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# The Russo-Japanese War.

We are evidently approaching a second crisis in the war. It was inevitable that the scouring of the seas by the Japanese fleet would be followed by a season of waiting for that was a necessary preparation for the transportation of troops to the mainland. The delay may have been increased by the fact that the Japanese could not have known that the sea victory could be so easy.

Be that as it may, things are beginning to look lively once more. The Japanese have driven the Russians back across the Yalu by a series of what the Russians themselves in their dispatches to St. Petersburg call “Japanese reverses.” The Russians considered it a great feather in their cap that they destroyed the two men-of-war in Chemulpo Harbor. The *Shanghai Mercury* says with the finest touch of irony that the Russians will never despair so long as they can do such things as these. By whatever name we wish to call this victorious retreat of the Russians they are now beyond the Yalu and Korean soil is clear of them. It is not much to be regretted when we read the telegram sent down here by the commissioner who went north to bring back the body of the prefect whom the Russians killed because he refused to supply provisions. The Commissioner found the body decapitated, both arms and legs cut off and the trunk [page 146] frightfully mutilated. We cannot assert that the Russians mutilated the body but there is no doubt that they killed the prefect.

Once more the old Yalu comes into notice. There are few more historic streams than this one. For nearly four thousand years it has seen many armies facing each other across its waters. It is the Rubicon of Korea. The parallel is accurate.

When the Koryu dynasty, away back in 1392, had become so rotten that it was a disgrace to the whole Korean people the great general Yi was ordered by the priest-ridden king to take the army and attack China! Gen. Yi knew it was the command of a maniac but he had to make a “bluff” at obedience; so he took the army as far as an island in the middle of the Yalu and then made a speech to them, to the effect that it was worse than suicide to attempt the invasion of China and asked them if they would follow him back to the capital and engage in a little political house-cleaning. They applauded the speech and recrossed the arm of the river and marched on the Capital, where Gen. Yi soon became king and founded the present dynasty. Old Sindon was the monk who had hypnotized the fallen king. One of his tricks is worth recording. Feeling that his bluff needed a little “upholstering” he dug a hole by night in front of his door; at the bottom of the hole he put a barrel of beans; on top of the beans he put a gilded image of Buddha so that his head would come about two inches from the surface of the ground, and then he filled in the dirt so that nothing could be seen. He had taken good care to throw in a couple of pails of water on the beans. In the morning he called the people about him and said ‘‘By noon a gilded Buddha will come up out of the ground in front of my door.” They sat down to watch. The beans began to swell, and at 11:57 the gilded head broke through the surface of the soil. They went down on their faces as if they had been shot and Sindon’s hold was strengthened for another year or two.

The world is waiting eagerly for news of a land [page 147] fight but this is not likely to come off for several weeks yet. The Japanese might land some troops back of Port Arthur and attack that place by land and sea simultaneously but the strength of Port Arthur has been proved to be so much less than the Russians boasted that even the capture of that stronghold would really not be considered a hard blow. It is when the two armies meet in the death clinch in Manchuria that we shall hear of something definite. Meanwhile we seek for evidences of strength or weakness on either side. The frantic efforts that the Russians are making to secure food in Manchuria and the fact that they have had to bribe the bandits to keep them still, show that the Siberian road is going to prove all but inadequate to supply the army in the Far East.

Manchuria is heavily populated with people hostile to Russia, her railroad runs so near the Arctic circle that in winter it will be an enormous undertaking to keep a large army in Manchuria supplied. At some stations along the road we looked carefully at the track and, as the train moved along, the railroad ties would sink half or three quarters of an inch and mud would ooze up over them. If this was the case with comparatively light passenger cars what must it be with heavily loaded ones? It is probable that to keep that road in running order and to transport what the army will need will require an average of fifty men to the mile along the whole 6,000 miles, or in round numbers a total of 300,000 men who must themselves be fed and provided for and paid. We have lately heard that 100,000 more men are asked for as guards alone for the railroad. So when people talk about Russia’s game being a waiting game, it is true only in case she can concentrate a large army at Harbin or elsewhere and then push the Japanese rapidly and steadily out of Manchuria and Korea. If the statement of the Japanese is true, that the war will take two or three years, we feel confident that its prolongation will be worse for Russia than Japan. It may be that Japan sees that it will be necessary to play the waiting game herself and attempt to drain [page 148] the resources of the Russian government. In order to make it succeed it was necessary to have complete command of the sea and render it impossible to feed the Russian army by any other avenue than the Siberian Railway. This they have done and the next step is to keep things moving enough to make it necessary for Russia to support an enormous army in Manchuria at three times the cost of keeping a Japanese army there. If the Russians want to stop the suicidal expenditure they must drive the Japanese army off the southern point of Korea; but the nature of the Korean country is such that the Russians would be constantly fighting an uphill game with the ever present danger of a Japanese army landing in their rear and cutting off their communications. We very much doubt whether the Japanese wish to bring the matter to the issue of a single great battle. Japan is now paying for something like fifty thousand men on the field while Russia is probably paying for six times that number and when we take into account the vastly greater expense of putting Russian troops in the field than that of putting Japanese troops there we might be within bounds in saying that Russia’s daily expenditure is ten times as great as that of Japan. At that rate Japan can afford to play the waiting game. This looks the more likely when we notice the satisfaction with which Japan views the restriction of the belligerent territory and the arrangement which she has made with Korea, for whereas it prevents Russia from drawing supplies from any Far Eastern territory excepting Manchuria, which in a state of war will produce comparatively little, it leaves Japan free to draw upon the enormous agricultural resources of Korea which, being in the southern part of the peninsula, will be out of the area of actual hostilities at least until the Russians have succeeded in pushing the Japanese to the wall. And before this can be accomplished Russia will have drained every bourse in Europe and beggared her own people.

But even this does not exhaust the indications which point to Japan’s intention of prolonging the war. She [page 149] recently secured an extension of the fishing privileges of the Japanese along the whole western coast of the peninsula and the avowed purpose was to provide another means of supplying the Japanese army with food. This shows that she does not expect to end the war in a single season. We must also add to this the fact that Japan is hastening the building of the railroad between Seoul and Wiju, which cannot possibly be finished inside of two years.

General Kuropatkin’s statement that he expected to finish the war in July probably voices the profound wish of the Russian Government, and to realize this wish they will depend upon the hot-headedness of the Japanese in precipitating a general engagement. But Japan is not out to do what Russia wants and we fully believe that an entirely different policy will be adopted by the Japanese leaders. A prominent Russian official has already foreseen that Japan will adopt the tactics of the Boers. It is an ominous forecast for the Russians; for with Japan’s resources and the number of men she can put into Manchuria it will mean the Boers with thrice their force and backing.

The war correspondents who have been waiting so impatiently in Tokyo have come on at last. They passed through Chemulpo the other day on a Japanese transport. The boat dropped anchor in the harbor at five in the morning and left before noon for the north. Not one of the fifteen correspondents was allowed to land and a newspaper man here who boarded her was allowed to stay only fifteen minutes. Mr. Jack London was waiting in Seoul for that boat. He was told that it would arrive at noon but it arrived and sailed again before that hour, so he was left; but he went north by a subsequent boat.

To show how well Japan keeps her own secrets, I will say that for three weeks a fleet of over forty loaded transports lay off the Korean islands within fifty miles of Chemulpo and yet very few in Seoul had heard a word about it. That fleet was waiting for the Russians to be pushed back across the Yalu and when [page 150] that event was in sight the time had come for this new force to land near the mouth of the Yalu. For this reason the war correspondents in Tokyo were sent forward.

This newspaper crowd, like all crowds, is made up of all kinds. There are veterans like Burleigh, James, London, Davis, and Palmer and then there are callow youth just out of college, whose notions of the East and whose estimate of Russian or Japanese character is based upon a few days observation from the deck of a steamer. One of them called on us the other day to ask questions about Korea, which we gladly answered; but we found that he had formed preconceived notions of it that were decidedly youthful and he disputed with us at every point. We could tell him nothing. He had learned more about Korea in four days than we had in eighteen years. He was like the fellow who crossed from Dover to Calais for the first time, and seeing a redheaded man on the pier at Calais wrote back to his friends that all Frenchmen were redheaded. And, strange to say, this man represented one of the greatest papers in the United States.

The withdrawal of the last Russian force across the Yalu River brings to an end one period in the war; only a preparatory step, of course, a clearing of the decks for action, and yet a very definite step and one in which the Koreans are deeply interested. It means that the war is to be fought on other than Korean soil and only those who have lived in territory which was the actual scene of conflict can properly understand what a blessing this is to the Koreans.

It will be well therefore to give a resumé of what has been done and the manner in which the advance and retreat of the Russians was accomplished. It is evident that the Russians never expected nor intended to attempt to hold any of the Korean territory against the Japanese, but it was necessary that they should send forward a small force to keep in touch with the Japanese so as to be always informed of the movements of the latter. For this purpose they made use of Koreans as spies and through them gained some useful information but, if reports are correct, they were often deceived by these Korean spies as to the number of the Japanese. The passionate longing of the Koreans to see the war carried to the other side of the Yalu evidently affected these Korean spies and more than once their reports of the Rapid approach of strong detachments of Japanese made the Russians decamp in haste when in truth thet could easily have stood their ground and caused delay to the enemy. The question here arises as to whether one of the objects of the Russians was to cause serious delay to the Japanese so as to give more time for preparation to the military authorities in Manchuria.

The rather serious business at Chong-ju might indicate that such were their orders. The little skirmishes at Anju, when shots were exchanged across the river and two or three on either side were killed, could not be called serious opposition. The Russians were looking for the best place to take their stand and see what they could do at holding the Japanese in check. They may have seen the futility of it, and probably did, but an attempt, at least, must be made to obey orders if only to prove that they could not be carried out. The skirmishes at Anju occurred about the middle of March and it was not until nearly a fortnight later that the battle of Chong-ju was fought, namely March 28th.

But before describing that encounter we must note some of the movements of the Japanese that preceded it. The Russians spread out over the southern portion of North Pyeng-an Province in a desultory sort of way. They must have known through their scouts that the Japanese were going north by the main road only but the Russians scattered far to the right and left of this road apparently bent upon forage. On March 15th they entered Yŭng-byŭn, the capital of the province, about a hundred strong and made a demand upon the governor for food. He could do nothing but comply, so he gave them orders on various prefects in the vicinity. These the Russians took and presented at various prefectures saying that the Russians were going to fight the Japanese and that the Koreans must aid them with food. They seem to have had the curious notion that this would be [page 152] pleasing to the people, when in fact nothing could be more distasteful. The Russians gradually came to see their mistake when prefect after prefect announced that orders straight from. Seoul were superior to the governor’s orders and that they could furnish no provisions. The result was that the Russians had to take what they wanted. These provisions were not paid for even though the Russians may have offered Russian money. That money was worthless to the Korean and however much he received it could not be called pay. It is amply proved that they took things without leave, for they entered the grounds of American citizens in Sun-ch’un and were going to walk off with some fodder, and it was only by an appeal to the head officer that the theft was prevented.

On the 22nd a Russian band, twenty-five strong, entered Ch’ul-san and took a hundred pecks of rice and five bullocks. A large majority of the people had run away leaving their houses empty. The Russians entered these houses and took whatever they needed. It was the same in all the towns along the main roads. The number of Koreans who fled from their homes in the north would mount up to thousands. Where did they go with their wives and children? It was bitterly cold. Winter had but just begun to break up. The imagination is taxed to the utmost to form even a faint conception of the terrible suffering those people must have endured. The number of actual deaths among those fugitives must have been ten times the number of Japanese and Russians who were killed or wounded in the various small engagements. We may smile and say that it was quite unnecessary for them to run away from their homes, that they were themselves to blame for their suffering; but we forget that they know of war only as rapine and plunder, the loss of property, of life and of honor more precious than life. They know nothing of “civilized” warfare.

It was on this same day March 22nd that the Russians at Yongampo, connected with the Timber Concession, and the Chinese under them, removed to the other side of the Yalu. Only 100 Russian soldiers and ten Chinese remained. The Koreans say that they put a [page 153] large number of “boxes” into the water at that port. The Koreans took it to be the Russian form of burial but they learned later that these were torpedoes. We cannot be sure as yet that the Russians actually mined the harbor, but these reports would lead us to suppose so. On the next day even the 100 soldiers and the Chinese all left hurriedly and went across the Yalu leaving everything in the hands of the Korean interpreters.

When the Japanese crossed the river at An-ju the Russians being greatly outnumbered evidently determined to move steadily back toward the Yalu but to leave enough men at Chong-ju to hold the Japanese temporarily in check and prevent an attack in the rear. That there was no general concentration of troops at Chong-ju is shown by the fact that on the 20th 500 Russians arrived at K wi-siing which is almost north of Chong-ju and then in a day or so went westward. But still better proof is found in the report that on the 29th just one day after the fight at Chong-ju 2,600 Russians arrived at Sun-ch’un and the following day went toward Wi-ju. These men could not have been in the fight at Chong-ju. There was a little brush between the Japanese and Russians at Pakch’un a few days before the Chong-ju affair and it is plain that the Japanese were hot on their trail for we hear from Ta-ch’un, just north of Pak-ch’un, that on the 26th twenty-nine Japanese cavalry arrived and most of these immediately hurried westward toward Kwi-sung.

It was on the morning of the 28th that the Japanese cavalry scouts approached the walled town of Chong-ju which is on the main road thirty-five miles beyond An-ju. Weare able to give a little sketch map of the situation of Chong-ju, indicating, the main road along which the Japanese came, the lay of the land about the city, the spot where the first firing took place and the position occupied by the Russians and from which they were driven by the Japanese. It will be seen that a stream comes down a valley from the northwest and flows around to the south side of the city where it is joined by a corresponding stream coming down from the northeast, so that the city lies in the fork of the streams, which then flow south into [page 154] the sea a few miles distant. Some of the Japanese scouts came across the stream about half past ten in the morning and approached the south gate of the town while others took a circuit around the eastern side of the town to see what was going on in that direction. It soon became clear that they were in touch with a considerable body of Russians who were in the city and outside the west gate. The scouts started back to report but the Russians seem to have followed them out of the south gate and soon the main body of Japanese appeared and a sharp encounter took place a hundred yards outside the south gate. The Russians were not in force enough to hold this position which was a poor one, so they retired, leaving, as it is reported, two or three dead on the field, who were afterward buried by the Japanese. When the Russians retired they all went outside the west gate up the stream and took their position on rising ground, evidently with the intention of making a stand there. The Japanese cavalry had followed close on their heels, but when it was seen that the Russians had drawn up for business the cavalry retired to the main body of the Japanese and reported. Going around the south side of the city the Japanese attacked the position of the Russians with fifty cavalry and seventy infantry but it was two or three hours before they were dislodged and compelled to retire toward Wiju. If the Japanese could have pushed on and kept up the fight the Russians would perhaps have been more thoroughl3’ beaten but snow was lying deep on the ground and the cavalry alone could have effected nothing. So the Japanese had to let the Russians off without further loss. A few days later the Russians were streaming through Sinch’un carrying their wounded. They were in full cry for the Yalu. This little battle m which there were only aboat fifteen casualties on each side seems to have sufficed for the Russians. No more stops were made until Wiju was reached. The Japanese followed steadily, welcomed every-where by the Koreans who had learned the difference between Japanese and Russian treatment. When they appeared before Wiju the Russians had already crossed to the other side of the [page 155] Yalu and Korea was rid of the Cossack, it is to be hoped forever.

It was on March 4th that Korean soil once more ceased to be belligerent territory. We understand that the Russians have taken a stand on the other side of the river and will dispute its passage. In fact General Kuropatkin is reported to have said that the Russians would attempt to surround the Japanese at the Yalu.

There is little use in trying to forecast the immediate future. General Kuropatkin is an experienced officer and when the Japanese come in contact with him there will be some sharp work.

# The Burning of the Palace.

The night of April 14th witnessed one of the greatest conflagrations that Korea has suffered for many years. The new Imperial Palace called the Kyong-un was swept out of existence in a few short hours. It will be remembered that this was the palace built soon after the Emperor took refuge in the Russian Legation in 1896. Compared with the old time palaces it was small and insignificant but even so it was a huge collection of buildings, huddled closely together, some purely native in style some purely foreign and others still a mixture of the East and West. It was about eleven o’clock that the alarm bells were rung, though the fire is said to have begun some thirty minutes sooner. The cause of this fire is not definitely known but rumor states that it came from the overheating of some newly made flues under the floor of a building lately occupied by the Emperor as his private apartment, but in order to understand where the fire originated the reader is invited to refer to the diagram which accompanies this article. This represents only the most important buildings in the palace enclosure but between these and around them were hundreds of kan of buildings; so that when the fire once caught it was sure to sweep clear through.

[page 156] It was in the building numbered 20 in the diagram that the fire started. This was the apartment of His Majesty before the Queen Dowager died. At that time he removed to the building numbered 11. The buildings that he had temporarily left were being renovated. Carpenters, masons and painters had been hard at work upon it. It is said that there were many shavings lying under the *maru* and when the workmen built a fierce fire in the newly made fireplace some of these shavings, being whirled about by the wind caught fire and communicated the flames to the shavings under the *maru*. The newly painted wood burned readily and when the fire was first noticed it had already taken a firm hold. It is probable that instant and vigorous measures would have prevented a great conflagration but in a Korean palace ordinary rules do not work. In the first place there must be no outcry or tumult; in the second place the gates must all be tightly closed and guarded. Then the Emperor must be awakened and informed of the fact that the palace is on fire. Then and only then can any attempt be made to stop it. It is quite irregular for any efforts to be made in this direction without the express order of the Emperor. The result is that if a fire once starts in a palace the whole place is practically doomed. History shows us that seditious attempts have often been begun by starting such a fire, so that the first care must be to close the palace gates and give access to no one.

On this occasion matters were made worse by a high wind that was blowing from the northeast and the building where the fire started was in the northeastern part of the palace grounds; so that the flames were practically sure to sweep a clean path through the palace inclosure diagonally to the southwest comer.

Not long after the fire was perceived from the outside the Japanese fire-bell was rung and the Japanese and Chinese firemen hastened to the palace but found all the gates fast closed and no answer was made to their shouts, so they were unable to render any assistance. No noise was heard from the palace enclosure except the angry roar of flames and the crash of falling roofs.

 [page 157] There was something sinister about the stillness. Fire in the orient is always associated in the mind with screaming crowds and frantic efforts to dam the tide of flame, but here all was silent. Crowds surged around the palace on the outside but what of the thousand people or more who were within. They might all be burned to death.

The British Legation guard turned out promptly and armed with patent fire extinguishers attempted to get in at the back gate and on the side near the Custom House, but they were foiled at every point. They then went to Mr. Chalmers’ place and secured a hand fire engine and dragged it around to the palace in readiness to enter if an opportunity should be afforded.

Meanwhile the fire was rapidly gaining a firmer hold upon the closely packed buildings in the palace. It leaped from the house in which it started to the adjoining buildings to the west, south and southwest, and it was not long before it threatened the apartments in which the Emperor was anxiously awaiting the issue. Within forty minutes of the time when the fire was discovered he hurriedly moved to building numbered 9 on the diagram and called to him Prince Yung-chin and Lady Om. Of course the Crown Prince was with him all the time. This move was made so hurriedly that His Majesty is said to have gone out in the garments that he wears at night. It soon became evident that the whole palace was doomed and that there was no part of it sufficiently safe for His Majesty to risk remaining there. It was therefore decided to leave the palace and go to the Library building which is just west of the American Legation. To do this he must go out the small gate on the west side of the palace, but when this was reached it was found already open. The reason for this was as follows: Along the west side of the palace enclosure, inside the wall, was a row of buildings used as barracks and magazine. The smoke drove straight in that direction and a shower of burning cinders was falling. The soldiers were drawn up in front of their quarters and it was plain that unless something was done and done very [page 158] quickly they would be burned to death. They had no mind to emulate the example of Casablanca and so made for this west gate to gain egress from their critical position. It was closed, barred and locked but with the flames behind them they soon had the gate unbarred and streamed out. A number of the American Legation guard were there waiting for an opportunity to be of service. The Korean soldiers told these men of the ammunition stored in the threatened buildings and so the Americans together with some of the Koreans made a dash for the building and soon had the ammunition outside the palace where it could do no harm. If this had not been done a very serious explosion might have occurred. It was about this time, approximately 11:30, that the Emperor, the Crown Prince, Lady Om, Prince Yung-chin and a crowd of eunuchs, officials and palace women came hurrying out of the gate to make their way to the Library building.

Soon after this the British Legation guard entered this gate, got their hose-pipe into a large well at the northwest comer of the palace enclosure and set to work to save the new palace building that is in course of construction. They kept a stream of water on the scaffolding and succeeded in preventing the fire from spreading in that direction.

The wind was blowing strongly from the northeast and about midnight the fire reached the great Audience Hall called the Chung-wha-jon or “Middle Harmony Hall.” The fire went around three sides of this great building before it caught fire. The large amount of ornamental work under its double roof made it bum with one great roaring tide of flame. The sight from the British Legation grounds was truly awe-inspiring. In half an hour the enormous pillars which supported the double roof were seen to totter and then the whole pile came with a deafening crash to the ground. Even so the debris stood sixty feet high or more and burned as fiercely as ever. This building alone represented an outlay of something like half a million dollars.

Fears were felt for the safety of some of the foreigners’ [page 159] houses to the southwest of the palace. The constant steam of sparks and cinders which fell upon and around them required careful watching and some of the foreigners were busy pouring water upon the most exposed portions of the buildings. Some gentlemen mounted the roof of the Methodist Church, which was nearest the fire, and kept watch for signs of fire there.

In the room occupied by His Majesty there was a heavy chest containing a large amount of solid gold and silverware of various kinds. As soon as His Majesty left the apartment eight soldiers were detailed to bring out this chest but their combined strength was inadequate to the demand and it had to be left. After the fire the debris was removed and it was found, of course, that the gold and silver had melted and run in all directions but the bullion was recovered. In an adjoining room was another case containing a large number of silver spoons and other implements which had been presented to His Majesty as souvenirs on many festive occasions. The cover of this was burned off and the contents partially melted but many of the spoons though blackened and twisted still retained some semblance of their original shape.

It would be a mistake to suppose that all the buildings were burned or that all the occupants of the palace buildings had to leave. There were seven or eight buildings on the north, northeast and east sides of the enclosure that were not burned and many of the palace women, clerks and others remained in them until morning.

Many valuable books and documents were burned in the cabinet council house numbered in the sketch. These books were histories, secret documents, ceremonial laws and a large number of foreign books. In the house occupied by His Majesty a large amount of Japanese paper money was burned. The furniture of some buildings was hastily carried out and piled up in the road or passage-way and in some instances this was burned, although the building from which it was taken escaped. In the buildings surrounding the great Audience Hall [page 160] were stored the uniforms and instruments of the native musicians. These were all destroyed. Many jinrickshas that had been prepared for use in the jubilee celebration, that was so many times postponed, were also burned. The number of screens, silver utensils, rolls of silk, vases, and other valuables is unknown but the aggregate value must have been very great indeed.

The morning after the fire inquiries were immediately set on foot to discover the parties responsible for the calamity. It was found that the cause was as we have stated already; so the men who had charge of the repairs, and to whose carelessness the fire was due, were immediately arrested and lodged in jail at the Law Department. It is said that these men will be banished nominally for a term of years but that they will be soon reprieved. The matter of the place of the Emperor’s residence was taken up immediately. The various functions of the Household were temporarily lodged in buildings owned by the government in the vicinity of the palace but this could not continue long. Rumors were abroad that His Majesty would go to the Chang-dok Palace, called “The Old Palace” by foreigners. Others said he would lease the Russian Legation while others still believed that he would stay in the Library building until sufficient repairs could be effected on the site of the burned palace to make it habitable. Of these three the last was by far the most congenial to His Majesty and inquiries were set on foot to find out what such repairs could be effected for. An estimate was made that it would require Y 9,000,000 to put the whole palace in the condition it was before the fire. This, being nearly equivalent to a year’s revenue for the whole country, was of course out of the question; but 300,000 dollars were appropriated for temporary repairs and carpenters and other workmen were ordered to be in readiness to begin the work. Most of the leading officials and the Japanese Minister advised that the Court be moved to the “Old Palace’\* but this was very distasteful to His Majesty so the matter was not pressed. But as the days passed it became more and more evident that this would [page 161] be the outcome of the matter for the government treasury can ill-afford the tremendous strain and, in addition to this, the “Old Palace” has lately been renovated and put in order so that a very slight expenditure will make it habitable. Strong pressure was again brought to bear upon the court and at the present writing, April 25, it has been practically decided that the court will remove to that palace. It is by all odds the finest situation in the city and much more commensurate with the dignity of an imperial court than the cramped quarters in Chong-dong which are elbowed on every side by foreign legations and other foreign properties. Of course it will mean that we shall be able to have no more of those delightful picnics in the “Old Palace” grounds where one can imagine himself for a time transported far away from the sights and sounds of the city.

In connection with this fire there is an amusing prophecy said to have been unearthed. Someone posted an anonymous statement at Chongno, the center of the city, saying that such a prophecy had been found and that it reads as follows :

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The curious thing about it is that this inscription was posted at the beginning of the year. The literal translation is as follows: “The pine forest will suffer a calamity; at first hide in the tiger’s tail; green dragon of ancient times; superior will be attached to twenty.” This means absolutely nothing as it stands but it is one of those curious oriental conundrums in which the Korean delights. It depends upon a clever juggling with the Chinese characters. The first four characters are said to foretell the burning of the palace, as the thousands of posts used in its construction may be called a “forest of pines.” The next four characters are interpreted generally to refer to the fact that the Emperor took refuge in the Library building which, being a sort of annex to the palace, may by a stretch of the imagination be called a “tail.” The use of the word tiger describes the Library building more perfectly, for the tiger is the animal that [page 162] corresponds to “West” even as rat corresponds to north, dragon to east, and bird to south. The third combination, the green dragon, refers to the present year, for each year of the sixty year cycle has its own “animal name” and this year, being the kap-chin year, may be also called the green dragon year. But the character for dragon also means the third moon of the year, for each moon is presided over by some animal. Then the last character, meaning “ancient” is made up of the characters meaning twenty-first day. So the whole of this third line gives the exact year, month and day in which the idea in the last line will be carried out. The day here specified is the sixth of May. The enigmatical meaning of the last line is “The superior will be attached to the double *sun*’’ now the character *sun* is \* and if two be put together the two characters for day \* come together one above the other and this is the character \*, chang, which is the name of the “Old Palace.’\* So the whole is interpreted as follows : In 1904 a disaster will overtake the palace. Its inmates will find refuge in a building to the west of the palace and on the fifth of May they will remove to the “Old Palace.” When this poster was discovered in the morning by the police it was instantly torn down and taken to the Police Headquarters. If the author could be found he would suffer capital punishment. But many people saw and copied it and it appeared in the native papers a few days since. To say the very least it is a curious coincidence. It will be rather interesting to note whether the last line of the prophecy is fulfilled. If the interpretation of the lines is the right one the only rational explanation would be that the conflagration was incendiary in its origin and that the last line is a clever effort to force its own accomplishment by making the individuals to which it refers hesitate not to follow it lest worse evils befall. It will be noticed that the fifth of May is a lucky day and one on which a moving can be accomplished without fear of the spirits taking offence. If there is anything in this, it gives us just a glimpse into the workings of the oriental mind.

At last advices the plan to rebuild five of the buildings [page 163] has been changed and two only will be built. The two buildings in the diagram marked with a cross are the ones to be rebuilt.

# The Internal Condition of Affairs in Korea.

In such a country as this it is rather difficult to gauge the feelings of the people, but everybody who knows anything about them must admit that the whole country is in a very unsettled mental state. The people do not know whether the tide of war will turn and they may be called upon to entertain a Russian army. They do not know just to what extent the Japanese will assume the direction of affairs here. They do not know what the Home Office will do about the prefects throughout the land. They do not know how much or how little the talk of the Tong-haks and other disintegrating factions may amount to. They do not know where the multiplication of robber bands is going to stop. The outlook is not as promising as it might be. Two of the highest officials in the so-called reconstructed government are having a violent quarrel over the appointment of the country prefects. Each has brought in a list of appointees and each insists that his list shall be adopted. This is very suspicious on the face of it, for it looks as if it was a clear case of that same partisanship which has been the bane of good government in Korea ever since the middle of the sixteenth century. This uncertainty at Seoul is thoroughly understood in the country and increases the feeling of insecurity there. The depredations of the bandits, especially in the south, has reached a point where steps must soon be taken to put them down or the people will feel that the only way to be secure is to become robbers themselves. One morning not long ago a band of five armed men entered a town in southern Korea and forced the people to point out all the houses [page 164] of well-to-do citizens. They said that a large number of beggars were on their way north and would soon be passing this town, and the people were warned to feed these tramps or they would suffer for it. The crowd of tramps arrived, a veritable Coxey’s Army, and the people took them in and fed them. As soon as the eating was over these tramps each produced a short sword and began looting the town. They took away some 30,000 dollars with them.

We have received from Dr. W. B. McGill some notes on observations he made recently in Kong-ju, about a hundred miles south of Seoul. He says that about five miles from that place there are some fanatics who have formed a new religion. He went out to the place and saw their antics. He found that they called their cult \*\*\*\* the Sound, Influence, Dance Doctrine. They believe that if they chant the five sounds of the ancient Chinese gamut, the \*\*\*\*\* and dance with all their might, God will be pleased, the Holy Spirit will descend and all evil will be taken away. They call God their Father and say that Jesus being fixed in the heavens forms a cross. They say that Christ will come to earth again together with Confucius and Mencius, and that the time is at hand. They dance so hard that the “trees, men and mountains seem to be leaping in unison with them” and the elements seem to be dissolving. The ignorant on-looker is tempted to join in the intoxicating dance. Dr. McGill says that the local “Dowie” approached him and waved over his head some paper on which were written in red certain meaningless characters, apparently trying to hypnotize him. We fancy he was not a very docile subject. These people in the excess of their frenzy have hemorrhages of the lungs and believe that the evil goes out of them with the blood and that renewed spiritual life comes with the renewed flesh. They claim that they and the Christians belong to the same family and believe the same things. They read the “Great Learning” and the “Little Learning” and believe that their doctrine came from Confucius, find that the scholars have forgotten the true doctrine of [page 165] Confucius. They allow women to follow the doctrine equally with men.

 One day he was walking through the town and he saw a crowd of beggar boys huddled around some object. He approached and found them seated in a circle about a smouldering fire eating a dead dog that they had found in the sewer. They had made a little fire, enough to bum the hair off and singe the flesh a little. It was a very sad sight to see the little fellows fight for the possession of the only knife in order to cut off a piece of the meat. One little fellow had secured the head of the dog as his share and looked up at the Doctor and smiled and said “I have the best part of all.” The next day he saw five of these boys crowded into a single fireplace at the local butcher shop. After the fire is out, ten of these beggar boys crawl in and sleep. Some’, of course, go clear in out of sight. Several cases brought to him were boys who had been burned by contact with the hot stones on the sides of these fireplaces.

One day he was startled by his boy who came in to say that four men and one woman had just been hanged. The next day he saw three of the bodies hanging from a willow tree just outside the town. There were two other broken ropes showing where the others had been hung. The woman and a boy had been cut down during the night. It was said the woman was a murderess. She had fed her husband lamprey eels in his rice and so poisoned him. When he was dead she tore his face off so that he could not be recognized. The Doctor says—

“I went to the prison and talked through a hole in the door with those inside. Some were thieves and others murderers. There were thirty-seven in all. One of them seemed to show some signs of contrition. He said that he and three others got into a fight on the way home from a funeral and one of them was killed. They were all drunk at the time. Most of these thirty-seven were hanged within a week. I knew of some forty-five who were hanged within a month. From a distance I witnessed nine of them being hung to a single branch, so close to each other that their faces touched. They had [page 166] their hands tied behind them with straw rope and they walked to the tree with the constable holding them by the arm, and put their heads in the noose without any attempt at resistance. They seemed to die without the least struggle. One of the prisoners was sent up the tree to tie the straw ropes. The man to be hanged was held up off the ground a foot or so while the rope was being tied to the limb and then he was dropped and slowly strangled. The first victim was so heavy that the straw rope broke three times, and he looked up and cursed the man in the tree for not tying the rope properly. Death usually followed in three or four minutes. Two little boys stood near me crying. I asked them what the matter was and they said, “That is our father.” Two or three days later these bodies were taken down. Some were thrown into the ditch and some were half buried, so that a hand, a foot or a top-knot showed above the surface. The dogs had been helping themselves. In that same place there were many skulls and other portions of the human skeleton. It was said that a few years ago a large number of tonghaks were placed in a group and a huge fire built around them. I went to the prison again and this time gained admission. There were thirteen inmates, three of whom were in the stocks. The keeper’s house was in front of the outer door of the prison and a meaner face I do not care to see. As I was going home after witnessing the hanging described above, I met an old woman with a grass-hook or sickle in her hand and I asked her where she was going. She said she was going to cut down her son who had been hanged. I also met another old woman and two younger ones with some children going for the same purpose. The ajun told me that there were about forty more to be hanged soon. My servant was going along the road at dusk and neared a village. There were nine policemen just behind him. The door of an inn opened and the first of the policemen fell pierced by a shot. The other policemen scattered in all directions. Three thieves had stopped there to eat and did not propose to be disturbed.

“It isn’t safe to accuse the wrong man in this country, [page 167] though. Once a man was brought to my dispensary with both eyes hanging down on his cheeks. He had lain hands on the wrong man for the thief, and as a penalty had his eyes gouged out.

“Oh yes, he lived.”

It is no pleasure to record these horrors, but they give us just a glimpse at native life in Korea. The cruelty, the brutality, the cheapness of human life are appalling, and such things occur not in Kong-ju only but all over the country.

We are sorry to note that native Protestant Christians in the south near Mokpo are suffering severe persecutions at the hands of the populace. Dr. Owen writes under date of April 4th that he has brought the matter twice to the attention of the governor who seems to be prejudiced and unwilling to investigate but later he put the matter into the hands of the Kamni of Mokpo who immediately took active steps to have the ringleaders arrested. Two of the native Christians had been imprisoned, several beaten, and others had been robbed of their books. Kwang-ju and Na-ju are said to be hot-beds of the tonghaks and pukaks, A later notice says that the police sent by the Kamni secured four out of six of the ringleaders of the persecution and were bringing them to Mokpo. But after the police had started on their return trip a company of ruffians came and seized some fiftt men, women and children connected with the Christian work. It is not known yet what was done to them, but the Kamni immediately telegraphed the governor and the Foreign Minister in Seoul and sent a man post haste to the governor to secure the release of these people. The man mainly responsible for the trouble is wealthy and this may be the reason why justice is so slow.

It looks as if the unsettled state of things in Seoul was being reflected in the actions of the people in the country. This delicate barometric relation between the politics of Seoul and the actions of the country people is one of those things which no one not native born will ever get to understand. These poor deluded people suffering under an incubus of ignorance, of poverty, of [page 168] hopelessness are a heart-breaking spectacle. The time must come when this government will see that education is more necessary than an army.

Both in the north and south, the tonghak are much in evidence. The country about Pyeng-yang swarms with them. They are pratically nothing but organized robbers but the name they have assumed invests them with a sort of dignity in the eyes of the Koreans. It is an attempt to veil sedition under a religious name. In the south also the country is rife with the same sort of thing. It is all based on the desire to get something for nothing. Many of the gentry have turned robbers. The reason for this as given by competent Korean witnesses is that a great change has been effected in the attitude of the common people toward the gentry. In former times the gentry were a genuinely superior class whose education, and manners commanded and received respect. They were respected by the common people and found no difficulty in requisitioning whatever of the necessities and luxuries of life they might want; but all this is changed now because of a double movement in society. The upper class have ceased studying and have dropped to a point but little above the common people while the latter have slowly but surely had their eyes opened to facts of which they were before ignorant. They now despise the yangban who while preserving all his former pride has lost his former claim to consideration. Once he had only to suggest what he wanted and it was forthcoming; now when he demands it the people seize and beat him or else pass by with a disdainful smile. The power of the yangban is gone. Some will regret the passing of this old time social condition but there can be no doubt whatever that it is a distinct advance in genuine civilization.

# Editorial Comment.

We have heard a great deal of late years about the deteriorating effect of yellow journalism. The aim seems to be to provide something startling even if not true.

[page 169] The appetite grows with what it feeds on and the degree of “hairbreadthness” must be constantly increased or the pampered appetite of the public will reject it. All this we have had dinned into our ears but we had fondly thought the Editor of the *Kobe Chronicle* was proof against such things. We described a journey of some missionaries through a section of the belligerent country in northern Korea and stated that one cold night when the little party, consisting of one foreign gentleman and three ladies with a few coolies, came to a mountain village and applied at the local inn for lodgings they found it was a tonghak village, and it was well known that the tonghaks had lately vowed to massacre the foreigners and clear the land of them. The little party was refused lodgings and ordered to leave the town on pain of death. In spite of fatigue and cold they were compelled to push on through the night over a snowy road to a distant village. This is what we said, but the Editor of the Kobe Chronicle can see nothing exciting about it. He does not understand why we call it an exciting trip. He says that in a really exciting trip he would have expected to hear of various dangerous experiences, but that this one was very tame. Who would have thought that the “yellow” fever would have claimed our worthy contemporary as its victim? The following is doubtless the sort of thing he would look for in a genuinely exciting trip :

It was a wintry night and all the world had gone to sleep in that lone wilderness, except a little band of Americans who wound their way over the hills and through the darksome forests, far from home and surrounded by unknown dangers. The cold, unpitying stars looked down upon them from above and the ladies glanced repeatedly from side to side ever on the lookout for lurking danger. The footsore but courageous coolies trudged stolidly along and in front strode the only foreign gentleman in the party, his alert bearing and set jaw proclaiming his determination to win through or die at his post.

Hark! what was that?

The party came to a sudden halt; the ladies’ faces blanched, the coolies muttered incantations against the spirits of the air. The leader stood in a tense, listening attitude with his finger on the trigger.

Again the ominous sound!

It was the barking of a dog in a village nearby. Their approach had been detected and now there was nothing to do but push forward [page 170] and brave the imminent peril. The leader drew his belt tighter, set his jaw a little more firmly, glanced back at the ladies, laid his finger on his lip in sign of caution and then they silently struggled forward in the gloom of night. What might they not be approaching? Was it safety or was it death?

They came to the outskirts of the village. There it lay, bathed in the moonlight, but not a soul was visible. Only the ominous howling of the dog broke the starry stillness of the night. The hardy leader put on a bold front though fear had laid its icy fingers on his heart. He approached a door and gave it a sounding blow with the butt of his revolver and at the same time called out with masterful voice.

“Chu-in-ah!”

There was in his tone the master fulness of the West but the house rang hollow to his touch. Again he struck louder than before and again the same wierd cry came from his throat.

It was all in vain!

An impatient coolie muttered, “Break it down,” but this was beneath the dignity of our hero. At last by dint of shouting and pounding the inmates of the place were awakened, but no sooner had they seen that the party was composed of foreigners than they raised a wild cry which instantly aroused the entire hamlet. Men came pouring forth from every house, each with a weapon in his hand. The leader of the party felt the crucial moment had come. He stood boldly forth as daring them to attack him. Fierce, blood-shot faces were pressed close to his own, eyes that betokened murder glared upon him from every side. One of the blood-thirsty crew raised a great bludgeon above his head and with a wild yell was about to . . ...

But we draw the veil over the harrowing scene without even so much as a “Continued in our next” to cheer our able contemporary. We would be pleased to learn whether this style would make the trip really exciting to him or whether it would be necessary to have the ladies dragged about by the hair and the hero beaten “to a pulp” in order to raise the responsive thrill in his breast. If he will let us know what degree of yellowness is necessary perhaps we might manage to evolve something that would be more exciting than a plain statement like the one we gave in our last issue.

# The Vanguard.

*The Vanguard*, by Rev. Jas. S Gale. Fleming H. Co., Chicago, Publishers. 8vo. pp. 320; $1.50. Illustrated.

[page 171] We have lately received a copy of this book and have examined it carefully. The author has adopted a most novel and interesting method of depicting the life and experiences of the modem missionary. It is a distinctly new departure though “The Bishop’s Conversion” and one or two other books may be said to border on the same field. Mr. Gale has brought to this work all the necessary qualifications for a successful book. In the first place he knows Korea and the Korean mind as intimately as they can well be known by a foreigner. The experiences and incidents he relates are at least the counterpart of those which have come under his own observation. The characters are drawn in some sense from actual life though it cannot be said that there is anything “personal” about the actors in the story. It is inevitable that shrewd guesses will be made, but these guesses may or may not be true; and in any case the characters are all handled with a kindliness of manner and a charitableness of touch which would disarm criticism. And last but not least the author has brought to this work a fascinating style which makes the book well worth reading simply for its diction. All these things together make it quite certain, even before we open the book, that it will be good reading, but we must add to this the fact that there is, underlying it, a deep purpose. It was not thrown off as a mere literary pastime. It is a serious and successful attempt to lay open the inner life of the missionary. There is no attempt to minimize the difficulties of the work nor the human limitations of the missionary. His faults and failures are frankly granted and yet the story is instinct with the spirit which makes possible the accomplishment of mighty things even by the use of such imperfect instruments. No one can write a successful book about an individual or a system unless he has appreciation and sympathy. These two qualities shine out from every page of this book. As to the style, the word that best describes it is suggestiveness, the subtle power that tells more in a simple word, perhaps, than most people can tell in a whole sentence.

Another thing we like about the book is that there is [page 172] no attempt to conceal its real motive and purpose. On every page you read between the lines these words

*If all you get out of this is an interesting story to while away an idle hour, it is a failure.*

There is no room in the world to-day for any apologies for Christianity. In the parlance of ordinary business, it is a “going concern,” and the author places this book before the general public as confidently as you would place before it the annual statement of any other business that is paying a handsome interest on the investment. We are simply asked to take a look at the inner life of a successful missionary enterprise. It is an array of facts, more conclusive than statistics.

We do not propose to spoil it for the reader by giving an outline of the story but we can only say that the man or woman who fails to read it will miss the best thing that has yet appeared on Korea.

# News Calendar.

On the 7th inst. the soldiers of the British Legation Guard gave a concert at the barracks on the Legation Compound. It took the form of a farewell entertainment in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Baldock who were about to leave Korea permanently. The concert was a distinct success in all respects. The room was amply large for the audience. The stage was very gracefully draped with the British Japanese and American flags. The songs were repeatedly encored and the choruses were rendered in fine shape. The singers were fortunate in having such an exceptionally fine accompanyist in the person of Mr Ferguson who was as much at home on the piano stool as Private Curson» claimed to be *not* at home on horse-back. Private Deluhery gave free rein to his exceptional genius at comedy and kept the house going from one convulsion of laughter into another. During the intermission the men presented Dr. and Mrs. Baldock with a large framed photograph of the guard and officers, and accompanied it with some very appreciative words which the recipients will value even more highly than the memento.

On the evening of the 22nd inst. the members of the American and British Legation Guards gave a concert for the benefit of the local Y. M. C A. By the kindness of Dr. Brown they were given the use of a fine hall in one of the customs buildings just inside the Little West Gate. The soldiers were assisted on the program by some of the civilians [page 173] of Seoul but most of the program was very successfully filled by the soldiers themselves. It was divided into three parts, the first and third of which were general and the second a Minstrel performance in which the end men did themselves proud. The singing was a distinct success throughout and many of the choruses were specially fine. We understand that the net proceeds were upwards of Yen 150. Special thanks are due to the British Marines who worked so assiduously and successfully on the decorations, and to Mr. Gillett, on whom the responsibility for the whole affair rested. The hall was well filled and the frequent encores showed that the performance was enjoyed to the full.

A good deal of news was crowded out of our March number by the press of other matter but we shall try to include it in the present number by the issue of supplementary pages.

On March 10th a new Japanese daily newspaper was established in Chemulpo under the name of the *Tai-kan Il-bo* meaning The Korean Daily Record. It is a little larger than the other dailies in Korea. It purports to be published in the interests of the Korean government and people. His Majesty, the Emperor, was pleased to donate Yen 1,000 as a present to the new venture.

Cho Min-heui the Minister to Japan arrived at Tokyo on March nth.

About seven men who have been long imprisoned on account of their connection with the sometime Independence Club were finally released on March 12th. Yi Seung-man was not among those released.

On March 24, the birthday of the Prince Imperial, there were no special festivities because the court was in mourning for the Queen Dowager .

On March 24th the Emperor sent a present to the Japanese soldiers, consisting of twenty bottles of champagne, fifty boxes of cigars, fifty boxes of cigarettes, thirty bottles of sake, fifty bullocks, 300 boxes of Japanese cigars; and to the naval men he sent 30,000 cigarettes.

One of the Japanese native dailies in Seoul published a statement about the 23rd ult. praising some Korean students in Japan who had been charged by their own government with sedition. The Che-guk copied the statement, with the result that Chang Chi-yun the editor of the Whang-sung was arrested by mistake. When he challenged his captors to show where he had published it they were unable to do so, so he was liberated and the editor of the Che-guk, Yi Chong-il, was arrested. He said he had not originated the article in question but had only copied it, but he was told that this was itself a seditious act and he was lodged in prison where he still remains, and with no immediate prospect of release.

While Marquis Ito was in Seoul he had the honor of sitting at the table with His Majesty at a dinner on March 25th.

U Keui-wun, a teacher in the German language School, has been appointed to succeed Hong Hyun-sik the secretary who committed suicide at Berlin.

[page 174] The Japanese in constructing the Seoul Fusan Railway are said to have struck a rich deposit of copper about 170 *li* from Fusan. A little further on they came across a fine vein of coal.

Yi Chi-yong was appointed special envoy to Japan to return the the visit made by Marquis Ito. He left Chemulpo on the 14th and arrived in Tokyo on April 23rd.

The Korean Emperor conferred the highest decoration in his gift upon Prince Henry of Germany on March 20th.

The American Minister received from the Emperor the first class decoration of the Tai-geuk on Match 20th. Mr. Hayasbi also received the same decoration and many other Japanese received decorations of various grades.

On March 20th twenty Koreans departed for the Hawaiian Islands to engage in work.

Special efforts are being made to check the use of opium by Koreans. Some of the people who smoke opium have been punished by tying to their backs the opium pipes and marching them about the streets to be jeered at by the people. Gambling, too, is being punished. Even the son of Han Kyu-sul, lately Minister of Law, was recently given twenty blows fcr gambling.

The Law Office recently sent out a notice that any Korean either official or private who joins with any foreigner and does anything derogatory to the dignity of the government will be punished. This refers to recent arrangements in which private parties attempt to put through various schemes by which the government is compromised. We need not go into particulars. Punishment will follow even though the effort be unsuccessful. Some specific forms of this offence are specified. (1) Going to any foreign legation and asking them to render aid to the Korean Government. (2) Disclosing any Government secret to any foreigner. (3) Asking the loan of soldiers or money from any foreign source; or offering any kind of mining, timber or railroad concession to any foreigner. (4) Making any contract with a foreign firm for war vessels or material or any machinery; or making any arrangement or promise of a position as adviser or assistant in any department of the government. (5) Attempting to secure office because of services rendered as go-between for any foreigner and a Korean official. (6) Starting absurd rumors that tend to unsettle the public mind, (7) Selling or in any way alienating any land to a foreigner, outside the treaty ports (8) Becoming naturalized in any foreign country without the consent of the Korean government.

A special court for Seoul has been established separate from the Supreme court. It has been housed in the buildings used by the former Surveying Bureau, which has been attached to the Finance Department,

Yi Han-yung resigned the War portfolio and Hyun Yang-un was appointed on March 31st. He was the man who acted as confidential interpreter between Marquis Ito and the Korean Emperor.

The prefect of Ch’ung-ju neglected his business and spent a good [page 175] deal of his time praying to the great rock Buddha at Ung-jin, So the governor of the province locked up the prefect’s house and relieved him of his position.

Sin Ta-hyu, the Chief of Police had begun a vigorous campaign against certain evils in the social life of Korea. He has posted in conspicuous places the list of his proposed changes and commands the people to observe the new regulations. Many of these are really important and strike at genuine evils. Some of them are as follows:

( I ) Ordinary notes of land, payable at sight shall not be considered negotiable but must be cashed immediately. (2) Any man who comes up to Seoul and tries to buy office or anyone who helps him will be severely handled; (3) Any one who obtains a loan on false pretenses will be punished, (4) It is forbidden for any policeman to use his office as a means for extorting money. (5) Children shall not go about the streets soliciting money. (The government has undertaken to feed them); (6) Servants of officials shall not be allowed to take what they wish from shops or stalls without payment.

On April 3th 700 Japanese troops arrived in Seoul and on the same day eighty-six who were on the sick-list returned to Japan.

About the beginning of the month many counterfeit notes of the Japanese Bank were issued. The Y. 5 denomination were so well made as almost to defy detection. Two Japanese were arrested and imprisoned for a term of two years for this offence,.

Early in April a number of special taxes and imports were remitted namely those on fire-wood, charcoal, tobacco, and on river boats. There were also many lesser ones.

The Dai Ichi Ginko bank notes have now reached a circulation of some Y 1,300,000.

So Chung-sun the Governor of South Ham-gyung arrested two Tonghak leaders and had them shot.

The foreigners in Kunsan desire to express, through the columns of of this Review, their thanks for the generous manner in which the friends in Seoul responded to their request for garden seeds. Unlike us in the Capital they are wholly dependent on their own gardens for vegetables and when the steamship companies refused to bring freight from San Francisco the loss of garden seeds was a serious inconvenience.

It is reported that the Japanese are building temporary barracks in Chong-ju, Un-san, Kwak san, Son-ch’un and Yung-byun. It is not very creditable to the Koreans that the prefect of each of these places is attending to “important business” in Seoul. The Governor and the people are sending urgent requests that the prefects be sent down.

The native papers state that advices from the island of Ko-je at Masampo indicate that the Japanese are actively engaged in fortifying the place, building barracks and erecting batteries.

The native papers say that a French citizen who made a secret engagement with the Government to superintend some building operations had failed for some months to receive his salary. He went to the private residence of Min Pyung-suk the Minister of the Household [page 176] and found that he had gone to the country. He therefore declared that as his salary was not forthcoming he would seize the house and hold it as security. The Foreign Office communicated with the French authorities objecting to this method of procedure and said that while the salary would be paid, the government would expect the gentleman in question to be dealt with somewhat strenuously by the French authorities.

On the 23rd inst. about seventy of the American Legation Guard were withdrawn from Seoul and sailed for Manila. Forty men volunteered to remain here but as only twenty-eight were needed they could not all stay. This would indicate that Seoul has not proved an altogether unpleasant berth. Many of them expressed themselves as highly pleased at the hospitable way in which they had been treated by the American residents of Seoul.

A great monastery in Mi-ryang near Fusan has been destroyed by fire. It is said it had several hundred inmates.

Col Chang Tal-heun stationed at Puk-ch’ung in the northeast near Sung-jin has been charged by the Japanese with sympathizing with the Russians and working against the interests of Japan and they suggested that his services be dispensed with. The government immediately complied with this request.

When it was decided to send the Pyeng-yang regiment north Col. Kim Wun-gye told the soldiers that those who wished to go might go and those who did not care to go might stay in Seoul. So out of a thousand men 600 elected to go. It is a curious method to adopt in time of war and the Colonel has been subjected to severe criticism. Soldiers are supposed to obey orders during the term of enlistment and to allow them to choose whether they will go or stay seems to be a serious breach of discipline.

The laying of the Seoul-Wiju Railway is proceeding apace. Notices from Song-do indicate that we shall soon be able to go to that city by rail.

About the beginning of April one of the Japanese soldiers had a quarrel with a Korean merchant in So-heung and the latter was killed The Japanese authorities promptly arrested the soldier and sent him back to Chemulpo to be sent back to Japan for punishment.

The 600 Korean troops who were sent to the northeast thought better of the proposition before they reached Wonsan and about a third of them deserted on the way. This is not surprising when we remember that they were given the option whether to go or not.

We regret to learn that on the 8th inst. a part of the buildings belonging to Townsend & Co., Chemulpo, were destroyed by fire.

The prospect of an exciting tennis contest between Seoul and Chemulpo this season has been somewhat lessened by the departure from Seoul of Dr. Baldock and from Chemulpo of Mr. Wallace and Mr. Sabattin. The remaining devotees of the racquet should pull themselves together and practice all the harder to make up for these serious losses.

[page 177]

# Korean History.

These troops came, it can hardly be doubted, at the request of the conservative party. These troops encamped all about the capital, some at Pa-o-ga outside the West Gate and some at the Ha-dogam just inside the East Gate.

Some of the soldiers who had been most active in creating the disturbance lived at Wang-sim-yi three miles outside the East Gate. The Chinese made it their first work to seize these men by night. Ten of them were court-martialed and were torn to pieces by bullocks.

The Chinese general O Jang-gyung was told that the ex-Regent was at the bottom of the emeute, and he sent a letter informing the Emperor of this fact. The latter ordered him to seize the person of the offending party and bring him to China. The Chinese general thereupon visited the palace where the Prince Tai-wun was in full control and invited him to visit Yong-san on the river, where he said there was something important for him to see. Having once gotten him on board a Chinese boat there, under pretext of showing him over it, the anchor was quickly raised and the baffled Prince found himself on his way to China. When he arrived at Tientsin he was refused audience with Li Hung-chang but was banished by imperial decree to a place not far from Tientsin, where he was well cared for until his return to Korea three years later.

After this *deus ex machina* had spirited the ex-Regent away, an official, So Sang-jo, memorialized the throne stating that the Queen was still alive and ought to be brought back to the capital. It is said that Yi Yung-ik covered the space between the capital and her place of hiding, sixty-three miles, in a single day, carrying the message of recall. A large retinue of officials and soldiers were sent southward and brought the Queen back to Seoul where she arrived on the first day of the eighth moon. The people immediately doffed their mourning garb.

Toward the close of 1882 a Foreign Office was established in the capital and Kim Yun-sik was made Minister of Foreign [page 178] Affairs. He invited P. G. von Mollendorf, a member of the customs staff of China, to act as adviser, and the Chinese generals Wang Suk-ch’ang and Ma Kun-sang were made attaches of the new department.

The year 1883 witnessed more advance in Korea than any year before or since. In May Gen Foote, the first United States Minister, arrived and on the nineteenth of that month the treaty which had been drawn up at Chemulpo between Commodore Shufeldt and the Korean Commissioners was ratified. After this was done Gen. Foote left Korea to make preparations for the establishment of a legation in Seoul.

Kim Ok-kyun, one of the leading members of the progressive party was made “Whale Catching Commissioner” and departed for Japan to fit out an expedition to carry on this lucrative government monopoly along the Korean coast. He was selected for this work because of his intimate acquaintance with the Japanese. It was a move looking toward the development of Korea’s resources and was therefore in direct line with the wishes and plans of the progressionists. At about the same time a powder-mill was built outside the Northwest Gate, and a foreign mint was erected inside the Little West Gate. This was done with the aid of Japanese experts at a great and, as it proved, useless expense to the government. An office was founded for the printing and dissemination of useful literature on the subjects of agriculture, forestry, stock-raising and the like. The ports of Chemulpo and Wun-san were opened to foreign trade according to the stipulation of the Japanese and American treaties. In contrast to the progressive moves we find that eight men who were suspected of complicacy with the exRegent in the émeute of the preceding year were executed by poison. Of like character was the building of the Kwanwang temple, devoted to the interests of sorceresses and exorcists who enjoyed the patronage of the Queen.

In the summer of 1883 Min Yung-ik was made special envoy to the United States. His second was Hong Yungsik. Among his suite were Su Kwang-bom, Pak Un and others, all of whom were members of the progressive party or at least well affected toward it. This same summer the king founded the American Farm some ten miles east of [page 179] Seoul and stocked it with foreign seeds and cattle, with the idea of providing Korean farmers with a sort of object-lesson in farming, and to provide seeds for distribution among the people. The United States Department of Agriculture sent a large stock of seeds by the hand of the special embassy of which Min Yung-ik formed the head.

Late in the autumn the German representative arrived and concluded a treaty on behalf of his government. A month later a treaty was ratified with Great Britain and a Consulate General was founded in Seoul.

With the opening of 1884 the state of affairs in the peninsula was something as follows. The progressive and conservative elements in the government were clearly differentiated. The innovations effected by the progressives had raised in them the hope of being able to speedily reorganize the government on a foreign basis, and the degree of their success marked the increasing suspicion and opposition of the conservative element. The latter were strengthened in their position by the presence and active support of the Chinese generals and troops, and the influence of the foreign adviser von Mollendorf was always on the side of Chinese interests. The ex-Regent was for the time being out of the war and a great stumbling-block to the Min faction was thus removed. The king and queen were both favorably inclined toward a progressive policy but the latter was gradually being drawn back into line with the conservative element of which the Min family was the leading representative. Min Yung-ik was still true to his better instincts and was an ardent supporter of the progressionist views but his return from America was the sign for a vigorous attack upon his enlightened views by the members of his family and he was being rapidly alienated from the party whose interests he had tentatively espoused. It was not, however, till later in the year that he broke away entirely from the progressive following.

The spring of 1884 saw the arrival of Ensign Geo. C. Foulk as naval attache of the American Legation. He rapidly became acquainted with the leading officials and it was through his advice and aid that several reformatory measures were promulgated. In the sixth moon the influence of the [page 180] progressive party secured the position of Mayor of Seoul for Pak Yong-hyo, one of the most ardent of the reform party, and he immediately set to work at sanitary reforms and municipal improvements. He began by tearing down houses that had encroached upon the main road between the East and the West Gates. He had not proceeded far in this good work before he was blocked by the influence of the opposing faction. His next move was in the direction of dress reform and he succeed in putting through a law prohibiting the use of the long sleeves, long hat-strings and long girdle strings. In these efforts he was seconded to a certain extent by Min Yung-ik, but at this point terminates the latter’s active interest in reforms, and from about this time the progressive leaders began to look upon him as a traitor to their cause. Here again personal interest came to injure a cause which, while good in itself, was discredited by the means used to effect its end. One sign of advance was the establishment of a school for the training of interpreters in English, under the charge of a competent foreign instructor.

In the autumn of this year 1884 twelve of the young men who had been sent to Japan to study military tactics returned to Seoul, among them being Su Cha p’il, known in later years as Dr. Philip Jaisohn, who though still a youth of about twenty years began to take an active part in the plans of the liberal or progressive party. By this time Min Yung-ik had practically taken his stand with the conservatives, and this tended in no small measure to draw away from the progressives the sympathy and support of the queen. It was becoming evident that the hopes of the liberals were to be dashed to the ground. Yuan, the Chinese commissioner, was staying at the barracks in front of the palace and was active in the interests of his own government, which meant that he urged on the conservative party in their opposition to reforms. It can hardly be wondered at then that the progressives looked more and more to the Japanese from whom they had imbibed their ideas of progress. Japan had recognized the independence of Korea and this naturally carried with it a desire to see Korea progress along the same lines that had raised Japan out of the rut of centuries to the more satisfactory plane of enlightened government.

[page 181] How to stem the tide that had set so strongly against them was a difficult problem for the progressionist leaders to solve. From time immemorial the method of effecting changes in the Korea government had been to make an uprising, secure the person of the king and banish or execute the leaders of the opposition. It must be remembered that at that time, so far as the mass of the people was concerned, the progressive party had little or no backing. On the other hand the conservatives had the ear of the king and were backed by a Chinese army. It was evidently necessary to secure military backing, and for this Japan alone was available. But it was manifestly impossible for Japan to come in and attempt to effect the change. It must be at the request of the Korean government, or at least of the king. It seemed that the only thing to do was to hasten a crisis, obtain possession of the person of the king and then see to it that Japan be invited to loan troops to preserve the new status.

Instead of waiting patiently and suffering temporary defeat with the hope of ultimate success, the progressive leaders determined to have recourse to the old method, and in so doing they made a fatal blunder. Even had they been successful the means they employed would have fatally discredited them in the eyes of all enlightened people.

It is generally accepted as true that the progressive leaders had a distinct understanding with the Japanese. A Japanese man of war was on the way to Chemulpo and was expected to arrive on the fifth or sixth of December and the uprising was set for the seventh of that month. The leaders in this movement had not been able to keep it entirely a secret, for some of them talked about it in a very excited manner of the Naval Attache of the American Legation and it came to the ears of the British Consul-general, who, meeting Yun T’a-jun on December fourth, asked him if he had heard that there was trouble in the air. That gentleman who was himself a strong conservative and a close friend of Min T’aho, hastened to the house of the latter and reported what he had heard. Min advised him to hasten to the house of one of the relatives of one of the progressionists and secure information if possible. He did so, and there happened to meet one of the leaders of the progressive party and intimated to him [page 182] that he had heard that trouble was brewing. This man denied all knowledge of any such plan but the minute his caller had gone he hastened to the other progressionist leaders and told them that all was lost unless instant action were taken. News had just arrived that the Japanese gun-boat that was expected at Chemulpo had broken down and could not come. There were only a few hundred Japanese troops in Seoul at the time. But it seemed to these men that it would be better to risk the whole venture on a single cast than to wait passively and see the destruction of all their hopes and plans. The seventh of December was the appointed day but as this was a matter of kill or be killed it was decided to proceed at once to business. Hong Yung-sik had been made Post-master General and on this very night he was to give a banquet at the new post-office which was situated in that part of the city called Kyo-dong. It was decided to start the ball rolling at this point. The evening came and the guests assembled to the dinner. They were the Chinese leaders Yuan, Chin and Wang, United States Minister Foote and his secretary Mr. Scudder, the British Consul-general Aston, the Foreign Office Adviser von Mollendorf, the Koreans Hong Yung sik, Kim Ok-kyun, Min Yung-ik, Pak Yung-ho, Su Kwang-bom, Kim Hung-jip, Han Kyu-jik, Pak Chong-yang, O Yun-iung and a few others. The Japanese Minister had excused himself on the plea of ill-health. It was noticed that Kim Okkyun rose and left the table several times and went out into the court-yard but no special significance was attached to this. The dinner began at an early hour, not far from six o’clock, and about seven o’clock an alarm of fire was sounded. A house immediately in front of the Post Office was in flames. Min Yung-ik, being one of the officials whose duty it was to superintend the extinguishing of conflagrations, rose from the table and hastened out, calling to his servants to follow. As he passed out of the inner gate, a man dressed in Japanese clothes leaped out of the shadow of the gate-way and struck at him savagely with a sword, wounding him severely in the head and in other parts of the body. He fell heavily to the ground and in the confusion that ensued the would-be assassin made good his escape. Von Mollendorf was not far behind, and seeing what had happened he hastened forward, [page 183] lifted the wounded man in his arms and carried him back into the dining-room. The Koreans who were present fled precipitately making their exit not by the door but by way of the back wall.

The wounded man was conveyed to the residence of von Mollendorf which was in the vicinity, where Dr. H. N. Allen of the American Presbyterian Mission was soon in attendance.

The die had now been cast and there was no retreat. The leaders of the conspiracy, Kim Ok-kyun, Su Kwang bom, Pah Yung-hyo, Hong Yung-sik and Su Cha-pil, hastened immediately to the palace known to us as “The Old Palace” where the king had resided since the insurrection of 1882. Entering the royal presence they announced that the Chinese were coming to take possession of the king’s person and that he must hasten to a place of safety. The king did not believe this report but as they insisted he had no recourse but to submit. The little company hastened along under the west wall of the palace until they came to a small gate leading into Kyong-u Palace which adjoins the “0ld Palace” on the west. As they proceeded Kim Ok-kyun asked the king to send to the Japanese Minister asking for a body-guard, but he refused. Thereupon Sin Kwang-bom drew out a piece of foreign notepaper and a pencil and wrote in Chinese the words “Let the Japanese Minister come and give me his help.” This was immediately despatched by a servant. That it was a mere matter of form was evident when the little company passed into the Kyong-u Palace, for there they found the Japanese Minister and his interpreter already in attendance and with them some two hundred troops drawn up in line. When the king appeared they saluted. There were present also the twelve students who had been in Japan. Word was immediately sent to Sin Keui-sun, Pak Yung-hyo and O Yunjung to come and receive office under the reconstructed government. Within half an hour they were in attendance, excepting O Yunjung who happened to be away in the country at the time.

Very early in the morning a royal messenger was sent with the *myong p’a* or ‘‘summoning tablet” to the houses of Min T’a-ho, Min Yung-mok and Cho Ryung-ha, ordering them to appear at once before the king. They complied and [page 184] hastened to the palace but no sooner had they entered the palace gate than they were seized and cut down in cold blood. Then the summons was sent to Han Kyu-jik, Yi Choyun and Yun T’a jun. They too were assassinated as soon as they entered the palace. A eunuch named Yu Cha-hyun was also put to death. It is useless to ask by whose hand these men fell. Whoever wielded the brutal sword, the leaders of the so-called progressive party were wholly responsible. The twelve young men who had returned from Japan were all fully armed and it is more than probable that they took an active part in the bloody work. Not only was not the king consulted in regard to these murders but in the case of the eunuch it was done in spite of his entreaties and remonstrances.

These seven men who thus went to their doom were not entirely unconscious of what awaited them. When Cho Ryungha received the summons the inmates of his house pleaded with him not to go, but as it was the king’s summons he would not disobey even though he knew it meant death.

Just at daylight the king was removed to the house of his cousin Yi Chil-wun, escorted by the Japanese soldiers who surrounded him four deep. Kim Okkyun gave passes to those who were to be allowed to go in and out and only such had access to the premises. After remaining there some three hours the whole company returned to the “0ld Palace.” In the reconstructed government Yi Cha wun and Hong Yungsik were made Prime Ministers, Pak Yung-hyo was made General-in chief. Su Kwang-bom was made Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kim Ok-kyun Minister of Finance and Su Chap’il Lieutenant-general. The rest of the young men who had studied in Japan were also given official position.

Before Yun T’a-jun, Yi Cho-yun and Han Kyu-jik went to the palace and met their fate they sent word to Yuan warning him of the state of affairs and asking help, but he made no immediate move. As the morning broke thousands of Koreans came to Lim and said that the Japanese held the king a prisoner in the palace and begged him to interfere. Yuan replied by sending a messenger to the Japanese Minister demanding why he had surrounded the king with soldiers and had killed the ministers, and demanding that he immediately evacuate the place. Three hours passed and still no answer [page 185] came; and at last Yuan and the two other Chinese leaders took a strong body of Chinese troops and several hundred Korean troops and proceeded to the palace. Entering by .way of the Sun-in Gate and passing through the Ch’ang-kyung Palace they approached the Pot’ong Gate which gave entrance to the “Old Palace” but they found it strongly guarded by Japanese. Here a sharp encounter took place which lasted an hour, beginning about three o’clock in the afternoon. About ten each of the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans fell in this assault. As the darkness came on the Japanese began to fall back and taking the king and the newly appointed ministers they made their way to the extreme northeasterly portion of the palace grounds, not far from the Hong-wha Gate. The royal party took refuge in a summer house there and the Japanese stationed themselves behind trees and guarded the place, keeping up a lively fusillade with the Chinese who had followed them. Meanwhile the Crown Prince, the Queen and the king’s foster-mother had escaped in small closed chairs out the Sun-in Gate and had found refuge in the house of Yi Pom-jin in the village of No-wun, twenty li outside the East Gate.

The chances of success for the Japanese were becoming smaller and smaller and the king was anxiously looking for an opportunity of escaping from them and making his way to the Chinese side. At last, taking advantage of the extreme disorder that prevailed, he made his way to the Puk-chang Gate at the extreme northeastern part of the palace enclosure. Outside there was a crowd of Korean soldiers who wished to gain entrance and rescue the king from his captors. When the latter made his presence known inside the gate these soldiers effected an entrance and lifting His Majesty on their shoulders carried him in triumph to the North Temple just inside the Northeast Gate. Seeing that all hope of immediate success was gone, Pak Yung-hyo, Kim Ok-kyun, Su Kwangbom, Su Cha-p’il and a part of the company of military students accompanied the Japanese troops out the front gate of the palace to the Japanese Legation which was then situated in Kyo-dong. This was accomplished in the midst of great excitement.

Meanwhile Hong Yung-sik, Pak Yung-kyo, Sin Keui-sun [page 186] and seven of the military students had followed the fortunes of the king. But no sooner did the party arrive at the North Temple than the people fell upon Hong Yung-sik and Pak Yung-kyo and hacked them to pieces before the king’s eyes. Hong Yung-sik attempted to hide in a closet behind His Majesty but the latter indicated by a nod of the head that he was concealed there and the people dragged him out and dispatched him on the spot. The seven students tried to effect their escape but were pursued and killed, one below Chong-no, and another at Yun-raot-kol.

No sooner had the morning dawned than the Japanese Minister formed his little company in a hollow square, placed the Korean refugees and the Japanese women and children in the center, fired the legation buildings and marched out through the city on their way to Chemulpo, shooting at any Koreans whom they happened to see in their way. They found the West Gate locked but they soon forced it and hurried away to the port. All the Japanese in Seoul did not escape thus, for there were a few living in Chin-go-ga. That same day the Koreans mobbed them and killed them all, men women and children.

A Japanese merchant vessel happened to be lying at Chemulpo and the Minister with all his company boarded her, carrying the Koreans with them. The latter were hidden in the hold.

That same day, later in the afternoon, the king made his way to the Ha-dogam where the Chinese had camped, and put himself under their protection. Cho Pyung-ho was sent to Chemulpo to ask the Japanese Minister not to leave, and to effect the arrest of the fugitives. In neither quest was he successful.

An anxious month passed by and at last the Japanese, Count Inouye. came with a guard of 600 troops and took up his quarters at the governor’s place outside the West Gate. Negotiations were at once begun and as a result the Korean Government agreed to pay an indemnity of 600,000 yen. Su Sang-u and P. G. von Mollendorf were sent as commissioners to Japan to arrange suitable terms for the renewal of friendly relations. To make good their protestations of regret at the killing of defenseless Japanese in Seoul four men who took [page 187] part in that work were arrested and put to death. At the same time Yi Ch’ang-gyu. Su Cha-Ch’ang, Kim Pong-jung and five others who had been charged with complicacy in the plot were seized and executed.

On January ninth 1885 Kim Hongjip, Special Korean Commissioner, signed with Count Inouye a convention regarding the trouble of the preceeding month, by the terms of which the government agreed to apologize to the Japanese emperor, to pay an indemnity of 110,000 yen, to execute the murderer of Lieut. Isobayachi, to give a site for a new Legation and 20.000 yen for its construction and to set aside a site for barracks for the Japanese guard. Early in the Spring the Japanese Legation was built, being the first foreign building in Seoul.

The year 1885 beheld many events of importance. The government hospital was founded under royal patronage by Dr. H. N. Allen of the American Presbyterian Mission. It beheld also the arrival of that great vanguard of civilization the Protestant Missionary. Dr. Allen had arrived in the previous year but now the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches of America sent a number of representatives into Seoul to secure property and begin preparations for the founding of regular evangelistic and educational work. In April the Chinese and Japanese signed the celebrated Tientsin Convention by the terms of which they both agreed to evacuate Korea and not to send troops there without previously notifying each other. It was the breaking of this convention by China which was one of the immediate causes of the JapanChina war. At this same time, England, fearing the occupation of Port Hamilton by Russia, sent a fleet of war vessels and occupied the place herself. She was finally induced to leave, but only after China had guaranteed to secure it against occupation by any other power. In October the treaty with Russia was signed and a Legation was established in Seoul. The ex-Regent was still in China, but the Chinese government now deemed it safe to send him back to the peninsula, and Min Chung-muk was sent to act as his escort.

Since the day when the Regent threw the finances of the country into confusion by the debasement of the currency and since the officials had learned how much the people would [page 188] endure of unjust taxation, in the days when every means was adopted to wring from them the funds for the erection of the palace, official indirection had been on the rapid increase. The people were being imposed upon more and more. All the money that dishonest men paid to corrupt officials to purchase office had to be drawn from the people later by dishonest means. The main qualification of a successful prefect was the ability to judge when he had reached the limit of the people’s endurance. The year 1885 beheld a serious revolt in Yo-ju where the prefect had overstepped the dead-line of the peoples’ patience. He was driven out and his *ajun* or clerk was killed. The prefect of Wun-ju also escaped death only by flight, while an *ajun* was killed.

Not the least important event of 1885 was the completion under Chinese patronage of the Seoul-Peking telegraph line by which Korea was for the first time put into quick communication with the rest of the world. At the dictation of China a commissioner, Yi Chung-ha was sent north to meet a Chinese commissioner and determine the exact boundary between Korean and Chinese territory along the Tu-man River.

A customs service had been begun by von Mollendorf on an independent basis but in July of 1885 he was dismissed from service in the Foreign Office and two months later he was relieved of work in the Customs because of unwarrantable schemes into which he had drawn that department of the government. The whole service was thereupon put under the management of Sir Robert Hirt the Inspector General of the Chinese Customs. An entirely new staff of men was sent from China. H. N. Merrill was made Chief Commissioner and Chemulpo, Fusan and Wunsan were put in charge of men directly from the Chinese Customs staff. This was a guarantee of excellent management but it proved to be the strongest lever China had in the carrying out her ambitious plans in the peninsula. Before the close of the year Gen, Foote without giving specific reasons retired from the United States Legation and returned to America. Ensign Geo. C. Foulk becoming Charge d’Affaires.

In the early months of 1886 Yi To-ja, Sin Keui-sun, Hong Chin-yu, An Chung-su and Kyong Kwang-guk were banished to

Supplement

April 29.

On the morning of April 25 at nine o’clock the little Japanese merchant steamship *Koyo Maru* dropped anchor in the harbor of Wonsan. The last thing that her captain or agent would have thought of was danger from the Russians. The preliminary formalities were finished and she was about to unload her cargo, when at eleven o’clock the people on shore saw four men-of-war and two torpedo-boats outside the harbor. No one even then had any fears as to their identity—Japanese war vessels appear and disappear without giving warning. The busy life of the settlement went on, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage as usual. But as it happened this peaceful scene was destined to be disturbed in a very informal manner. The four men-of-war remained outside but the two waspish looking torpedo-boats came gliding into the harbor, and approached the unsuspicious *Koyo*, When they were well within hailing distance a Russian officer appeared on board one of the torpedo boats and called out to the people on board the *Koyo* to take to their small boats and leave immediately as the *Koyo* was about to be torpedoed. This was like lightning from a clear sky and, like lightning, it was sure to be followed by a clap of thunder, so the people on board the merchant vessel made for the gangway and got away from her as fast as oars would take them. Before they reached the shore a torpedo was launched at the side of the helpless ship and a terrific explosion followed which needed no farther explanation. The little steamer gave a lurch to port and sank like lead.

Meanwhile the watchers on shore were beginning to grasp the situation and the business portion of the town awoke to strenuous life like a bee-hive struck with a club. “Then there was hurrying to and fro” and a general [page 2] panic among the Japanese civilians who had no reason to doubt that the Russians might throw a few torpedoes into the town. The steamer was an inoffensive merchantman and if they could destroy her why not the Japanese property ashore. The Japanese gathered together what they could take in their hands and sought places of safety. Many of them are said to have hidden in Korean houses in the native town.

But this agitation proved to be unnecessary, for the Russians soon steamed out of the harbor and left for parts unknown, and then the Japanese came back to their homes. Of course no exception can be taken to this act on the part of the Russians for the Japanese set the example at Chemulpo, but it shows rather conclusively that Russia no longer puts any stock in the fiction of Korean neutrality. We have not learned yet what the foreigners in Wonsan thought of this little by-play but we suppose they had the pleasure of a little excitement to vary the monotony of life in that rather isolated port.

It is very difficult to get any reliable information from the front. The Japanese know their business and they probably feel that until they are ready to strike decisive blows any information from the front will give the enemy a basis for guessing at future movements. We hear that Korean couriers from the north are stopped somewhere along the line. There must be some good reason for it and if this extreme reticence on the part of the Japanese will be of genuine benefit to their cause, those who wish them well should be willing to put up with the tiresome delay without grumbling. Japan has to fight against the modern newspaper as well as against the Russian, for there can be no doubt that if the war correspondents had their way there would not be a single movement of Japanese troops or boats that would not be made public to the world within twenty-four hours. One of the war correspondents told us the other day that if Japan did not modify a little this extreme sensitiveness to publicity the newspapers would recall their highly paid men and depend for news upon one or two leading news agencies, the inference being that this would be an [page 3] injury to Japan. We venture to surmise that such a solution of the difficulty would be eminently satisfactory to the Japanese authorities.

There have been all sorts of rumors from the north, most of which have come from Russian sources, but it is very unlikely that there has been any serious fighting on the Yalu as yet. It seems to be sure that the Japanese are throwing a pontoon bridge across the river without special opposition from the Russians. Whether the Russians will concentrate near that stream and offer determined resistance to the Japanese or whether they will draw the Japanese on in the hope of bringing about a great general engagement we do not profess even to guess. We will find out in time — and no sooner. A large number of war correspondents have gone to the front but where they are and what they are doing we know no more than if they had started for the moon. It is reported that on April 10 some Russians in Chinese clothes attempted to come to Yongampo but were detected by Japanese and fled. Two of them were killed and the rest escaped. Then again we are told that on the 12th about forty Russians crossed the Yalu below Wiju but were attacked by the Japanese who killed one captain and about twenty of the men. Other skirmishes have been reported from Russian sources but they are not of great consequence. All we know is that the two armies are close to each other and that the Japanese attitude is distinctly aggressive.

News Calendar.

A new Japanese daily paper printed in mixed script has begun publication in Seoul. The name is the Great Eastern Daily Record. This makes seven daily papers published in Seoul and Chemulpo.

It is stated that enterprising Japanese are about to establish an Agricultural and Industrial Bank in Chemulpo and that the capital will amount to three million yen .

Sixty houses in On-yang were burned by robbers about the middle of March.

The number of police in Seoul has been increased by sixty men.

The Government contemplates establishing a large business and industrial school and for this purpose the Finance Department has been drawn upon for an initial sum of 27,000 dollars.

On the night of the 14th inst the palace occupied by the Emperor was almost completely destroyed by fire. We have described this more fully elsewhere in this issue. The last advices as we go to press leave it quite undecided whether His Majesty will go to the “0ld Palace” or remain where he is until repairs have been effected.

[page 4] At Yong-san, so the native papers say, a man fell into the water and was about to drown when another man jumped in and saved him. The latter was arrested and asked why he had thrown the man into the water. The people who witnessed the incident testified in his favor but he has not yet been released. The people declare that hereafter if a man is drowning they will let him drown.

The government has appropriated 30,000 dollars for replacing the musicians’ uniforms and instruments that were destroyed in the recent fire.

It is said that the war has thrown a large number of men out of work on the northeast coast and that many of them want to go to Hawaii.

The Dai Ichi Ginko is preparing an issue of 50 cent, 20 cent and 10 cent bank notes for circulation in Korea. We understand that they will be issued the first of May.

After the disbanding of the Peddlars in Seoul that organization continued its operations in Kangwha but the prefect caught them and took away their certificates of membership in the society, which put an end to their active operations.

The authorities of the Seoul Fusan Railway asked for the temporary use of some Crown lands outside the South Gate but the Minister of the Household replied that it could not be granted.

Yun Yong-sun, Pak Chong-yang and Min Pyung-suk were appointed directors of the work of rebuilding the palace. The estimate for complete reconstruction amounted to 9,000.000 dollars but as this was out of the question 300,000 dollars were appropriated for the erection of the two most important buildings. His Majesty ordered that the Imperial residence be completed within twenty days.

Several of the treaty powers sent to His Majesty notes of condolence regarding the burning of the palace.

Taiku must be getting to be a rather lively place as there are upwards of 1,000 Japanese there.

The contract of M. Cremanry as adviser to the Law Department has been extended one year.

An old woman was accidentally killed on the railway outside the South Gate on the 18th inst. She was walking on the path beside the track as the train was passing and she slipped and fell so that her head was severed from her body.

Yi Ha-yong was appointed Foreign Minister on the 19th inst.

The work of robbers in the south has resulted in the burning of houses as follows, Pu-yu twenty-seven, Chongyang forty, Chun eui ten.

On April 16th thirty Russian cavalrymen entered Sung-jin. The Japanese had been warned of their approach and had left the place but one foreigner remained at the Custom house and two Canadian missionaries in the suburbs. The Russians burned the Japanese post office, shops and godowns. They are said to have taken some papers from the Customs. They smashed the telegraph instruments and cut the lines. They did not remain long but having accomplished their purpose left for Puk-Chung.

The Emperor has ordered that the rebuilding of the Audience Hall be delayed until next Autumn.

A police regulation has been published which commands that young men of low grade shall alight from jinrickshas when they pass the chair of a minister of state on the street.

Yi Keun-gyo has been appointed governor of Kyung-geui Province and Chu Sung-myun governor of Kang-won Province.

Severe penalties have been threatened against soldiers who pawn their uniforms and against those who accept them.

The Japanese bank at Sung-jin has been removed to Wonsan.

[page 189] KOREAN HISTORY

distant islands for complicacy in the plot which led to the emeute of 1884.

In February the king by royal edict abolished the hereditary transmission of slaves and the use of slave labor by the guilds in the work on the palaces This was a measure of far-reaching import had it been carried out in full; but we find that it had to be re-enacted in 1894.

The government desired to secure the services of a foreign expert as adviser to the Home and Foreign Offices and with the sanction of Li Hungchang, the Chinese Viceroy, Judge O. N. Denny, ex-Consul-general of U.S. to China, was called and he arrived in the spring of 1886 just in time to be present at the signing of the treaty with France. He had for some years been on rather intimate terms with the Great Viceroy and it is probable that the latter hoped to use the Judge in forwarding Chinese interests in Korea. If so he found himself grievously mistaken for the United States as well as Japan and France, had recognized the independence of Korea, and Judge Denny devoted his energies to the maintenance of that independence. Yuan the Chinese commissior had taken up his residence in Seoul and had dubbed himself “Resident” in opposition to the Korean claim to independence. The Peking government, forgetting or ignoring the fact that whenever Korea had gotten into trouble she (China) had always disavowed responsibility and had practically disclaimed suzerainty, now began to bolster up her claims and to use every means to make good her pretensions. The dominant party which had ridden into power on the shoulders of the Chinese put no obstacles in the way and thus JudgeDenny found himself blocked in his efforts to better the condition of the country.

It was generally understood that the right of Japanese and Western foreigners to reside in Seoul was based on the most favored nation clause in the treaties and that if the Chinese removed from Seoul the others could be compelled to do likewise. The Chinese, therefore, hoping, it is said, to secure more exclusive power in the capital by the removal of other foreigners began to agitate the question of removing all their nationals to Yong-san near the river three miles from Seoul. For a time it appeared as if this might be done but the large [page 190] vested rights of the Japanese in the capital as well as the interests of others caused a counter agitation which frustrated the scheme.

Geo. C Foulk, Ensign in the U. S. Navy, had long been in connection with the Legation in Seoul. Early in 1884 he had suggested to the government the advisability of founding a school for the instruction of young Koreans in Western languages and sciences, and consequently the United States Secretary of State was requested by the Korean government to secure three men as instructors; but the emeute of that year had deferred the matter. In 1886 it was again brought up and in July three men who had been selected by the U. S. Commissioner of Education arrived at the Korean Capital. A terrible epidemic of cholera devastated the city that summer and as many as seven or eight hundred deaths occurred daily. It was in September that the Royal English School was opened.

Chinese claims to suzerainty emboldened the Chinese merchants to attempt to evade the customs regulations and the result was a serious affray in Chemulpo when the Chinese tried to evade the export on ginseng. The Chinese Commissioner tried to uphold them in it but a vigorous protest to him Hung-chang righted the matter and the offenders were deported and the Customs Service was vindicated.

It was in this year that the trading station Whe-ryung on the Tuman River was established for convenience of trade with Russia but it was not made an open port. About this time the school founded by the American Methodist Mission received royal recognition and the king conferred upon it the name Pai Chai Hak Tang or “Hill for the Rearing of Useful Men.”

Contrary to the wishes of the Chinese a Korean Minister to America was appointed in the person of Pak Chong-yang, but in attempting to start for America he was intercepted by the Chinese just outside the South Gate and compelled to return. Two months later, however, he succeeded in getting away. He was received in Washington with all the punctiliousness due to a Minister from any sovereign power. This helped in a certain way to forward Korea’s claim to independence but America’s well-known policy of non-interferance in foreign matters largely neutralized its effect.

[page 191] The year 1888 beheld what is known as the “Baby War.” The report was spread abroad that the Europeans and Americans were stealing children and boiling them in kettles for food. It was also generally believed that the foreigners caught women and cut off their breasts in order to extract from them the condensed milk which was so commonly used among the foreign residents. The Koreans knew that the foreigners had no cows and they could explain the use of milk only on the above theory. The *modus operandi* was said to be as follows. The foreigners were possessed of a peculiar drug which became a powerful gas when introduced into the mouth. Approaching a Korean paper covered lattice door at the dead of night the operator would make a tiny hole in the paper and applying his mouth to it would blow the gas into the room. The effect would be that if there were a woman in the room she would waken and be seized with an uncontrolable desire to go outside. Once without, the door, the foreigner would seize her, cut off her breasts and return to his home. It was believed that they had paid agents among the people to whom they taught the secret and whom they sent about the country to secure women’s breasts. Two suspicious looking men were set upon in Hong-ch’un charged with being breast-hunters. They narrowly escaped with their lives. For a short time there was imminent danger of an uprising but a royal proclamation couched in trenchant language did much to calm the excitement and the danger subsided as suddenly as it had arisen. In Eui-ju there was a most destructive flood in which 300 lives were lost and 1927 houses were swept away.

Chapter XVII.

Corruption . . .edicts of reform . . . . trouble with Japan envoy to Europe . . . . death of Queen Cho . . . the fisheries dispute . . . . oppression . . . . retrogression excessive taxation . . . . insurrections . . . . foreigners threatened . . . . on the verge of anarchy. . . . prefects punished . . . . revolt in Song-do . . . . Tong-hak manifesto . . . . government helpless . . . . Japan uneasy. . . .Kim Ok-kyun murdered. . . . revolting barbarity. . . . the fall of Chon-ju. . . . Korea asks China for help . . . [page 192] Chinese troops arrive . . . . Japanese movements . . . .the other powers interfere . . . .Japanese demands . . . . proposed reforms . . . . the palace taken by the Japanese . . . . the sinking of the Kowshing . . . . war declared . . . . Korea breaks with China . . . . Japan promises to leave Shanghai alone . . . Japanese in Shanghai. . . .battle of Asan . . . . battle of P’yung-yang . . . . .battle of the Yalu.

At this time the administration of the government was anything but exemplary. The selling of the same oflfice at such short intervals increased the burden on the people to an almost unbearable point, so that there were frequent uprisings in country districts. In Korea the people form the court of final appeal. If a prefect oversteps the line which marks the limit of the people’s endurance and they drive him from the place the government ordinarily accepts it as final.

The following year the government was obliged to take notice of this state of things and the king sent out a proclamation saying that the taking of bribes and the extortion of money in the provinces would be severely punished. He took this opportunity also to speak about robbery and gambling, which had begun to run rife in the land. The people were forbidden to dress in silk, excepting those over fifty years of age.

The year 1890 opened with serious trouble in Ham-gyung Province. Cho Pyong-sik, a man of indomitable will and one whose unbridled temper had more than once gotten him into serious trouble, was governor in that province. The people had mortgaged their bean crop to the Japanese exporters, of Wun-san, and had received some $176,000 therefor. But when the beans had been harvested and were ready for shipment the governor forbade its delivery. He wanted the Japanese to sell it back to the people, as it was a year of scarcity, but this they refused to do; and the beans rotted where they lay. The Japanese promptly took the matter up and demanded an indemnity. The Foreign Office at once recognised the validity of the claim but the king ordered Cho Pyung-sik to pay the bill himself, since he had acted throughout without orders from Seoul. The unhappy governor was obliged to part with all his patrimony and several of his relatives had to do likewise. As this was not enough to settle the bill the government paid the balance.