hyun was, for this, we were told, was the name of the foreigner in command of the fearful expedition. Governor Pak summoned Colonel Chung Chi-hyun, who was in command of the troops, and sent him to make inquiry. He went, but for some reason, was detained on board and not allowed to return. Seeing this, crowds of people armed with stones, sticks, and bows and arrows, went out on the river [page 31] to get within throwing distance. Suddenly a cannon was fired from the ship that wrought great havoc among those who ventured near. Some lost an arm, some a leg, some were blown up and killed. The Colonel made every effort to get away, but the foreigners held him fast and finally took his seal from him.

“By means of the written character he conversed with a Chinaman who happened to be on board, named Cho Yoong Pong. In this conversation Cho wrote, ‘Is there a stone pagoda anywhere near?’ The Colonel replied, ‘Yes’ and asked what he meant by such a question. Cho made answer, ‘Before coming on this trip I met a fortune teller who read my chances for this journey and wrote :

A thousand year old city!

Stone pagoda, very terrible.

which means that a stone pagoda standing before a certain city of a thousand years was greatly to be feared.’ Strange as it may seem, a stone pagoda did stand just over Keui-ja’s dyke in the willow grove just opposite to which the ship hung fast...

“The Governor then summoned the guard, several hundred men, also a group of tiger hunters, fifty or more, and ordered them to fire on the ship. But the cannon shots that came in reply spread terror everywhere and ploughed the land where potato patches now are. This continued for several days during which time news was being constantly sent to Seoul Finally word came back from the old Regent,

“Destroy them utterly.”

“Among those who ventured to try a hand against the foreigner was a man who had a boat protected by a bull’s hide. A cannon shot however, sunk and slew him, his bag of gun-powder and all. He was killed and my father took pity on his son and brought him into our home where he lived for many years.

“While the ship was still fast aground a bold sculler went outward close up and called Colonel Chung to jump. [page 32]

The Colonel being free at the moment did so, also one of his attendants; but one, Yoo Bok Ee, missed his footing, fell into the water, and was drowned.

‘Though the attacking party was balked for several days, at last, by loading a scow with brushwood sprinkled with sulphur, she got the ship afire, and the crew smoked out. Into the water they dashed and Choi landed with Cho the Chinaman. Both offered submission, bowing deeply, but this was refused. They were pinioned at once with the rest among whom were two black men, negroes, and were led over Keui-ja’s wall to the willow grove where the fated pagoda stood and there beaten to death. The man who first struck the American Choi was a brother of the Colonel’s attendant who was drowned. There were about twenty in all and they met their fate on the 22nd day of the seventh Moon (Tuesday September 2nd) in the year of Pyung In.”

United States Diplomatic Correspondence.

In the United States Diplomatic Correspondence concerning the loss of the General Sherman and the murder of its entire crew we offer the following. This material is found in the Diplomatic correspondence between China and the United States for the years 1866 to 1868.

Mr. Williams to the Foreign Office. Legation of the United States,

Peking, October 23, 1866.

To the Foreign Office :

A report has been received here from Chifu that an American schooner, the General Sherman, was wrecked last month on the coast of Corea, and burned by the natives; her officers and crew, 24 in all, being captured by them, but it is not certainly known whether they are still alive or not It is the usage of the Corean government to deliver all such persons at the frontier of China to her officers, to be handed over to their respective consuls at Niuchwang. In the month of June last a small American vessel was lost on the coast of Corea, and her crew were very kindly treated by the people, [page 33] and handed over to the officers in Manchuria, whose treatment was, on the other hand, in utter contrast with that of the Coreans, very harsh, the poor men not having enough to eat However, owing to the exertions and expostulation of Pere Gillies, a French missionary, at Mukten, they were sent to the consul at Niuchwang.

I have to request, that orders may be immediately sent to the officers in Manchuria that if the Coreans should deliver over these twenty four men to them, to treat them with kindness and protect them, and not with the harshness shown to the former company. All expenses incurred by the authorities there on account of these will be repaid by the government of the United States.

I have, etc.,

S. WELLS WILLIAMS.

Mr. Burlingame to Mr. Seward.

United States Legation, Peking, December 15th, 1866.

Sir : I have the honor to inform you that the French fleet of six vessels and 600 men, under the command of Admiral Roze, left Chefoo on the 11th of October for the purpose obtaining satisfaction for the murder of the French mission- aries. It arrived on the 13th at the mouth of a river on which is situated Seoul, the capital of Corea; ascending this to Kang-hoa, a city of twenty thousand inhabitants, on the 14th the Admiral landed his force, and on the 15th and 16th captured the city without loss. Great preparations had been made by the Coreans to meet the French all along the river, but the French arriving before the completion of their works they abandoned them at first without a struggle.

A deputation arrived from the capital, 26 miles from Kang-hoa, complaining of the conduct of the missionaries, but ending with a request that the Admiral should go to the capital and discuss the affair in a friendly manner. The Admiral conceived this to be a ruse to entrap him and refused to go, but invited them in return to come to him. In the [page 34] mean time large forces began to gather about Kang-hoa. On the 26th a reconnaissance was made with 150 men, who. upon nearing a pagoda, were fired upon by 500 Coreans, and at the first volley three were killed and 32 wounded, whereupon a retreat was made, and Admiral Roze, probably finding that nothing could be done with his limited force, left Corea to recruit, without which he can do nothing until the next spring or summer.

ANSON BURLINGAME.

Hon. William H. Seward Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Burlingame to Mr. Seward.

United States Legation, Peking, December 15th, 1866.

Sir : It is my painful duty to inform you that the United States Schooner General Sherman, while on a trading voyage to Corea, was destroyed and all on board murdered by the natives. The news was brought to Cheefoo by Admiral Roze, of the French Fleet, the particulars of which please find in Mr. San ford’s despatch, (A). I refer you also to the letter of Meadows and Company, (B) from which you will learn that the schooner was chartered and loaded by them and for what purpose.

As Corea was formerly tributary to China I brought the affair to the attention of prince Kung, who at once disavowed all responsibility for the Coreans, and stated that the only connection between the two countries was one of ceremony. I thereupon addressed the letter, (C) to Admiral Bell, in which I limited myself to a suggestion as to what action shall be taken.

As the French are seeking redress for the murder of their missionaries, it may be that those on board the General Sherman were by the Coreans confounded with them; this seems the more probable inasmuch as the crew of the Sherman were heavily armed. Recently an American crew under Captain McCaslin, wrecked in Corea, were treated with the [page 35] utmost kindness. My colleagues have written to their admirals, and I suppose in the spring there will be a large fleet in Corea. The issue of all will be the opening of the country. If my advice can have weight it will be that our presence there shall rather restrain than promote aggression, and serve to limit action to such satisfaction only as great and civilized nations should, under the circumstances, have from the ignorant and weak.

You have seen from my despatch, No. 122 what passions are aroused and to what their indulgences would lead. I am informed the French government does not contemplate an expedition against Corea, but after the virtual repulse of Admiral Roze it will be impossible to avoid it.

I have honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

ANSON BURLINGAME.

Hon. William H. Seward,

Secretary of State, Washington D. C.

Inclosure A. Mr. Sanford to Mr. Burlingame. United States Consulate, Chifu October 30th, 1866.

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that the French Fleet returned from Corea, October 3rd, and on the 4th it was reported here that the American schooner, General Sherman had been wrecked, and all on board murdered by the natives. I immediately wrote to the Admiral, requesting him to furnish me with information he could, to which he replied :

“In reply to the letter which you have done me the honor of writing, I can do no better than send you the exact copy of a note that was sent me by Rev. P. Ridel, Apostolic missionary : On the 30th of September we were at anchor near Woody Island, (Chagyakdo) on the coast of Corea. During the night a Corean boat, with two natives on board, approached the “Deroulede”. Having recognized in one of the sailors who had accompanied me in the spring on the [page 36] voyage from Korea to Cheefoo, I succeeded in inducing them to come on board. Among other information they told me that about the middle of the moon, (about the end of the month of August), a small vessel from the country of the West had appeared on the coast of Corea, in the province of Phieng-anso, which is in the extreme northwest of the kingdom. She was endeavoring to ascend the river, and to reach the city of Phienganso, capital of the province, and had already arrived almost off the city, when she grounded on a sand-bank. The government at once sent to the king’s father for instructions, whether he should put to death those on board or burn them and the vessel together. The king’s father replied, to burn the vessel and all on board. This barbarous order was executed. Such, Sir, is the only information bearing at all upon the matter to which you allude, that has reached me.”

The General Sherman left here on the 9th of August She called for water; took Mr. George Hogarth (British subject) as supercargo, and Rev. Mr. R. J. Thomas (British) as interpreter The owner, W. B. Preston, (American) also went with them,—Page , Captain, — Wilson, chief mate, (both Americans). The crew consisted of from fifteen to twenty, (Malays and Chinese), cargo, cotton goods, glass, tin-plate, etc. etc. On October 7th the Chinese junks arrived from Corea and made the following report respecting the wreck and burning of a foreign schooner, viz; the captain of one of them was engaged by Mr. Thomas to pilot the schooner up the river Ping Yangso, as he was acquainted with him previously; he yielded, and took her up four tides. But this time the alarm had spread amongst the natives, they taking her for a pirate, and would not believe the pilot when he told them she was a peaceful trader. (The General Sherman was heavily armed.) All trade was stopped, and the natives began to collect in large numbers. His friends on board the junk becoming alarmed refused to allow him to go up any further, saying that if he was killed, they would have no face to return to Yentai. He, therefore, left them [page 37] opposite to little Ping-Yangso, about half way up the riven They were still determined to proceed; this was about the middle of the 8th moon. You will notice a disagreement here between the dates given by the French missionary and this man. However, the other junk, it seems, did not reach Corea. On its nearing the coast, a junk put off, and warned them not to go in, as a foreign vessel had been wrecked opposite Ping-Yangso, and the vessel, with all hands burnt, on which the junk returned to Yentai.

On the night of the 24th instant, the two French mis-sionaries, who had been concealed in the mountains of Corea, reached this place. They state that a foreign vessel was wrecked opposite Ping Yangso; after some fighting between the natives and those on board the schooner, the natives succeeded by strategy in dragging the men on shore, when they were surrounded, and their hands tied behind their backs. They were then made to kneel down on the shore, and were decapitated. The missionaries report that there were twenty thus put to death.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant

G. STANFORD.

U. S. Consul

Hon. Anson Burlingame.

Minister of the United States, Peking.

Inclosure B Messrs. Meadows and Co. to Burlingame. Tientsin, October 24th, 1866.

Sir : The undersigned British firm, beg leave to bring your excellency’s notice to the following circumstances, in order to obtain your excellency’s assistance in getting redress.

During the latter half of July last the American schooner, General Sherman arrived at this port, and was consigned to our care by care of Mr. Preston, the owner. who had come as a passenger on the vessel for the sake of his health. After we had taken delivery of the inward [page 38] cargo, Mr. Preston and we came to an agreement that we should load her with a cargo of foreign merchandise, and despatch her to Corea with a supercargo to sell the goods there. We accordingly loaded her with foreign merchandise, and on the 29th of July last she left Tientsin. Mr. Hogarth, one of our clerks, who went as supercargo, left previously in the steamer, Shaftesbury, for Cheefoo, in order to have a pilot and shroff ready for the General Sherman arriving there, and thus save delay. On the schooner, Mr. Hogarth, accompanied by a Chinese pilot and a Cantonese shroff belonging to our firm, went on board also Mr. Thomas, who having expressed a wish to go to Corea again, in order to extend his knowledge of the Corean language, went as passenger. From the day the vessel left Cheefoo until now we have received no written advices from Mr. Hogarth or Mr. Preston, or in fact, from anyone on board when she left Cheefoo.

On the 8th of October current we received letters from the partners of our firm in Cheefoo acquainting us that the French Admiral’s vessel had come to Cheefoo, from Corea, with the news that the king of Corea had caused the General Sherman to be burned with all on board, while proceeding up the Pingyang river.

We immediately addressed Dr. Williams on the subject, copy of our letter herewith enclosed.

On the 20th of October current we received further advices from our partrener in Chieefoo, informing us that he had seen a junk captain who had piloted the schooner four tides up the Ping Yang River, when he left her and returned to the mouth of the river to his junk and finally to Cheefoo. This man stated that Coreans had told him their king was opposed to foreign intercourse with his country. We imagine that this man, who understands something of the Corean language, knows something more about the vessel than he is inclined to divulge, fearing, Chinese—like, to mix himself up in the matter with the authorities to question him later on the points. [page 39]

As the act of visiting Corea for the purpose of trade was not an act which could, in the eyes of civilized Western nations, justify the Corean government in destroying those who committed it, we, the undersigned, have taken the liberty of addressing you for the purpose of bringing the above matters to your excellency’s notice, with the request that you will be pleased to beg his excellency Admiral Bell to make inquiries regarding the destruction of the vessel and her people, and take steps to cause the Corean government to make redress as far as such in the nature of this is practicable.

We have the honor to be, Sir, your Excellency’s most obedient servants.

Meadows and Company.

Hon. Anson Burlingame.

United States Minister Plenipotentiary.

P. S.―We beg to enclose copy of our letter to H. B. M.’s consul, Mr. Morgan, on the loss of the General Sherman and requesting the British admiral’s assistance in the matter, Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Thomas both being British subjects.

Meadows and Company. Inclosure C.

Peking. November, 27th, 1866.

Sir : I find that the Chinese government disavows any responsibility for that of Corea and all jurisdiction over its people. Consequently the occurences there relating to the General Sherman are beyond my jurisdiction. It may, however, strengthen your hands to receive a suggestion from me, that if consistent with your instructions, it may be well to send a vessel of war to inquire into the facts of the case, to the end that they may be reported to the government for its instructions. Having great confidence in your discretion, I leave the matter in your hands, where it properly belongs.

ANSON BURLINGAME. [page 40]

H. H. Bell

Acting Admiral Commanding,

U. S. Asiatic Squadron.

Messrs Meadows and Company to Consul Mongan. Tientsin, 23rd October, 1866.

Sir: We take the liberty to communicate to you the following matter, in which two British subjects are concerned, in order that you may report to Admiral King, the British Naval Commander-in-chief in China, that he may take such steps as may be best in accordance with his duty, in a position where the lives and properties of his countrymen are concerned.

About three months back the American schooner General Sherman arrived at this port, and the owner, Mr. Preston, who had come on board the vessel, consigned her to our care. After we had discharged her inward cargo, which was sent to our care, Mr. Preston, who resided on shore in our house soon after his arrival, and during his stay in Tientsin, we came to the determination to see if any business could be done in an adventure to Corea; we consequently loaded the vessel and despatched her on a trading voyage to Corea. One of our clerks, Mr. Hogarth, was sent by us as supercargo and to assist Mr. Preston in making the trip a profitable one. Mr. Thomas, a friend of the writer, having expressed a desire again to visit Corea, in order to improve his knowledge of the Corean language, went as passenger in the vessel. He and Mr. Hogarth going aboard at Chifu. We may now state that both Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Thomas were natives of Great Britain; Mr. Preston, the owner of the General Sherman was an American citizen, and the Mate, Mr. Neilson, was a naturalized citizen. Mr. Hogarth took from our firm in Chifu one of our Cantonese employees, by profession a shroff, to assay the silver or gold which he might receive from the Corean merchants as payment for our merchandise. Mr. Thomas we understand took two Pekinese with him, and the crew was formed of Malays and [page 41] two Shantung men as pilots.

From the time the General Sherman left Chifu till the arrival of one of the French men-of-war at Chifu, we re- ceived no written advices from the General Sherman.

Peking, July 31st, 1866.

Sir : Referring to Mr. Burlingame’s despatch No. 124, or December 15th, 1866, and other relating to the fate of the American Schooner General Sherman in Corea. I have now the honor to inclose a correspondence (Inclosures A. B. C.) with the Chinese government, which commenced for the purpose of engaging its good offices in ascertaining, by direct application to the king of Corea what were the real circum-stances connected with the loss of the vessel.

The reason why an earlier application was not made to Prince Kung, after receiving your despatch, was that it was deemed best to wait the arrival of the annual Corean embassy at Peking, when more direct intercourse with the officials from that country could perhaps be obtained. This embassy did not reach the capital until January, and at that time the rumor mentioned in my note to Prince Kung, had assumed so much probability that I wished to learn what grounds there were for believing it This, unfortunately, could not be done until after the Coreans had left for the country, but in any case I could not have asked them directly, as the Chinese officials in the city are particularly careful to keep these tributary nations confined to their own quarters, and they themselves are shy of all intercourse.

I was, however, able to see one of the confidental mem- bers of the Corea Mission, and ascertained from him privately some particulars relating to the attack of the schooner. He told me that he was not himself in that part of the country at the time she was in the river at Pingyang, but he heard that after the vessel had gone ashore, she keeled over as the tide receded, and her crew landed to guard or float her. The natives gathered around the vessel, and ere long [page 42] an altercation arose between the two parties which soon led to blows and bloodshed, and a general attack on the for-eigners, who were all killed on the spot by the mob of natives, of whom fully twenty were killed. He understood that the vessel was French, though he knew nothing of the flag or distinction of foreign flags; but he was sure that all her company were dead, and had moreover believed that the wreck still remained in the Pingyang river.

Before the reply from the Korean authorities was re-ceived in Peking, the Corvettee Shenandoah had returned from her visit to that country, where Captian Feiberg went in March to ascertain the truth of the same rumor I referred to in my note of A. From what he learned, combined with the reply given him, and apparently intended for the United States steamer Wachusett, when she was there in 1867, there can be no reasonable doubt that the whole company on board the General Sherman were killed about September, 1866, and the evidence goes to uphold the presumption that they invoked their sad fate by some rash or violent acts toward the natives.

I have the honor to be, sir your obedient servant.

S. WELLS WILLIAMS.

Hon. William H. Seward

Secretary of State, Washington D. C.

Inclosure A.

MR. WILLIAMS to Prince Kung. Legationof the United States Peking March 3rd, 1866.

Sir : Referring to my note to the Foreign Office of October 28th, 1866, respecting an American merchant vessel, the schooner General Sherman, which had been stranded in Corea in August of that year, at which time I was favored by a reply assuring me that the military and civil authorities of Manchuria should attend to the wants of such as might be handed over to them. I have now the honor to bring the subject again before your Imperial Highness, with the re- [page 43] quest that you would communicate upon it with the Corean government.

It appears, from reports received after the date of my note of October, 1866, that when the General Sherman got ashore in Corea the natives of the country flocked about her, and that a quarrel arose between them and the crew, resulting in injury and wounds to both parties, and a fight, in which all the latter were ultimately destroyed. In consequence of this report, the Admiral commanding the U. S. Squadron in these seas last summer despatched one of his vessels to Corea to make inquiries into the matter, and ascertain the real circumstances of the affair on the spot; but this he was not able at that time to do in a satisfactory, manner.

A day or two since I received from the United States Consul at Chifu the report of a pilot, named Yu Wantai, who last year returned from Corea, and related to him that he had gone up a stream called Pingyang river, and about ten miles from the sea had seen a foreign vessel lying on the southern bank without masts or sails, and her hull full of water. He also met a Corean, Kin Tsz ping a native of an island called Tsioh Tai or Sparrow Island, who told him that in March last he had himself seen two foreigners and two Chinese at the magistrate’s at the chief city of the district of Pingyang. The rest of the foreigners and two Chinese had all been killed by the farmers and people of the country, and not by the Corean authorities or soldiers. He saw these two foreigners walking in the streets without any instruments of torture upon them, followed by policemen to see that they did not get away; but he could not ascertain why the Corean magistrates detailed them in this manner.

The report of the pilot Yu Wantai seems to me to possess a degree of truth, and not to be a made up story, and I therefore lose no time in making it known to your Imperial Highness, to see whether some plan cannot be carried into effect to secure the liberation of these four men. I have [page 44] myself also received direction from the government of the United States, in consequence of the report having reached Washington of the destruction of the General Sherman by the Coreans two years ago, to ascertain the true facts of the case and report upon them. This order, in connection with the unsuccessful visit for that purpose of the U. S. man-of- war last year leads me now to make known these particulars to your Imperial Highness, and respectfully request that a communication be sent by His Majesty’s government, to the Corean government for them to deliver over the two foreigners and two Chinese to the Chinese authorities.

The government of the United States has no direct relations with that of Corea, but there is something quite inexplicable in the fact that when this American vessel went there her crew should be treated so barbarously, and there must have been some cause for it, which the American government cannot pass by silently, and without full investigation being made into all the circumstances.

The government of China and the United States have long been on the most friendly terms, and I therefore entertain the strongest expectation that His Imperial Majesty will so represent this affair to the Corean government that they will see the propriety of transmitting a correct account of all the facts connected with the destruction of the American schooner within their territory, in order that I may report the same to the President This act of courtesy will likewise add another evidence of the friendly relations existing between our respective governments, and will be duly appreciated.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your Imperial Highnesses obedient servant.

His excellency S. WELLS WILLIAMS

United States Charged, Affaires ad interim.

[page 45]

Inclosure B.

Prince Kung to Mr. Williams

Translation

March 10th, 1868.

Prince Kung, chief secretary of state for foreign affairs herewith sends a reply:

On the second instant I had the honor of receiving Your Excellency’s despatch, in which you inform me of the report that two foreigners and two Chinese are now kept in durance by the Coreans, and request that the Chinese government should demand of the Corean government to hand them all over to the Chinese officers, etc.

On the same day that I received this communication the British minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, also sent a despatch to the following effect:

“Last year the French admiral took his expedition to Corea, where a collision took plack with the authorities; and it was after that occurance that an American vessel went to Corea with the intention of trading, and was attacked in the Pingyang river, which she had entered, by the people. The report that came to me at that time was, that her crew had been entirely cut off; but afterwards many persons reported that some of them were yet alive, and detained in confinement by the Coreans. Recently a Chinese pilot has informed the United States Consul at Chifu that he knows two foreigners and two Chinese belonging to the vessel are still alive in Corea.”

On receiving these despatches I have recurred to the note written by Your Excellency on the 28th of October, 1866, in which you stated that an American schooner had been wrecked in Corea, that the vessel had been burned, and twenty four of her crew carried off, concluding with the request that directions might be sent to the authorities in Mukten that if any of these men were handed over they might be carefully cared for by those officials. The members of the Foreign Office personally assured you that the time [page 46] any persons were thus delivered by the Coreans, those authorities should be directed to do everything necessary for their comfort; and corresponding instructions were immediately forwarded to the general in command at Mukten and to be the collector at Niuchwang. In due course a reply was received from the former officer, in which he stated that the Corean authorities had previously given over to the district magistrate of Ching-teh six distressed foreigners, saved from the wreck of the Surprise, a vessel which had been driven ashore in their country; that they had been already sent on to Yingtsz and handed over to Mr. Knight, the United States Consul at that port, since which time no foreigners had been delivered to them.

Taking all these considerations together, and reflecting that an American ship of war has already visited Corea, but was unable to ascertain all the real facts about the matter, and that more-over the French and Coreans seem likely to engage in hostilities, it must be acknowledged that it will be rather difficult to learn the truth of the case. In the despatch under reply you propose that measures be taken by this government to bring about the release of these men; and if I delay a little, to consult as to the best mode of proceedure, it is that the affair may get the benefit of the best deliberations we can give it. It really will not be best to presently send off a mission to Corea asking about the surrender of these prisoners, for it will probably be evasively excused, and the peaceable success of the effort imperiled; or else, in our hurry, we shall not get at the real and right beginning of the matter; (referring probably to the misconception of the demand thus suddenly made on them).

I would further wish your excellency to reflect that, although Corea is in one sense a dependency of China, her authorities are now engaged in eradicating religion and forbidding its exercise; and their proceedings in the matter are carried on by themselves just as they please, but in what manner His Majesty’s officials have not heard. A moment’s [page 47] reflection will no doubt enable you to see the whole bearing of this suggestion.

I have, however, already sent a reply to the British minister and to yourself in regard to it

His Imperial Highness Prince Kung,

Chief Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Note from the Foreign Office.

July 11th, 1866.

When we received the despatch (of March 3rd) from Your Excellency, relating to the American schooner General Sherman, lost in Corea in 1866, concerning which an American man-of-war had gone to inquire about and had not succeeded in her mission, so that you requested us to communicate with the government of Corea to ascertain who were the two foreigners reported to be held in confinement there, and learn the reasons why they were so treated, that something might be done for their welfare, we replied that measures would be taken to further your wishes.

We accordingly presented a memorial to the throne, requesting that orders might be transmitted to the board of rites directing its president to address the king of Corea and ask him to inquire whether two foreigners were really detained in his country. We have recently received a despatch from the Board of Rites stating that a reply had been received from the king to the following effect;

“A two-masted foreign vessel went ashore in the Pingyang river, but this government had no hand whatever in the disasters which happened to her and her crew; nor has the envoy from the United States been here to inquire respecting them. If you have any means of communicating this to him, you can no doubt fully inform him of this fact It is a fixed rule of this country, moreover, that when unfortunate men are cast like this, such pitiable cases here of persons who had drifted down upon us, how could we detain them against their will? [page 48]

“The rumor of two foreigners and two Chinese being kept here has no foundation and is a point, too, which can be easily ascertained. I shall be obliged if the officers of the Board of Rites will make these explanations on my behalf to those who may wish them. “

It appears to us from the above that the statement by the Corean authorities that none of your countrymen are detained in their borders has much to confirm it; and in sending this reply we avail ourselves of the occasion to renew to you the expression of our best wishes for your happiness.

Prince Kung Tan Tingsiang

Wansiang Tsung Lun

Pauyun Seu Ki-Yu

Tung Siun

Hyonjae-jop

In the Hyonjae-jip (維齊集) we have discovered a record made by Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang province which gives an account of the visit of the U. S. S. “Wau-chesett” at Changyon. The name of the ship is given which assures us that the record is authentic. The record reads as follows:

Report of the reply of the Governor of Hwanghae province to the questioning of the Americans.

In the twelfth month of the year Pyongin (丙寅) January 1867 an American vessel arrived and anchored off the coast of Hwanghae province, Changyon. The Commander expressed his thanks for the hospitable treatment and safe delivery to Peking of the sailors which were wrecked on the American schooner Surprise, formerly driven by a storm upon the Corean coast, and also made inquiry concerning the loss and murder of the crew of the American vessel that went up the Taedong River to Pyingyang in the fall of Pyongin (1866). [page 49]

The local official was not familiar with the circumstances of the case and could not make a reply so that the Americans were finally compelled to leave without learning the particulars of the case.

Having lost the opportunity to investigate this matter and since it had become badly twisted when I heard about it, although sick in bed, I could no longer contain my anger. I arose from my bed with great difficulty and recorded the answer, that I said I had given.

The record of the investigation of the affair by Pak Songhui, governor of Hwanghae province.

In the twelfth month and on the 18th day of the year of Pyongin (Sunday January, 1887), an American mail-of-war, A-Kei Sa (Wachusett) arrived off the coast of Changyon and sent a communication requesting that it be forwarded to the Foreign Affairs Department of the Korean government and a reply brought back.

The local officials replied to the Americans saying that Seoul was a long way from there and that it would take too much time to get a reply.

The Americans arrived saying, “The making of such a statement before a reply is received is very impolite to say the least,” and their attitude was not good. The local officials then assumed all responsibility for the enforcement of the law of their country and delivered the following note:

“According to the laws of our realm a foreign ship adrift and in distress, although not wrecked, can be supplied, and aided to proceed on its way when the storm has subsided; but when a vessel is wrecked and unable to proceed under its own power, the crew may ask the officials to assist them in any manner they like. Such a crew will be protected on land and sent on to Peking as has already been done in several instances. This indicates that our people have manifested their humane spirit toward neighbors in distress and thus kept the sanctions of the moral [page 50] law. However, it is shameful that you have questioned our moral actions in this case.

“Concerning the incident that occured on the Taedong river at Pyengyang, it is very true that a ship did ascend the Taedong river to Pyengyang last fall The local officials took it to be a ship that had probably been forced there by the storm and took small boats to go out to investigate the matter but the foreigners on the vessel insulted them and refused to have any intercourse with them. They closed their eyes and went to sleep, totally ignoring our officials. Nevertheless our officials endured the insult, controlling their anger and replied to them in a polite manner saying, ‘It is very apparent that your vessel is not one that has been driven here by storms.’ “

“At this point the man who called himself Ch’oe, whether a Frenchman or Englishman we do not know, said, ‘If you will promise to trade with us, the military of the two countries concerned could easily adjust the matter amicably.’

“The local official replied, as follows : ‘A local official has no authority to decide upon such a question.’ Then Mr. Ch’oe, pretending that he did not understand, spoke all the more vehemently.

“We told him that such a large vessel could not possibly hope to reach Pyengyang in such shallow water; but they paid no attention to our warning, and proceeded on up the river every day on each tide.

“The Koreans hoping that the matter would not assume serious aspects gave them beef, vegetables, fruit, fire wood, and every day the crew promised to return. However, they kept on going farther up the river until they had almost reached the city of Pyengyang.

“Each day the Colonel of the city of Pyengyang took a small boat and attempted to hinder the further approach of the vessel One day, while thus engaged the crew let down a chain, caught the boat in which the Colonel was, pulled it [page 51] away and arrested him and several others, making them prisoners on the vessel When the Korean boats attempted to go near the vessel they fired their cannon and small arms, robbed the boats, and killed and injured some Koreans. The exact number was not known. The people of the neighboring villages, not being able to control their anger any longer, armed themselves to fight the foreigners.

“Even though the Koreans politely requested that the Americans release the Colonel, they replied, ‘Wait until we reach Pyengyang and we will set him free.’ The man who styled himself Ch’oe spoke Korean well and he was a splendid specimen of a man. He said, ‘Our plan is to go to the city of Pyengyang.’ We did not exactly know what he meant nor what their purpose was. Therefore, all the people of the city and several thousand of the military, not being able to control their anger longer, went out to the river side, and after fighting, succeeded in releasing the Colonel. A number of Koreans were shot to death. The populace were all the more enraged and used guns, fire-brands, and finally suc-ceeded in blowing up the magazine of the vessel A column of black smoke rose high into the sky and the ship was burned. It was not known whether all perished or not Was this the ship of which you speak?

“This Ch’oe was not of the same nationality as the men on your vessel I have enumerated all the circumstances concerning this matter from begining to end. We have learned through Peking that your country is a very honor-able one but in the questionings of your communication you speak about “cruel murder” and we consider it very impro-per, coming from you, and cannot help but being somewhat suspicious.”

The rumor still persisted that some of the crew of the General Sherman were still alive, and the desire on the part of the United States government to make every possible effort to rescue them resulted in the despatch of a second man-of-war to Korea by Admiral Rowan, in command of the Eastern Asiatic Fleet The S. S. Shenandoah, under the [page 52] command of Febiger, arrived in Korea some time in May, 1867, about five months after the visit of the S. S. Wau- chesett. The Shenandoah reached the estuary of the Tae-dong river and made surveys of the channel. We are told that the inlet was named after the vessel and is marked Shenandoah Bay on the old hydrographic maps.

The Chosen Christian Church and Foreign Relations.

Yi Neungwha, in the Chosen Christian Church and Foreign Relations says concerning the visit of the Shenan-doah, “The U. S. S. Shenandoah appeared at the mouth of the Taedong River between Hwanghae and Pyengyang provinces in 1867 to demand the return of the survivors of the General Sherman and also to make further inquires concerning the fate of the foreign vessel and its crew. The local official refused to answer the inquires and asked his interpreter, Hong Myongsik, to write to the Commander, telling him that the Taedong river was so shallow and dangerous that a foreign ship could not possibly navigate it, whereupon, the American vessel indignant at this reply, raised its sails and departed.”

Yi Neungwha also says concerning this vessel, “In the 5th month of the 6th year of Tongch’i and 18th day, the American vessel arrived at the mouth of the Taedong River, between Whanghai and Pyengyang to demand the delivery of the remainder of the crew of the Sherman and to make further inquires about its destruction. The vessel entered the river’s mouth and blocked the harbor for about a month and finally withdrew without being able to satisfy itself that any of the crew of the General Sherman remained alive or any further information concerning the distruction of the ship and the murder of its crew.”

Commander Febiger, commissioned as he was by Admiral Rowan to make an investigation of the fate of the General Sherman, would certainly not have come to Korea without having delivered some official document to the Korean government Korean evidence indicates that such [page 53] a document was delivered and the Commander of the S. S. Shenandoah also received a communication from the Koreans.

Corea the Hermit Nation.

Griffis says, “A report was delivered to the Commander which reads, “A foreign vessel arrived in the river two years before. The local officials went on board the vessel and ad-dressed the two foreign officers of the ship in respectful language, but the latter rudely insulted the native dignitaries; i. e. they turned around and went to sleep.

“A man on board, whom they spoke of as “Tong” a Frenchman, used violent and impolite language toward them. The Koreans treated their visitors kindly, but warned them of their danger, and the unlawfulness of penetrating into, or trading in the country. Nevertheless, the foreigners went up the river to Ping-an city, where they seized the Colonel’s ship, put him in chains, and then proceeded to rob the junks and their crews. The people of the city aroused to a great state of excitement, attacked the foreign ship with fire-arms and cannon; they set adrift fire- rafts, and even made a hand-to-hand fight, with pikes, knives, and swords. Finally the ship caught fire, and blew up with a terrible report This report was not believed by Commander Febiger.”

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**YI DYNASTY ANNALS, CHAPTER XXIII.**

We here attempt to give the reports as presented in the record of the Yi Dynasty. These are translations and we trust are quite accurate. They throw considerable light upon the subject in hand.

I. The Arrival of the Foreign Ship at Changyon. (Wauchesett)

On the 24th of the Third month, (Monday April 18th, 1868) the military officer of Hwanghae, Yi Minsang (李敏庠) reported, “The foreigners from the vessel have landed and entered the village.”

The report also stated that, “A company of about twenty men from the vessel at Changyon, Ido-bang, Ori-p’o(長連二道坊五里浦), came into the bay and by means of Chinese characters, stated that the vessel was an American ship and requested the villagers to get them chickens, dogs, pigs, and sheep. They said that if these were not forth coming they would return again in the evening, burn their homes and forcibly take their animals. The ship was anchored some distance from the shore so that it was impossible to say how many there were on the vessel Of the twenty who came in the small boat, five of them landed and entered the village. Three of these were dressed in blue uniforms and their hair was braided in four strands and hung down their backs; two of them were dressed in black, and for the reason that they wore helmets, it was impossible to see how their hair was cut. Those dressed in the blue uniforms said they were from Teng-chou(登州) and that they had been sold as hostages by their people to the Americans and that was why they were on the ship. They further said that unless their demands were met they would come again the next day. Shortly these five men returned to the small boat, ana rowed back to the vessel

“Therefore, hearing that the people of the village were terribly disturbed over the matter, an official took several [page 55] petty officers and went through the village to find out con-cerning the demands made by the landing party. The village folk were fearfully wrought up over the affair. It is reported that tiger-hunters were sent from the official headquarters to assist in the settlement of the matter.”

II. Report on the Investigation made by Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, concerning the foreign vessel, made on March 26th, 1868. (Wednesday, April 20th).

In the report it says, “A foreign vessel with three masts anchored at P,ido, Sinnam-bang, Samhwa” (三和新南 坊避島), on March 21st, (Tuesday April 15th) between 5 and 7 in the morning. I took a subordinate official from the Yamen and went to O-ori (吾吾里). Here we climbed a high eminence and putting our hands to our eyes I looked for the vessel It had already moved westward in the direction of Changyon and anchored. The distance between it and myself was too great to observe it distinctly. It was engaged in gun practice so that passing boats could not approach near to it I waited for an opportunity to observe the affair and went to Pugudong. The next day I gave the attendant with me paper on which to make an investigation and report, and had him go to the vessel and take down in writing his observations. He returned and reported as follows :

“We took the paper and started in the evening for the spot where the vessel was anchored. When we were within a short distance of the vessel a small boat from the ship put out and would not allow us to go near. The upper and lower decks of the vessel were brilliantly lighted and a great noise came from the ship. The ship was about 20 chang (about 120 feet), long and about 4 chang high (24 ft.). Its three sails were set and there was a great funnel in the midst of the ship. There were six men in the small boat and as for their appearance they had big noses, deep set eyes, kinky hair, and were all dressed in blue. In order to investigate the matter we asked them from what country they had come, if any of them were sick after their thousands of miles over [page 56] rough and dangerous seas, what plan they had for staying there for the night, if they intended to carry on trade in the future. I said, ‘Our appearance, mode of dress, manners and language are different but we are all like one great family and ought we not to make clear our purposes and intentions to each other? I trust you will be very frank and make clear your plans.’ At this the foreigners raised their hands, perhaps because they did not understand the questions. We asked them to receive our communication but their boat returned to the ship. After a little while they returned with a man who understood a little of our language and told us that they were Americans and that the ship was an American man-of-war (Wachusett). There is a matter about which we are going to Pyengyang to make inquiry,’ they said. ‘We can make no reply to you at this time.’ Their appearance was not comforting. The firing of their cannons was continued, and since there was no chance to make further inquiries or observations we returned.”

III. The Investigation of the Foreign Vessel.

On March 26th, 1868 (Wednesday April 20th), the officer Yi Minsang (李敏庠) made a report on his investigation of the foreign vessel.

On March 21st, between five and seven in the morning Yi Minsang taking several of the subordinate officials from the Yamen went about sixty Li (20 miles) to the place where the foreign vessel was to be observed. In the village was a Chinese scholar by the name of Im Pyongjong (林秉正) who had questioned the foreigners. But the characters of the Chinese scholar were too difficult and long to record. Therefore, we make only a brief report/ The report said,

“The Chinese scholar at Ori-p’o, Im Pyongjong, asked the foreigners from what country they had come and the object of their coming. They replied in writing and we observed that their letters were English. ‘‘Several years ago an American vessel disappeared here. Do you know anything about it?” Im Pyongjong answered, “We know [page 57] nothing about it.” Then they said, “We have come to make inquiry concerning it” Then they asked us the name of our Colonel and Im Pyongjong being somewhat suspicious replied, “The port is Ori-p,o (五里浦) and the water-gate is Taejin (大津) port.” The foreigners again asked, “Is the capital far from here? Is it all right if we go and visit the city? We would like to visit your village.? Im Pyong- jong replied, It is impossible for you to do this as our country is different from others.” Once more the foreigners said, “We would like to go into the village and talk peace. Where is your home? Would you mind if we went to your home? We do not wish to inquire into your customs. How is it that you treat us as ordinary folks? In the teachings of Confucius we discover the teaching of the truth about the world. We know that truth too. Wouldn’t it be well to go and have a conversation with your teacher?” Im Pyongjong made no reply to all these inquiries. Among the Koreans was a man by the name of Yi Kwangjong, who said, “Are there not Americans in China teaching the Christian doctrine?” Then the foreigners asked the Koreans if they had any eggs. “We will pay you for them.” Then the foreigner took two books from his sleeve and threw them down on the sand. We refused to receive them and tossed them at him. He once more threw them at us and then got into the small boat and rowed back to the vessel. I looked at the books and discovered that one was a copy of the Gospel of Matthew and the other was the entire copy of the New Testament Pak Chejang asked, “What country are you from?” They replied, “We are Chinese. We came here to fish for herring and were captured by the Americans and have come on their ship.” Then we next asked them who the foreigners were who had red hair, deep-set eyes, and prominent noses?” They replied, “They are Americans.” They once more asked the foreigners, “How far is it from here to Seoul? How many cities are in the country? Where is the seed for rice and cotton sown?” The answer we gave them was, “Why is it that foreigners should ask [page 58] the distances to our cities and where our seeds are sown?” Upon the conclusion of these inquiries the foreigners re- turned to their ship.

IV. The Investigation of the Foreign Ship.

The report of the investigation of Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, on the foreign ship made on March 28th (Friday April 22nd), 1868. The Ch’ongnam (淸南) water guardian, Yi Kijo (李基祖) made a report on March 5th. In the report it said, “The Interpreter in the garrison, Hong Myonjo (洪勉祖), went to the place where the ship was anchored and ordered Pak Hyongch’o (朴亨初) and some subordinates to make an investigation of the ship. Upon their return they reported as follows :

“We started out to where the vessel was anchored but when we had almost reached it a small boat put out from the ship and came hastily toward us. They seized our boat and would not allow us to go near the ship. Then we came to O-ori-do with their small boat and anchored. By means of Chinese characters we informed them that we very much desired to go on board their ship. They informed us that we would not be allowed to do so. Soon their countenance changed and they took hold of their arms. Shortly afterwards we heard the report of firing on the ship. They then set sail and moved out into the channel.”

V. The Investigation of the Foreign Ship.

The report of the foreign vessel by Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, made on March 30th (Sunday April 17th).

Between the hours of nine and eleven in the forenoon I wrote a letter and placed it high on a pole on the shore opposite where the ship was anchored. The foreigners came and got the letter, answered it and placed it back on the pole. Their communication said, “We have read the letter you put on the pole and have answered the questions you asked concerning our nationality and the object of our visit We are Americans. We are about fifty thousand li (fifteen [page 59] thousand miles) from home. Our ship is from Kwangtung and Shanghai and we sailed from Yen-t’ai (煙台) on March 15th for Korea. We have not come for the purpose of trading but to make inquiry. Three years ago one of our American merchantmen came to the mouth of the river and disappeared. We are, therefore, sending a letter of inquiry to you which we hope your local officials will forward directly to the king in Seoul. The purpose of our coming is also to express our friendship to Korea and express the hope that our two nations may ever continue in peaceful relations. Further, we desire to purchase fowls, meat and food stuffs from your people.” This was the communication. This return of the vessel was not a good omen.”

VI. Matters concerning the letter despatched to the King.

On April 8th 1868, the Korean government sent a letter to the officials of the locality where the ship was anchored concering the communication from the foreign vessel. It said, “We have investigated the matter and advise you that in case another communication is despatched to you that you reply to it in a very conciliatory manner.” The government also added, “We have seen the report made by Pak Kyusu, governor of Pyengyang, in which it is stated, that a foreign vessel anchored at Samhwa, Namp’o, Piyon-do (三和南浦庇鍊島); that fourteen men from the ship landed on an island and, that five of them entered the village, delivered a communication and then returned to the ship. We have replied to the local officials requesting them to investigate all the details and to write them again placating them and have them go away. If they should send another communication answer them the best you can according to circumstances.”

I have given all the evidence from the Korean and United States sources that are open to investigation. It might be of interest to give the findings of some writers who have made investigations along the same line. However, the writer [page 60] has no knowledge to what extent the various writers have been dependent upon each other.

History of Korean

In the History of Korea by H. B. Hulbert the writer says, “In September 1866 the sailing vessel General Sherman entered the Tadong. She carried five white foreigners and nineteen Asiatics. Her ostensible object was trade. Though told that this was impossible, the foreign vessel not only did not leave, but on the contrary pushed up the river until she reached a point opposite Yangjak island, not far from the city of Pyengyang. This rash move astonished the Koreans above measure. Something desperate must be the intentions of men who would drive a ship thus to certain destruction. The Regent sent word to attack her if she did not leave at once. Then the fight began, but without effect on either side until the Koreans succeeded in setting fire to the General Sherman with fire-rafts. The officers and crew were then forced to drop into the water and were drowned. Those that reached shore were immediately hewn down by the frenzied people. No impartial student of both sides of the question can assert that the Koreans were especially blameworthy. The ship had been warned off but had ventured where no ship could go without being wrecked even were all the circumstances favorable. The Koreans could not know that this was a mere blunder. They took the vessel to be a hostile one and treated her accordingly.”

Investigation of Lieutenant Bernadon.

“In 1884, Lieutenant T. B. Bernadon, U. S. Navy, made a journey from Seoul to Ping-an, and being able to speak Corean, learned the following from native Christians. The Sherman, arriving during the heavy mid-summer rains, which made the river impassable to native boats, was seen from the city walls, and caused great excitement When the waters subsided the governor sent officers to inquire her mission. Unfortunately to gratify their curiosity, the com- [page 61]mon people set out in a large fleet of boats, which the Sher man’s crew mistook for a hostile demonstration, and fired guns in the air to warn them off. Then all the boats returned. When the river fell the Sherman grounded and careened over, which being seen from the city walls a fleet of boats set out with hostile intent and were fired upon. Officers and people, now enraged, started fire-rafts, and soon the vessel, though with white flag hoisted was in flames. Of those who leaped into the river most were drowned. Of those picked up one Tchoi-han-un (Rev. R. J. Thomas), who was able to talk Corean, explained the meaning of the white flag, and begged to be surrendered to China. His prayer was in vain. In a few days all the prisoners were led out and publicly executed.”

Corea The Hermit Nation.

Griffis himself says anent the matter, “The “General Sherman” was an American schooner, owned by Meadows and Company, a British firm in Tientsin, and reached that port July 1866. After delivery of her cargo, an assignment was made by the firm and owner to load her with goods likely to be salable in Corea, such as cotton, cloth, glass, tin-plate, etc., and despatch her there on an experimental voyage in hope of thus opening the country to commerce.

“Leaving Tienstin July 29th, the vessel touched at Chifu, and took on board Mr. Hogarth, a young Englishman, and a Chinese Shroff, familiar with Corean money. The complement of the vessel was now five white foreigners and nineteen Malay and Chinese sailors. The owner Mr. Preston, the Master Mr. Page , and the Mate Mr. Wilson, were American, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, who had learned Corean from refugees at Chifu, and made a trip to Whanghai on a Chinese junk, went on board as a passenger to improve his knowledge of the language.

“The schooner, whether merchant or invader, leaving Chifu, took a north-west direction, and made for the mouth of the Tadong River. There they met the Chinese captain [page 62] of a Chifu junk, who agreed to pilot them up the river’s mouth and sailed back to Chifu, where he was met and questioned by the firm of Meadows and Company.

No further direct intelligence was ever received from the unfortunate party. According to one report the hatches of the schooner were fastened down, after the crew had been driven beneath, and set on fire. According to another all were decapitated. The Coreans burned the wood for its iron and took the cannon for models.”

After the destruction of the General Sherman and the experience with the French off Kangwha, the Regent, (Taewon’gun) together with the entire Korean court, assumed a very anti-foreign attitude toward all Westerners, and also to all Koreans who were in any way conniving with them. This was unmistakably manifested in the very stringent laws which the Korean court passed to control or eradicate them, and in the tablets prepared and erected in various places in Korea against them.

One of these tablets was set up in Pyengyang and one in the city of Seoul near where the Chong-no bell now stands. The inscription on the tablets reads as follows :

“The barbarians from beyond the seas have violated our borders and invaded our land. If we do not fight we must make treaties with them. Those who favor making a treaty sell their country.”

