Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

GIFT OF

Yŏng-il Kim

Google

Google

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHOSÖN

THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHOSÖN

THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE "FRAGRANT IRIS."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHOSÖN

THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

A SKETCH OF KOREA

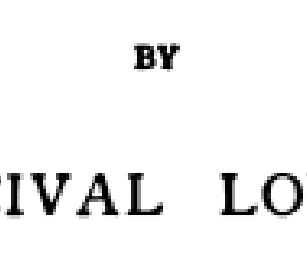
BY

PERCIVAL LOWELL

LATE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND COUNSELLOR TO THE KOREAN SPECIAL MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MEMBER OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF JAPAN

ILLUSTRATED

FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



BOSTON

TICKNOR AND COMPANY

211 Tremont Street

1888

BERKELEY LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

3490
7054
1888

Copyright, 1885,
BY PERCIVAL LOWELL.

All rights reserved.

THIRD EDITION.

UNIVERSITY PRESS:
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE.

ONE evening in August, 1883, I found myself arriving in Tokio, after a journey into the interior of Japan. The thousand lights and lanterns of the great city, as I sped through its miles of streets in a jinrikisha, never seemed so brilliant nor so welcoming before. I felt I had reached home. Of leaving it, of sailing for America, I had at that moment about as much idea as you have, good reader, of setting out to-morrow for Kamchatka. Coming events cast no shadows before them; for all was one vast shadow,—night. Four days from that time I was on the broad Pacific with the Korean Special Mission to the United States, and a little more than two weeks later I entered my native land as a foreigner.

It was at the end of October that we set sail again from San Francisco for Yokohama. A long passage across the Pacific and unavoidable delays in Japan made it the middle of December before we at last reached Korea. There, in its capital, Söul, as the guest of his Majesty, I spent the winter.

Now that you and I, indulgent reader, have journeyed so many thousand miles in company, we should surely have learned to know each other; for nothing, we both admit, so reveals character as travel,—except marriage.

I would add two notes. In the first place, I wish to put in a plea for the right pronunciation of Korean words. In the transliteration of the Korean alphabet I have followed the scheme suggested by Messrs. Aston, Satow, and Chamberlain, the pioneers of the subject. The simple vowels *a*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are to be pronounced as in Italian. Ö, an exceedingly interesting Korean vowel, has a sound which varies from the French *e* mute, through short *u*, to a degenerated *o*. The best sound,

Digitized by Google 176101 Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

on the whole, to represent it is the German *ö* (*o* umlaut). What have been written *e*, *è*, and *é* were originally Korean diphthongs, and are still so written, *ǎi*, *ai*, and *oi*; but they are now pronounced as single vowel sounds, akin to the sounds the letters represent in French. The transliterated consonants are to be pronounced for the most part as in English, — the principal exceptions being *r*, which is a general, not a special liquid (that is, it suggests either an *r*, an *l*, or an *n*, according to position); an intercalated *h*, which has the effect of increasing the aspiration of the preceding letter, — as, for instance, *Whang*, *Chhung*; and lastly, a reduplication of certain letters, which simply increases the intensity of their pronunciation. Other foreign words have been spelled according to the consensus of scholars on the subject; for this reason *Korea* has replaced *Corea*, and in *Manchuria* all the vowels have the Italian sound.

Secondly, I would send with this a note of thanks. The thanks would have taken the form of a dedication had the names not seemed too many to share one book. To William Sturgis Bigelow, Gustavus Goward, Basil Hall Chamberlain, Ernest F. Fenollosa, and Edward S. Morse, I am indebted for kindness and help thanks cannot express: I would offer them instead this sketch. To Miyaoka Tsunejiro, Yu Kil Chun, Cheu Kyöng Sok, Ni Si Ryom, Kim Nak Chip, Min Yöng Ik, and Sö Kwang Pöm, I am under the greatest obligations. I would also thank most warmly Hon. Lucius H. Foote, C. L. Scudder, Esq., Herr P. G. von Möllendorff, T. Koyabashi, Esq., and Y. S. Yoshida, Esq., for the many happy days they gave me in both thought and feeling, the remembrance of which has lately, unhappily, been saddened by the death of Mrs. Foote; while to Hong Yöng Sik, the loyal friend, the true patriot, and at last the political martyr, I can now only ascribe a memory. To the Forbes Albertype Company I desire to express my thanks for the manner in which they have reproduced from my negatives the accompanying pictures. Finally, I would thank Mr. Stevens, of the University Press, for his many able suggestions.

Boston, *November*, 1885.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	WHERE THE DAY BEGINS	1
II.	THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE PENINSULA	11
III.	THE CLIMATE	22
IV.	THE COAST	33
V.	CHEMULPO	44
VI.	THE JOURNEY UP TO SÖUL	54
VII.	THE JOURNEY UP TO SÖUL.—THE SECOND DAY	68
VIII.	THE ENTRY INTO SÖUL	78
IX.	A WALLED CITY	86
X.	THE WATCH-FIRES ON THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN	93
XI.	THE GOVERNMENT	100
XII.	THE TRIAD OF PRINCIPLES	107
XIII.	THE QUALITY OF IMPERSONALITY	120
XIV.	THE PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM	131
XV.	THE POSITION OF WOMAN	143
XVI.	PRESENTATION AT COURT	153
XVII.	A DAY AT HOME	162
XVIII.	THE HOUSE OF THE SLEEPING WAVES	170
XIX.	THE WANT OF A RELIGION	181
XX.	THE DEMON WORSHIP	193

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXI.	Söul by Day	213
XXII.	Söul by Night	226
XXIII.	A Korean Banquet	238
XXIV.	My Friend the Mathematician	250
XXV.	Architecture	262
XXVI.	Landscape Gardening	280
XXVII.	The Palaces	289
XXVIII.	A Chapter of Horrors	299
XXIX.	The Valley of Clothes	307
XXX.	Costume	316
XXXI.	On Hats	332
XXXII.	An Out-of-the-Way Corner in Language	348
XXXIII.	The Flower-Stream Temple	356
XXXIV.	Winter Revels in a Monastery	367
XXXV.	Time	376
XXXVI.	A Predicament	386
XXXVII.	The Beacons of Pusan	394

Appendix 401

Index 405

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

FULL-PAGE PLATES.

PAGE

"The Fragrant Iris" . . . . . *Frontispiece*
His Majesty the King of Korea 50
River Suburbs of Söul 74
The Foreign Office 116
An Outlying Branch of the City's Wall crossing a Stream . 172
The Pillars of the Palace of Summer 270

WOODCUTS, ETC.

Family Table 139
The Chinese General and the Unfortunate Imp 196
A Tea-Fight of Gnomes 206
A Hasty Sketch drawn with a Pencil, in course of Conversation, by a Korean who was not an Artist 245
A Korean Sock 328
A Korean Shoe 328
A Korean Boot 330
The Ordinary Every-day Hat 336
The Skull-Cap, with the Mitre-Hat over it 337
A Court Hat 339
A Mitre-Hat, the Cue seen underneath 340
The "Chef-de-Cuisine" Hat, not, however, a Culinary Badge . 340
A Large Hat . . . . . 342 *note*
The Hybrid 346
Yang . . . . . 381 *note*
Yang and Yöng . . . . . 381 *note*

Map of Korea 13

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM.

CHAPTER I.

WHERE THE DAY BEGINS.

IT is fortunate that the one hundred and eightieth meridian falls where it does. From Siberia to the Antarctic Continent this imaginary line traverses nothing but water. The only land which it passes at all near is one of the archipelagoes of the South Pacific; and there it divides but a handful of volcanoes and coral reefs from the main group. These islands are even more unimportant to the world than insignificant in size. Those who tenant them are few, and those who are bound to these few still fewer.

The line is not only imaginary; it has not even an astronomical reason for its existence, like the equator. It is purely and entirely an arbitrary convention; and yet its position is of exceeding importance to mankind. From the very convenience of this position we are apt to forget its value; for the line is the great day-origin. It sets, not the time of day merely, but the day itself. At the line two days meet. There, though time flows ceaselessly on, occurs that unnatural yet unavoidable jump of twenty-four hours; and no one is there to be startled by the fact, — no one to be perplexed in trying to reconcile the two incongruities, continuous time and discontinuous day. There is nothing but the ocean; and that is tenantless.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Had it been otherwise, — had the line crossed some continent where man dwelt, — there might have been two great towns, ten miles apart, with different days yet the same hour. "Nothing new under the sun!" Why, two days would be born with every sunrise. And persons induced to do so, from financial or other causes, could go skipping across the line, doubling certain days of their weeks while they forever obliterated others.

Now, as we pass this meridian westward, we simply drop a day into the deep; and but few of us pause to consider that we have in reality buried a cause of strife, — an immaterial something which, had it not been for the uninhabited ocean, would have thrown the world into inextricable confusion. The point at issue is nothing less than the agreement upon a common day for the whole world.

The form of the earth and her rotation give man a certain natural measure of time. As she turns upon herself, the sunlight and the shade mark out for him a division he calls a day; and for any one place the darkness severs one day from the next, but for the earth as a whole the day sweeps endlessly round. There is no line to determine where this unending light shall cease to be the old day and become the new: the symmetry of the globe renders such a thing impossible. Man must place it for himself.

Now, so long as civilized nations — or at least all such as knew or cared about one another — lived close together, it mattered little whether they all agreed upon the same origin or not; and it mattered less where they placed it, provided only it was far enough away from all. But when they came to care about the antipodes, the case changed. Whether they had each made for themselves their own day, or had consented to worship at the common shrine of a convention, the problem would have been equally embarrassing. Indeed, had the world reached that stage of scientific and practical development in which the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

knowledge of its surface in its entirety became necessary, before man's migrations had carried him to what we now call Europe, no little annoyance might have resulted from his position; for, with himself as centre, the beginning of his day would lie at the one hundred and eightieth meridian, because as far away from him on the one side as on the other. If, then, his own meridian had lain not in Europe but in India, the other would have crossed the American Continent, to the great confusion of its present inhabitants. There would then have been no natural gap. An imaginary line only would make it Wednesday here and Thursday to him who stood a stone's-throw away. Most fortunately, then, the impossible hiatus occurred where no continuity was needed. The attempt to make both ends meet — the end and the beginning — was rendered unnecessary by the great Pacific Ocean. Most fortunate was it, indeed, that opposite the spot where man was destined most to think there should have been placed so little to think about.

There is one loss which most travellers count a gain. It is the parting with that day which we drop from out the circle of our year into the depths of the Pacific Ocean. We fall asleep one night in the new world to awake on the after-morrow's morning in the old. The day that knows no to-morrow — was yesterday.

And we are somehow glad. We vouchsafe the event a feeling, in our joy that we seem by so much nearer to our journey's end. We hardly give it a sober thought. Still less do we imagine that we shall meet its spirit in the land whither we are bound, — that we shall find that for once the fancies of far-Eastern superstition and the prosaic dictum of Western science are at one.

Long before such a thing as a prime meridian had entered the thoughts of men, before they could dream that their early

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

beliefs would later receive a certain sanction from science, the races of the Asiatic Continent had mused about the day's beginning, and put its birthplace where we have agreed to find it to-day. Their myths, and the names those myths have left behind them, are a pretty, poetic forecast of our stern matter-of-fact convention. Modern science needed a starting-point for the day; ancient fancy sought the place from which every morning came forth the sun: and the spot they fixed upon is the same. Our present fiction was an old-time fact. The sun rose from out the ocean; to the far-Oriental it seemed that he must have slept there. To them his abode was a fairy palace; to us it is a geometrical line. Thus sadly has scientific necessity caused illusion to narrow and disappear.

The continent upon which these early races found themselves did not girdle the globe. If it had they might perhaps have been endlessly pursuing and destroying one another round the circle. As it was, its general profile shaped their course to the sea. Their birthplace had much to do with the direction which they took; but apparently the direction in itself, as that toward the rising or the setting sun, had little or nothing to do with it. Such thoughts came later. They went because they were driven, probably not by foes behind them, but by the restless spirit within. While the Aryans went westward, certain of the Turanian peoples struck east; and from that moment they separated, not by distance only, but in thought, in customs, in those ways of looking at things which we are too apt to call innate, once and forever. They had differed a little when they set out. There was a whole world of feelings between the two ere they had both completed their long journey. As with the west, so in the east. Horde after horde went forth, — at first, no doubt, to seek new pasture-lands. Like many a wanderer since, they forgot the object that had brought them, in the charms of their new surroundings.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Arrived at the sea-coast, their material advance was stopped; for they possessed neither the means nor the knowledge to venture upon the boundless bosom of the ocean. The land is man's friend; the ocean is at best but neutral. The mind must abet the wish, be it ever so strong, before man will become a sailor to lands beyond the sea. But if they went not in body, their dreams sped away to an earthly paradise beyond the water, — a happy material immortality where all was young and fair. The names they have left behind them bear witness to fond beliefs; and so do the names of their lands to the journey that brought them thither.

The Japanese were among the first, and they went the farthest. They came, in all likelihood, through what is now the Korean Peninsula. Urged by the same desire that pushed our forefathers across the Asiatic Continent into Europe, they themselves at last ventured upon the sea. We can imagine them risking their way across the strait that separates what have since become their islands from the Korean Peninsula: first to Tsushima, which, from the highlands of the hilly coast, they could see, — a streak of darker blue against the sky; thence they made out Iki; and once there the islands would be a wall in front of them. But beyond these islands there was nothing but the restless, everlasting blue. To their watchful, anxious gaze, as they stood peering across the deep, no land was visible in the waste of waters. But every morning the sun rose in fiery splendor from out the ocean. Surely it was here that the day began. There could be nought beyond save the regions of the blessed, whence the day was born anew each morning for the dwellers upon this earth; and so they named their land "The Day's Beginning,"[1] long, long ago in the morning of the ages.

[1] Nihon, from whose characters, as pronounced by the Portuguese, comes our word Japan, is the collective name of the islands that compose the Japanese Empire. It

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

But these beliefs were not confined to the Japanese. Both before they sailed, and long after the wanderers who never returned, and even the memory of their wanderings, had been utterly forgotten by those who remained behind, such beliefs existed. From before the time of history, the races along the Asiatic eastern watershed have turned their gaze, and imaginations that pierced beyond their gaze, toward the rising, as we do toward the setting, sun. All those longings, all those castles in the air, dreams of possibilities, — impossibilities, — which come unbidden to him who watches the sun as it sinks to rest, these peoples saw when it rose from out the deep. And so it happens that the peninsula which had been the pathway of the Japanese, and was destined later to become a dwelling-place permanent beyond its fellows, comes to our notice first as a mythical region of ultramundane bliss. It was called "The Land of the God-men." In it grew, not the apple of the Hesperides, but the imaginary cactus that cured all ills, — that conquered disease, that brought immortality. "The fairy palm" the Chinese called it; and the common people in Korea see it in the mountain ginseng to-day.

But a new horde from the north poured forth, and the gods took wings before them. Less adventurous than their predecessors, they crossed not the sea; they tarried in the land and became a part of it. Yet they forgot not their old traditions; and as year after year and century after century slipped away, we may imagine that they may almost

is commonly, but somewhat loosely, translated "the rising sun." "Ni" meant originally "the sun," and thence, by an easy transition, its signification was extended to mean "the day." "Hon" means "origin." The two together, therefore, mean "the origin of the sun or day." "Nihon," which is Sinico-Japanese, would, in pure Japanese, be expressed by "hi no moto," and not "hi no de," which is the expression for "sunrise." The character signifying "to appear, to rise, as of the sun," is quite distinct from that which is read "hon," which denotes "an origin, a beginning, a birth, as opposed merely to an appearance." A strictly literal rendering bears out the mythological origin of the name, — to my thinking, even more poetic than "The Land of the Sunrise."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

have looked upon themselves as the successors of the former myths. At any rate, the sun rose for them in the peaceful splendor that wraps the morning hours there even to this day, and the sunbeams fell into the valleys between the hills and nestled on the land. "Morning Calm" they called it; and it seemed not so much a name as its very essence. The drowsy quiet of the spot lulled them to rest, and they fell asleep. They were in the world, yet it was to them as if it had passed away. And so they slept on for ages.

Like the palace in the fairy tale, everything remained as it had been centuries before. Change knew them not, and time stood still. Individuals passed away and were forgotten, but the race seemed immortal. No alien might approach the place; and their neighbors to the north and west seemed quite disposed to respect their seclusion, exacting only a tribute for the privilege they enjoyed of being left alone. What they took into their sacred precincts that they kept. Albeit most of what they took had been borrowed from their neighbors' customs, they clung to it as if it had been the fruit of their own ideas. And so it came to pass that we have here a most remarkable phenomenon, a living fossilification — the preservation intact in this world, the law of whose very existence is change—of the life, the thought, the manners, the dress, of centuries ago. In the Koreans of to-day we are not only looking upon what is strange, we are looking upon what has once been and has elsewhere passed away. Like the old Etruscan king, as he was seen for a moment when his tomb was exposed to view, they stand before us to-day just as they appeared on the day of their inhumation. Like him, too, will not the vision all crumble away to dust on contact with the air of the outer world?

But Nature, as well as man, has singled out the peninsula for a charmed region of the past. When the long equinoctial summer drew to its close, and the icy hand of winter crept over

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the north of Asia and entombed the mammoths where we find their skeletons at the present time, a mantle fell over what is now Korea and the countries round about. It may have been that the surrounding water for a time kept the fauna warm, or they may have been so hemmed in that Nature at bay fought for her life; but whatever the cause, the fauna lived on. Whatever change there was, they acclimated themselves to it. The tiger kept his haunts in the jungle, and the great bustards continued to roam the plains. Even the crocodile clave to the muddy banks of the estuaries which for centuries had been his, in spite of any falling off in the temperature of his habitat.

Escape may have been cut off. At all events, it was easier for the fauna to remain, even under what at first were adverse circumstances, than to migrate. It is not a little singular that this should have been the case It is certainly surprising that the Bengal tiger, so called, — a beast that we habitually associate with the damp, hot jungle, — should be found in the dry and cold climate of Korea and Manchuria. Yet there he is; and his appearance is just what it is in the jungle of India, only that he is a trifle smaller. And yet he frequents, from preference, not the warmer valleys, but the forests on the sides of the mountains. To suit his condition, his hair has lengthened and his fur is all the handsomer. His pluck in remaining has met with its due reward. He is most highly honored, much more so than he would have been in the land where he more properly belongs. His name, it is true, is a household word on the lips of both peoples; but in the north it commands not only dread but admiration. He is regarded as the archetype of strength and courage. His picture is the symbol of military greatness; and on the old battle-flags it used to be borne before the army when the Korean soldiers marched to war.

The tiger did not remain alone; his former associates

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

stayed likewise. The leopard continued to live where his race had lived before him. Even now, after centuries of persecution, he abounds there in such numbers that the skins form the most common of the insignia of official rank. Those from neighboring Manchuria — because to Manchuria, unlike Korea, there is access from the outer world — are to be met with, outranking the native product in lands whose specialty such things are supposed to be.

With the flora the case was different. Those species that covered the land in its early balmy days the peninsula knows no more. Their sun went south; they could not follow, and they could not live without him. They died.

Perhaps no better criterion of the rank of an organism can be chosen than its strength to endure adversity, — physically speaking, its power of adaptability. To flourish when all is fair around it, when it meets with nothing but smiles, is of the lowest; but to stand when everything compasses its destruction, "hic labor, hoc opus est." We praise it as it shows itself in the characters of men; and we do well. But it is deeper than this. It is one of the fundamental laws of Nature. All alike, the lower with the higher, will thrive when given what they want; but to mould what is given into what is wanted, this is an attribute only of the latter. "Quand on ne peut avoir ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a," might truly be called the password to race immortality. Just in proportion as the range of the capabilities of any organism becomes extended, as the compass of its powers increases, so will it resist. Increase takes place first in the complexity of bodily structure, and then, as we ascend the scale, in that of mind; and complexity in mind makes possible simplicity in matter: and this, it seems to me, renders it possible for us dimly to conceive how an infinite mind may, for its own existence, be independent of matter.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The plants, then, could not adapt themselves. All remains of vegetable life, such as grow within the tropics, have long ago disappeared from Korea. It is now, for all its past, like any of its sister latitudes for vegetation. And man has aided in the change: he has done his best to leave no aboriginal vegetation at all; and in the southern half he has very fairly succeeded. He has completely domesticated the land. Indeed, it is not a little surprising to observe how completely what we must suppose to have been originally a shepherd people has transformed its business in life. Agricultural, sedentary, fixed, — such have become pre-eminently the characteristics of the race. What was once a tribe of nomads has entirely and peculiarly forgotten its wandering instincts. They journeyed centuries ago to the land of myths, and became a part of it, — they settled in the heritage of the gods, and were content; and a halo as of immortality has rested upon them to this day.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER II.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE PENINSULA.

To most minds there lurks a certain charm in the mysterious. The very fact that secrecy wraps a subject as with a mantle renders us all the more eager to tear away the veil. The possession of this feeling is at once an exciting cause and a sanction to knowledge. We realize its power as regards persons, things, events; less commonly is it a motive force to the study of a whole nation, and yet it is in this connection that I would call upon it now. I ask you to go with me to a land whose life for ages has been a mystery, — a land which from time unknown has kept aloof, apart, so that the very possibility of such seclusion is itself a mystery, and which only yesterday opened her gates. For cycles on cycles she has been in the world, but not of it. Her people have been born, have lived, have died, oblivious to all that was passing around them. They might have been denizens of another planet for aught they knew of the history of this. And the years glided into centuries, and the centuries grew to be numbered by tens, and still the veil remained as tightly drawn as at the beginning. It was but last year that Korea stepped as a *débutante* into the society of the world.

There is a certain natural fitness in beginning the description of a country by positing its geography. It is kindred to the way we commonly make one another's acquaintance. We learn to

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

recognize the form before we become familiar with the spirit; and though the land is not the people, as the body is not the person, yet both land and body have much to do with the character of those who tenant them.

If we will cast our eyes upon a large map of the world, or still better upon some large globe, we shall discover a peninsula just to the west of the Japanese islands. It is the peninsula of Korea. We shall know it, by inference, from the scarcity of names upon it. Of a land of which next to nothing was known, next to nothing could be represented; and we shall hardly be glad to learn that almost all of what we shall read will be incorrect. Map compilers are artful. They put in much more information than they possess; and then, when even that does not suffice to cover the paper, they reduce the scale of the drawing. By this artifice the areas unavoidably left blank are much diminished in extent. Unfortunately, then, all that we shall be able to make out from our atlas will be the existence of the peninsula, and the name Korea. We shall not discover that as much more country to the north of it is Korea, too; for the frontier line on the map will not be such as would satisfy either China, on the one hand, or Korea on the other, or Russia, that all-devourer of other people's property in this part of the world, on both.

It is hardly surprising that our maps of Korea should be inaccurate. Where no one was allowed to land under pain of losing, not his theodolite alone, but his head, — an even more important instrument in the matter, — topographers were few. Over a century ago the Jesuits in China, indeed, — who did and taught everything from religion to civil engineering, and whose career was more remarkable than the wildest imagination would have dared to paint it, — did make an attempt to survey Korea, but with scanty success. China was willing enough, but Korea was not.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The career of these French Jesuits in China was little short of supernatural, and it is a matter fraught with no small interest and wonder that their teachings in religion were not more successful than they were. If ever apostles came attended with miracles efficacious to the converting of the unbeliever, they did. They reformed the calendar; they taught mathematics; they designed bridges: in truth, it would be easier to enumerate what they did not do. They gained the imperial ear; their word on all practical subjects became law to a people as numerous as the whole of Europe was then. They became the wise men of the land, and yet they converted relatively few. It looks as if they were much more scrupulous abroad than at home about the dogmas of their divine mission. With all respect to so subtile a body, it would seem that here was a chance for the clothing of themselves with a little assumption of supernatural authority much more productive and none the less credible than infallibility at home, and such a chance as may never occur again. But peace to their ashes! They did much good, and even to the most zealous of their opponents it must seem that they accomplished but little harm. And with all the folly and evil of their mistaken lives, they have exhibited examples of courage, of self-renunciation, of greatness, which cause us, as we read of their martyrdoms in that distant land of Korea, far away from all they held dear, to feel an answering throb in our own hearts. It is so easy to see the wrong in our fellow-man, and so hard to do honor to the truly good qualities of those we oppose. It is indeed a beautiful thing to have said of one what Coquelin (Ainé) said of Jacques Normand: "Il a trop de cœur pour que son esprit soit jamais méchant et trop d'esprit pour que le sentiment soit jamais exagéré."

Their topographical attempts on Korea resulted principally in failure. The best map of the country is one compiled by the Japanese Government; and it is from this that the one

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

given has been reduced. It is, however, a map made from external, — that is, coastwise, — not internal surveying. The Japanese have not been allowed to penetrate the land freely; and it is from charts and miscellaneous information about the interior, digested and compiled, that they have constructed this really admirable map. In 1876 they made the first treaty by which Korea had ever deigned to acknowledge the existence of the outer world; and then they proceeded with their men-of-war to make some excellent charts. Their map, as a whole, is neither so accurate nor so complete as it might be, for the reasons mentioned above; but in the main it is correct. It does not call the capital by the name of the province, as a most famous European atlas does; nor do the rivers that are drawn on the paper run across existent mountain-chains in Nature.

But, praiseworthy as it is, the Japanese map is to be seen, not heard. This somewhat enigmatical sentence is literally exact. The facts are these: On the Japanese map the names of the places are printed in Chinese characters, which the Koreans themselves use in the same way. Now, this would be as perfectly intelligible to the ear as to the eye, if all those who used the Chinese characters pronounced them alike. But they do not. Each of the three nations — China, Korea, and Japan — pronounces them after its own fashion. The result is, that, though using what are meant for the same words, neither nation understands the others. A Japanese reading from his really fairly accurate map would quite fail to make any Korean comprehend what he sought. They could write to one another, but they could not talk. Something of the same kind, though not nearly to the same extent, is to be met with in those words of French origin which the English language has embodied. No Frenchman to-day would understand them from an Anglo-Saxon tongue.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

This renders the identification of Korean places coming through the medium of the Japanese, whether by spoken information or when read off their map, impossible even to a trained scholar unless he happen to be as well versed in Korean as in Japanese, — an exceedingly rare accomplishment at present.

To remedy this difficulty, Mr. Satow, late Second and Japanese Secretary of the British Legation in Tokio, has compiled and recently published a Korean map, giving the names of the places in English spelling. But as such detailed knowledge, at our present stage of acquaintance with the land, would be neither useful nor specially interesting to the world at large, I have not thought it advisable to ask for permission to copy it. As time goes on, it will become more and more valuable. At present, it is more particularly for the use of students of Korea. But our map, — for the one published by the Japanese is the product of methods similar to our own, — though more accurate, is hardly so interesting as is their land, seen through their own spectacles.

There was brought to me one day, as a curiosity, in consequence of my having expressed a wish for old books, what turned out to be an exceedingly interesting volume. It was an atlas compiled by a Korean, some fifty years ago, from a still older Chinese one. Such was the date assigned it by the Koreans themselves, and the internal evidence bears out the assertion. It is due unmistakably to the influence of the Jesuits upon Chinese notions of geography, but has wandered as unmistakably from what they could possibly have taught. In plan it is similar to our own atlases. It begins with a chart of the heavens; then follows a map of the whole world; then one of Korea; then the environs of the capital; then the capital itself on a larger scale; and it finally winds up with a sort of family tree of the emperors of China, the kings of Korea,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and the Chinese philosophers. It looks like the result of a compact between Western teachings, Chinese philosophy, and the eternal pre-eminence of the Middle Kingdom. Perhaps the most generally interesting map is the one of the world, a fac-simile of which is here given.[1] It reminds us strikingly of our maps of "the world as known to the ancients." It, too, is drawn in a sort of perspective, on the principle that whatever is distant must be small, because to the mind of the artist insignificant; only that here China, instead of Ancient Rome, is the point of view from which he surveys the outer barbarians.

We are not left to guess at the countries represented. Their identification comes from a transliteration of the characters, even in the case of those for England and France. Thus the names make certain what the contours suggest. Throughout the whole we see the hand of the Jesuits, whose teachings were accepted, but were reduced in scale, so that the dignity of the Middle Kingdom might in no wise suffer from the additional knowledge. These instructors considered it unnecessary to introduce America into the map. They only vouchsafe her the following questionable footnote: —

"Below this South Pole there is a barren land by the name of South America, which, together with the continents we have here given, make up the five continents of the world. Once a French ship at the Great Billow Mountain (this means the Cape of Good Hope, as explained by the map) saw a land in the distance. On reaching it, she found it (America, as it was afterwards called) to be one vast level wilderness. When the night came, the stars seemed to the ship's crew to be much more numerous than they remembered them at home; and when the day dawned again, they could discover no human being living there. The only sounds of life which they heard in this great wilderness were the cries of some parrots in the distance."

[1] This map appears in the octavo edition of this work.

Digitized by Google
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

For a piece of unintentional satire, this is exquisite; and the idea of reaching South America by taking a short cut over the South Pole is worthy of the bold disregard of natural impediments that suggests our North Polar expeditions. I forbear to draw any conclusions from the wilderness and the parrots.

To show how fairly accurate at this time was their geographical knowledge, when not stretched by a desire to seem greater than their neighbors, I may mention in passing the map of Korea. Though the details are not what they should be, the general features are in the main correct. The boundary-lines of the provinces of the kingdom are curiously enough prolonged, out into the water, as far as this is represented. The device was perhaps suggested by the fact that in some instances numerous islands, too small to be shown on the map, rendered it necessary; and a desire for uniformity prompted the rest. The wavy lines that picture the sea have at least the merit of suggestiveness.

Let us now take up again the reproduction of the Japanese map. As Korea has little or no past that is the common property of the world, and is only just beginning to have such a present, to translate the characters that appear in the original would be even worse than to omit them altogether. They have therefore been left out.

Of special importance are two sets of geographical details; and the interest attaching to them springs from two diametrically opposite reasons. The one is connected with the land's long night of seclusion; the other, with her opening to the rest of the world.

One still occasionally meets with the expression "the island of Korea." The phrase is a bit of early hearsay now crystallized into an article of geographical faith, much in the same manner as formerly, though without even so much excuse, there

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

were said to be two emperors in Japan, — the one a spiritual, the other a temporal, head to the nation. No such separation between matters of this world and of the next ever existed in Japan; and similarly, whatever geology may eventually inform us on the subject, man from his own experience never knew Korea as an island. He has often wished that he had. The Koreans themselves would have been only too happy to make of this fiction a fact. Unfortunately for their desire for privacy, it was not only not an island, but they were not able even practically to render it such. Though separated from the rest of mankind on three sides by the sea, on the fourth they offered a long line of assailable territory. This they were never able to defend. Luckily for them, their neighbors had not the craving for possession, the greed for land, — that ogre-like propensity of nations to grow by swallowing all that lies adjacent to them. So when these last had pushed the Koreans back to a certain natural barrier, there they suffered the line to rest. This boundary is one which Nature first, and fable afterwards, has in some sort marked out for remembrance.

At the northwestern corner of the map lies a high peak, known from the snow which rests upon its summit as the Ever-White Mountain. It is famous as the birthplace of Korean folk-lore, and a great deal that is mythical hangs about it still. It is said to be thirty miles high. This sounds like even a stretch upon a certain Japanese method of measuring the height of mountains, where, for the height proper, is substituted the length of the ascent, and a mountain is called as many miles high as the path up it is long. But here there is no well-worn path, and it would seem as if the deviations from the straight road had all been counted too. To its inaccessibility is due, probably, the supposed existence of a little lake near the top, which is said to give birth at once to two

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

streams. From the snows as they melt, these two streams, on opposite sides of the mountain, fall down through the half-light of the forest to the sunshine of the valley below. One of them forms a river, called in Korean "The River of the Duck's Green," which then flows southerly and separates Korea from China. The other is the Tu Man Kang, which flows northeasterly and divides Korea from the last acquisitions of Russia in the far-east. Thus the Ever-White Mountain, together with what flows from it, marks the only land-boundary of the kingdom. The Sea of Japan on the east, and the Yellow Sea on the south and west, form the other barriers that have helped so long to keep Korea to herself.

Having seen how Korea is cut off from the continent, the next set of positions to be noticed are of precisely an opposite nature, — namely, those points at which she has at last suffered herself to be approached, — the treaty ports. In modern far-Eastern geography the treaty ports play a very important rôle. They are far more than merely ports of the country on whose sea-coast they lie. With one or two exceptions, principally the capitals of the lands, they constitute the only places where Europeans may live. They thus become practically foreign colonies; for the foreign community lives under its own laws, quite independent of those of the country in which it is. To foreigners, therefore, they are in some sort the far-East itself, — that part of it alone which they may call home, but which, with the patriotism of their several races, they never do so call, no matter how many years their sojourn in them may have lasted. The result is that in Japan, for instance, Yokohama is to most foreigners a more important name than Tokio, though the former has at most but sixty thousand inhabitants, of whom about a twentieth are Europeans, while the latter has twelve hundred thousand, and is, beside, the capital of the empire.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

In Korea the treaty ports are three in number, — Wensan on the north, Pusan on the southeast, and Inchön situate halfway up the west coast. By the revised Japanese treaty of 1880, and by the subsequent treaties with America, England, and Germany, these three places have been opened to foreign trade. Of these, Wensan has a productive country behind it, productive so far principally of skins and hides; Pusan, a history and a Japanese colony; and Inchön, its proximity to the capital to recommend it. They are also very favorably situated for an equal distribution of sea-coast in draining the commerce of the interior. These advantages will become more apparent as soon as there is any commerce to drain. There is another matter that hampers their general usefulness, — the climate. It is only during the summer months that they are all available. Such is the rigor of the climate, that the harbor of Wensan, the most northern, is frozen over from November to April, and that of Inchön more or less blocked during the same period. Without constant navigation, therefore, to keep the channel clear, they become for a great part of the year unapproachable. Inchön, indeed, would hardly become so were it not that it is situated near the mouth of the river Han, whose current brings down, whenever the weather moderates, large masses of floating ice, — an almost more serious obstacle to vessels than a solid sheet would be. Pusan is open the year round; but it is so far from the capital — at present the objective point — that for purposes of reaching Korea it may be said not to exist. By the present means of conveyance, it is ten days distant from the capital, Söul.

And this brings us to what is peculiarly the most important place in Korea, — Söul. Central in interest, it is also central in position. Of the many capitals which the peninsula has had, it is the last. It is also the southernmost. Taken east and west, or north and south, it is almost in the middle of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

land. Its position may be approximately learned from some of our own atlases, where it figures under the name of Kinkitao. This is not its name, however, but a misspelling of the name of the province in which it lies; just as the harbor of Pusan was set down in the early charts as the harbor of Chosan, because, in reply to questions of men-of-war's men as to what it was called, the natives answered, "Chosŏn," — the name of the country, — supposing the question to refer to the greater, not the less. It is suggestive to note how precisely opposite the answer would have been in Europe or America, where, to the peasant, the national is lost in the local.

On the Japanese map, Sŏul figures as a rectangle of some size. This representation is due to its intrinsic importance; but it is amply justified topographically, from the extent of ground the place covers.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER III.

THE CLIMATE.

NEXT to the physical features of any land, the most important question we can ask in regard to it is of its climate.

In the minds of a great many people there still lingers a trace of the old Roman classification of the world into citizens and barbarians. It lingers, I mean, in a certain geographical sense. There is a prevailing impression, indefinite but widespread, that countries not the birthright of men of European blood must be tropical in their climate. So a friend of mine once cleverly put it, as we sat crouching over a fire on an afternoon toward the end of May in the capital of Japan. If exceptions are recognized in the belief, it is only in favor of those places visited by North Polar expeditions.

Now, to any one who has happened to inhabit one of the lands included in this generalization, — almost as pleasingly loose in its application as is the word Turanian, — the notion has seemed an amusing delusion at certain seasons and a bitter satire at others. To read epistles from well-meaning friends, congratulating you upon the delicious heat you are enjoying, — the very thought of which, they write, contrasts most painfully with their own cold surroundings, — to read these held in hands which threaten momentarily to freeze is not jocose. Your first feeling is one of wicked joy that your friend is as badly treated

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

as you are; your second a still more fiendish one, to answer him in the vein he expects, and so keep him enviously wretched.

The belief is not without some show of excuse. The foreign lands first visited by Europeans were indeed tropical, and the temperate zones they later came to know were so far away from home that exact information about them found difficulty in reaching the mother country; not to mention that the road to them, whether they lay to the north or the south, to this side or the other of the equator, necessarily traversed, in either case, the subtropical belt. But whatever excuses can be made for it, the impression is none the less erroneous.

Perhaps such current expressions as "in those latitudes," "foreign latitudes," and the like, have helped to keep alive the delusion; for familiar phrases go for much toward the shaping and preserving of general opinions. Insensibly the mind comes to ascribe an intrinsic truth to its own formulæ. In this case it was not unnatural that the imagination should seek to clothe Nature herself with a certain strangeness, in order to suit a tale that was strange. The very term "latitude," which should have been earth-wide in signification, came to seem restricted to something peculiar; and the tropical belt, because heard of first, furnished the material for the clothing of the idea.

Now, these phrases were all very well in their day for the purpose for which they were originally employed. When men went abroad to seek for foreign lands rather than foreign peoples, latitudes were the best standards of comparison; for the most marked and obvious differences in Nature linked themselves at once with latitude. Then, again, it was in ships that the early explorers journeyed; and ships, as they had given rise to the idea, helped to perpetuate the expressions. A somewhat parallel case of misleading is to be found in the valuable projection of Mercator, — invaluable for that for which it was

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

invented, and worse than useless when introduced into the teaching of the geography of the land. Every one can remember, when a school-boy, firmly believing that Greenland was considerably bigger than South America; for so it was represented on the map.

But when, in addition to the foreign places themselves, the people living there came to be a subject of interest, the applicability of the criterion ceased. The substitution of the term "longitudes" in place of "latitudes" would have been more to the point; for almost all nations which have risen to greatness have dwelt within a narrow belt of parallels coincident roughly with the temperate zone, and more accurately still with certain limiting isothermal lines. Apparent exceptions, like that of the Aztecs in Mexico, fall really under the rule; for these people inhabited a high plateau, whose climate differed entirely from that of the sea-level at the same parallel. What is true elsewhere is equally true of what we call the semi-civilized nations of the far-East; and for the same reason, — the presence of a degree of cold sufficient to create a stimulus to work, and yet not severe enough to destroy it.

In saying, therefore, that Korea is civilized, we define its climate, and from that follows approximately its latitude. We place it, by inference, not in the tropical, but in the temperate zone; and this is where it lies. Its latitude ranges from $33\frac{1}{4}$ degrees north latitude, — that of the island of Quelpart, the farthest of the great southwestern archipelago, on the south, — to 43 degrees of north latitude, on the north, where the Tu Man Kang bars the Russian advance, and from a little beyond which the town of Vladivostock looks longingly southward to the coveted land and watches its opportunity to spring across. It might — indeed, most certainly would — have done so, had Korea slumbered much longer.

The climate of the country is what its latitude and its

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

position with regard to the continent would lead us to expect; only that the position is here of greater importance than usual in the question. The situation of the peninsula has altered the relation of the winter and summer isotherms more than we should perhaps have predicted.

As we know, the position of a coast, whether it lie on the eastern or western limiting edge of a large body of land, is as great a factor in the matter of climate as is the absolute parallel. Not only is the mean annual isothermal line deflected from the latitude it occupies in the centre of the continent, but the relative positions of the summer and winter isotherms are altered, and the changes on the western side are very different from those on the eastern. This is even more markedly the case with the Asiatic than with the American Continent. We must compare the climate of Korea, then, not with that of Europe, — which it does not in the least resemble, — but rather with that of the eastern seaboard of America. Similar prevailing winds and similar ocean currents tend to the same climatic result. We may therefore say, generally speaking, that the climate varies from one like that of Washington, for the southern part of the peninsula, to one like that of Maine in the extreme north. Like ours, its summer is short and hot, its autumn clear and beautiful, and its winter cold but fair. But there is one season which I have omitted; and I am afraid that when I come to speak of it, it may seem to destroy the resemblance between the two. Its spring is a true spring. No feverish anxiety there to hasten on in the middle of January, as if it feared that it might be late; then a hasty relapse again into winter, finding itself long before time; and then a period of vacillation every other day, until, having frittered away all the time at its disposal, it is obliged to plunge all of a sudden bodily into summer. There is no such weakness, no months of indecision, there. The spring makes its advances slowly but surely, and the trees with their

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

blossoms can count upon it. They open their buds, — the earliest while the snow is still upon the ground, — and break into flower; and they never suffer for the trust they give it.

The Koreans begin their year a month later than we begin ours. Owing to this reckoning and to the steady character of the spring, there is a natural reality in their conventional birth-time of the year. The year begins for man when it begins for Nature; and the earth awakes from her winter's slumber with a blush, for it is in tree-flowers that she shows her return to feeling.

The plum-tree is the first to bloom, — not the edible plum, but that species which is known in Japan as ŭme. By the end of January it begins to blossom, — a pretty pinkish-white flower. It is quite beautiful in itself; and then from being the first, it is specially prized. It is not easy to convey to the Western mind an idea of the mingled love and admiration the far-Oriental lavishes upon it. The feeling is mostly a perversion of what was meant to flow into other channels; but though springing, to a great extent, simply from within, there is in these far-eastern lands, even to the foreign eye, much to call it forth.

Few of the better houses at this season of the year are without a plum-tree, or at least a branch of one. It blossoms in their gardens; but this is not a close enough companionship for their love. It must be where they can constantly see it; so it is taken into the house and blossoms in the room in which its owner spends most of his indoor life, — for, however many rooms may make up his house, there is one which is particularly his dwelling-place by day and by night. Poetry and painting vie with each other in their attempts fittingly to praise the flower. Sonnets innumerable are written in its honor, and have been from dim antiquity. It is the motive or the accessory in pictures without number, and its name is

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

one of the commonest of the flower-names of girls. The glory of the tree vanishes with its flower, for it bears no fruit.

Early in April the cherry-tree comes into bloom; and of all the superb succession of flowering trees and shrubs it is the finest. It is all flower, — one mass of blossoms, — and flower is all that it is, for its fruit is not worthy the name. Nature rarely yields both in perfection from the same tree. With us we are granted the fruit and denied the flower. We may think not. We may admire the apple blossoms, the peach, the pear; but after we have once seen the gorgeous, lavish, spendthrifty manner in which Nature scatters her tree-flowers in eastern Asia, we begin to think that at home we have been robbed.

In Korea the sight is fine, but in Japan it is even finer. It is not that the trees differ. The flora in this respect is practically the same for the two lands, but the social condition of the people is quite different. In Japan, each kind of tree, as its turn brings it round, is made the occasion of a festival. It is an epoch. In masses the people flock to see the sight; and crowds, such as are never to be met with at any other time, collect in those places that are famous for their trees. And yet even with all this tribute of adoration, the beauty is but partially done justice to. The blossoming of the cherry-tree is one of the great events of the year. To see it is a sensation. It carries you away. You feel as if the earth had decked herself for her bridal, and you had somehow been bidden to the wedding. There are several kinds of cherry-trees: some have single flowers, like ours; some double ones; but all are covered thick with the white blossoms, touched ever so faintly with pink. The trees, laden with their masses of light and color, — the two seem one for the delicacy of the tint, — stand out in dazzling contrast with the brilliant blue of the sky; and the ground beneath is white, like snow, with the fallen petals. And underneath this splendid canopy is the passing to and fro of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

pleasure-seeking multitude. What the sight is, may perhaps be judged from the fact that men of naturally slothful habits have been known to get up at frightfully matutinal hours, and then travel several miles, in order to see the trees before the morning's mist has risen from them. Some varieties are earlier than others, and particular places are noted for particular kinds. This week it will be Uyeno; the next, Oji or Mukojima or Koganei. One place of entertainment succeeds another, — a long, continuous, and yet ever-changing fête.

The cherry-blossoms past, the wistaria begins to open its grape-like bunches of flowers. In its turn it becomes the event of the day. Crowds gather in the gardens where it grows, as they did two weeks before at the cherry-trees, and pleasure-parties are made up to go to see it. After the wisteria, comes the tree peony; then the iris. It is one long chain of flowers; and this is spring. It is more of a sight in Japan, because the public is greater, and gardens and parks have been planted on purpose that it may be enjoyed. In Korea there is no public, properly speaking; the people are an unconnected mass of individuals. Collectively they amount to nothing, and singly they are too poor to procure what they would like. Everything is for the official few. In their gardens, but on a small and therefore not nearly so impressive a scale, may be seen the same beauty that commands in Japan an annually recurrent national admiration.

And spring lingers: it is in no hurry to leave a land that seems to have been created for it. The dawn of the year continues where the dawn of the day began. From the end of January till the beginning of June it is spring. And it never goes of its own accord: it is fairly driven out by the summer rains; for from early in June till the middle of July lasts what is called the rainy season. Though not a rainy season proper,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

it is, as it were, a counterpart in a small way of what takes place within the tropics. During this month the sun rarely shines; it is cloudy almost continuously, and nearly every day it rains. The weather is very much like that of our summer storms, only that one storm follows without a break upon the ending of the one before. It stops raining only to gather force to rain again, and the clouds remain the while to signify the rain's intention to return. In cold and gloom the sky weeps for a month the departure of the spring, and the first hot day rarely comes upon you before the middle of July.

Then follow two months when it is hot, — as hot as it is anywhere at any time, except, indeed, in peculiarly favored localities, like the Red Sea; much hotter, for instance, than it is on the equator. And this suggests a common misapprehension about the heat within the tropics. There is a vague general impression that the heat there must be very great. This is, however, a fallacy. Of course, it is warm; but for taking the palm away from the land of its birth there is nothing so deserving as a good July day in New York. The apparent paradox is not difficult of explanation.

The word "tropics" is often used very lightly in popular parlance, as if it meant that belt on the earth's surface which surrounds the equator. Of course, it means nothing of the sort. If we would confine ourselves to the longer expression "within the tropics," it would be better; for the word "tropic" is the name, as the reader is aware, of those two imaginary lines upon the surface of our globe at which the vertical sun at noon seems to turn from travelling northward or southward, as the case may be, and moves backward again toward the equator. The sun then is just as much overhead on the tropic of Cancer, say, twenty-three and a half degrees north, at the summer solstice (this apparent standing still of the sun), as it ever is at the equator, which, be it remembered, does not take place in sum-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

mer, but in spring or autumn. But — and this is the important point in the whole matter — it is much more overhead on the parallel of the tropic, so to speak; for it rises at that season — as by turning a globe the reader will see it must — to the north of east and sets to the north of west. Its path is therefore both longer, and remains more nearly vertical, for the hours on either side of the noon point than ever is the case at the equator; so that for a few days in the middle of summer, such a place as Hong Kong gets more heat than for the same length of time ever falls to the lot of Singapore. The climate naturally shows it. Hong Kong in its hot weather swelters under a temperature unknown at any season at the Straits Settlements. I have purposely chosen these two places for comparison, because they are in other respects pretty similarly situated. Both lie upon islands off a coast, and that coast, in a general way, the same.

Now, as one goes north, the sun rises farther and farther to the north of east, and sets farther and farther to the north of west, on this midsummer day. The day gains in length as it loses in momentary exposure, — that is, in the more or less nearly vertical position of the sun for each instant of time; and these varying elements are so connected as to make the amount of heat received at this time by the north pole actually greater in the proportion of five to four than that received at its most favorably placed season by the equator.[1] The reason that Arctic explorers do not suffer much from it is that it is transitory. The air and other substances do not have time to

[1] A simple integration shows this. The amount of heat received at the equinoxes by the earth's surface at the equator is represented by the formula $2\int_0^{\frac{1}{2}\pi} \sin.\ \theta.\ d\theta$; which gives the value 2. At the pole, at the summer solstice, the amount received is expressed by $\int_0^{\frac{2}{3}\pi} \sin.\ 23\frac{1}{2}°.\ d\theta$; whose value is roughly 2.5. At their respective maxima of exposure to the sun, therefore, the pole receives more heat than the equator in the proportion of 5 to 4. The evident continuity in the value of the more general function, of which these two are particular cases, shows that the maximum for other latitudes increases steadily as we pass from the equator to the pole.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

become thoroughly heated, saturated as it were, and thus aid, themselves, in the heating effect.

We see, then, that such a place as New York does not start so far behind in the race for temperature as we might at first suppose; so near, indeed, that any little accident of physical geographical position is quite enough to render it hotter, at its hottest season, than the rest of the world.

In Korea, then, during July, August, and September, it is hot, at times very hot. The effect is increased by the physical conformation of the land. The narrow valleys that lie among the hills collect all the heat they may, and then have but little opportunity to part with it. They thus succeed in reaching a temperature impossible for places devoid of such protection.

With the autumn comes beautiful weather, and the same gorgeous change of foliage as in North America. The maples die in color, and under the scarlet of their leaves may be seen the same admirers that came to worship the glory of the spring. Red seems peculiarly the tint of coming and departing. We know why it is so at the beginning and the end of the day; we have not yet learnt why it should also be the sign of the birth and death of the year.

By the end of November, in Korea, winter begins to set in; and soon the ponds and the rivers freeze, and the snow falls to bury the year that is past. The temperature descends to a fair degree of cold. During the winter I spent in Söul, it went down to nine degrees above the Fahrenheit zero, and for days together it never rose above the freezing-point night or day. The changes are not very violent; though, on the other hand, the temperature is not peculiarly steady. Slight thaws alternate with cold waves. A keen north wind, that feels as if it had come straight from the Siberian steppes, so icy it seems, drives away the lingering clouds only to reveal their frozen forms still clinging in the rigid grasp of death to the peaks, — the white wraiths of the storm.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Owing to the latitude of Söul, thirty-seven and a half degrees north, the sun's power there, even in midwinter, is so great that the snow at the sea-level never lies deep upon the ground. After a heavy snow-storm, the evening before, it is surprising to those accustomed to more northern latitudes to notice how quickly it vanishes in places exposed to the sun. If it were not for repeated additions, there would be very little even in the depth of winter; and as the season advances and the days lengthen, you may trudge homeward some night through a heavy fall of snow, to find on the next afternoon no trace of it left. You have therefore, almost simultaneously, the coming of snow, like a snow-storm in New York, with a disappearance of it worthy of Virginia; and yet it may be far colder on the day it vanishes than on the day it appeared.

To this fact it is due that we find in Korea so few of the inventions common, in one form or another, to all countries where, during a part of the year, it is cold below freezing. Sleighs do not exist. In the matter of sleds there is certainly in the neighborhood of Söul, about the middle of the country, north and south, nothing but a certain kind in vogue among the fishermen on the ice, which they use to sit on while fishing, and on which afterwards they drag home the result of the day's work. As for skates, the idea is unknown. In fact, beyond the fishermen, above mentioned, the average Korean avoids venturing upon ice in winter as he would into water in summer. The frozen state seems to be just about as awe-inspiring to him as the liquid one is commonly elsewhere.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER IV.

THE COAST.

AN atmosphere is as a garment to a land: it enhances its beauty by partially concealing it. To this land of morning myths Nature has given a most fitting mantle. The atmosphere that envelops the coast, lends it now haze to hide, now mirage to magnify. Both the concealment and the illusion are due to the same cause, — to a certain ocean current.

Along the eastern coast of Asia flows what is called, in Japanese, the Kuro Shiwo, or Black Tide. It is an ocean current similar to the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic seaboard of America. These two, which similarity of position has similarly engendered, are among the largest of ocean rivers. They are, indeed, rivers in that they flow intact through stationary surroundings; but, unlike those on land, their history is not one of gradual accretion, but of repeated separation. It is with the first great loss of the Black Tide that we have now to do. One compact mass, the stream flows northward from the caldron of its birth, till it brings up somewhat abruptly upon the southern end of the Japanese islands. It strikes them so full that a part of it is cut off. The trend of the coast causes the greater portion to keep on northward and eastward, just skirting the land, and continuing on past the Kuriles, Kamchatka, and the Aleutian Isles, to descend the upper American shore. In times past, man has involuntarily used it as a highway. Junks blown off to sea in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

storms have been carried by its force across the ocean; and many a waif has, after its long journey, been cast upon the shores of another continent.

No such distant wandering is destined for the other branch. Turned more directly north, it enters the strait which separates Japan from the peninsula of Korea, in whose midst stand the pair of islands, Tsushima, guarding the approach to the Sea of Japan. This is the end of the unlucky stream. The place is a perfect cul-de-sac. Although it has not the appearance of it on the map, practically there is no exit. Having once wandered in, the stream can only revolve round and round; for the straits between the mainland, Saghalien, Yesso, and the main island, respectively, are but shallow. Not long ago, Mr. Milne informs us, Japan was tied to the great continent; and these breaks in the chain have since been made, due to ocean forces, which have perhaps been aided by the restlessness of the imprisoned current. Itself warm, it is chilled by the reception it meets with at the hands of the northern sea. It cannot escape; it will not mingle. So it leaves the cold water for the more congenial air; and thus for a part of the year we have fog, at another time mirage. During the summer months the coast of the peninsula and the neighboring shores up along Siberia are veiled in mist. As the weather gets colder, the heavy condensed vapor is gradually absorbed by the air and disappears to the eye, while the evaporation from the surface of the water still goes on; and of the land, from having seen nothing at all, we come to see twice as much as really exists.

The character of the coast, however, is such as not to need the magic touch of the air. It is grand of itself; mirage only renders it weird. A bold and hilly country rises, range behind range, till the purple of the mountains is lost in the blue of the sky; while from the southern extremity of the peninsula, halfway up the length of its western side, this mainland is girdled

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

by a fringe of islands. Some are mountains, sunk to their waists in the sea; some are but isolated crags that rise abruptly from the water's edge. All are high, reaching, in places, one or two thousand feet. When doubled by mirage, the effect is comparable only to what we see represented so often in the paintings of the people, — precipices hung in air.

To one approaching Korea from the sea, the first land he will make will be the high hills around the harbor of Pusan; for most of the boats that latterly have begun to run between Korea and her neighbors touch first at that port. Whether the steamers are from Shanghai or Yokohama, they make Nagasaki, in either case, their point of departure; and then a run of from thirteen to sixteen hours takes them across the straits to Pusan, on the southeastern end of the peninsula. The first impression, as the distant streak of blue resolves itself into the semblance of real land, is forbidding enough, — crags which are uninhabitable and mountain-slopes equally tenantless. Rounding one of the latter, which proves to be an island, the steamer opens out a nearly landlocked bay, surrounded almost entirely by hills. At its entrance stand three pinnacles of rock. They look as hard and remorseless as the sea that hurls itself against their bases. Chilling as is the view seaward, to look up the bay is no less desolate. The perpendicular lines of crag have given place to the curves of the hills; but there is nought to suggest the presence of man. Even trees, which seem the nearest approach to the human in a landscape, are wanting. One's first idea of Korea is as of the spirit of desolation made visible.

Turning still, the steamer suddenly brings into view a little knoll, at whose base are grouped some score of houses. They are not so far off but that a glance shows them to be not Korean, but Japanese. It is the Japanese colony of Fusan. It is in some respects a remarkable colony. In the first place, it

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

is the only one that the Japanese have ever had. The spirit of trade — the great colonizing motive-power — is not a strong element in the Japanese character; the Chinese are the English of the far-East. Secondly, it is historic. For centuries it has been a bit of transplanted Japan. Ever since the invasion of the peninsula in 1592, the Japanese have held it almost without a break; it has been a little fortress by itself in an alien land. Yet, though it has lived amidst Korean manners and customs for so long, it has not been in the least affected by them: it is still Japan. Nor have the Koreans, in their turn, been leavened by it. The natives of the neighborhood, impelled a little by the desire to trade, and more by the curiosity for foreign sights, visit it by day, but they return at night to their own town. The only thing they have deigned to acquire has been some knowledge of the Japanese language; so that to-day interpreters from Korean into Japanese are either men from the neighborhood of Fusan or else returned refugees.

The Korean town of Pusan lies about two miles away, round the bay. When you learn to distinguish the thatched roofs of the houses from the brown of the withered grass, it can just be made out from the steamer's anchorage. From Fusan a road leads over the seaward slopes of the hills to it, and you are first made aware of its existence by seeing a procession of distant ghosts slowly winding their way along this path. The white dresses of the Koreans, and their slow decorous movements, lend themselves involuntarily to such spiritualistic hallucination.

From having doubted their actual humanity you will next come to doubt their sex. On going ashore you are at once surrounded by a respectful but expectant crowd. With the men gathered about the landing-place are mingled a number of young and pretty faces. They belong to persons of less stature than the men, similarly clothed but differing from them in being hatless, and in wearing their hair in one long loose braid down the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

back, after the fashion of young girls at a certain age with us. Every stranger has mistaken them for girls, and not a few men-of-war's men have boasted of the impression they have produced upon the fair ones by well-directed attentions. Great has been their subsequent discomfiture, and hearty the raillery of their comrades, when told that the objects of their devotion were only boys; for this manner of wearing the hair is the common practice in boyhood, and simply denotes that the boy is still unmarried. For their want of stature and their pretty faces their youth, not their sex, is responsible; and for their being mistaken for their sisters, the entire absence of visible femininity the cause. As for real women, it is no easy matter to see any. Those of the better class are strictly secluded from their seventh year onward, and the poorer fly at one's approach like startled deer. To the foreigner the first step in the discrimination of sex in Korea is that all that is seen is male.

However well acquainted one may be with China or Japan, his first impression on landing in Korea will be that he stands on *terra incognita*. At first sight, nothing reminds him of that land, only fourteen hours away across the straits, a part of which, indeed, — the islands of Tsushima, — he may still see, by climbing a few hundred feet above the town. He feels that he is on unfamiliar soil. Nor does he feel it more than do the Japanese themselves; and a common sense of isolation begets a mutual feeling of affinity, such as years spent in the home of either people by the other would never induce. Nations, like men, show their most agreeable side when away from home.

Fusan is composed principally of one long street, turning half-way in its course at right angles to itself. The village has taken the form of a carpenter's square, with the bay, or rather two bays, to mark its outside limits, and a steep hill,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

in what would be the inside angle of the square, to bar its extension inland. Down the middle of the main street runs a canal a few feet wide, spanned at intervals by planking. Along its sides are rows of trees. At the outer corner of the square is the knoll from which the town takes its name; for Fusan — in Korean, Pusan — means "kettle mountain," and the name was given the place from a fancied resemblance in this knoll to a kettle upside down. A Japanese temple now crowns the top, and the whole is covered with trees.

The Koreans that lounge about the streets of the settlement, and that may be seen coming and going over the rough hill-path, are itinerants from the Korean Pusan. The same curiosity that prompts any one who comes upon a trail of ants ceaselessly pursuing their journey along a highway of their own, to follow up the line, in order to discover the spot of exodus, tempts the stranger to wander out in search of this human ant-hill, Pusan, and see what it is like; for from the Japanese town it is invisible. The end, to a certain extent, justifies a tramp over anything but a pleasant path; for an hour's walk will show him his first Korean walled town.

After several futile ascents and descents, necessitated by projecting spurs of the hills, the path descends finally to the shore, where on the long sands native craft are being beached to discharge the catch they have just gathered from the stationary nets in the bay, and all about the sand are strewn fish of every description. The beach is the market; and a strolling crowd keep it lively and gay by incessant bargaining and an occasional purchase. While the stranger examines the fish, the crowd examine him. Just off the beach begin the houses, — the outskirts of the town. They are not above ten feet high at the ridgepoles, and seven at the eaves; and the streets are narrow alleys, in keeping with the one-story dwellings. A few hundred yards of winding lanes, enlivened

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

by an occasional hasty scuffle which means that some woman has been surprised into flight by the sight of a stranger, lead to the wall of the town. Seen from without, it is apparently a solid structure of stone; but on mounting to the top, which is done from within, you discover it to be made of earth enclosed by a shell of granite blocks. It is twenty feet on the outside, not more than twelve within, and is crenellated on the outer edge. Between the parapet and the inner edge is a broad walk of beaten earth. Though the height is not great, it is enough to overlook all but the more imposing buildings, such as the magistracy. On both sides are meadows of thatched roof; for the town has grown since the wall was built to protect it. Like a great snake, it can be traced lying in sinuous irregularities around the older part of the town. A gateway — as imposing a building as any in the place itself — gives the road admittance. A stone's-throw within stands the magistracy. Though a low building of one story, it rises above the neighboring roofs, and is second in height only to the gate.

A short distance from the town is another magistracy. It is a collection of buildings surrounded by its own stone wall. In this is a gate similar to the city gate; but outside of the whole, and some little way off from it, is a most singular structure. It is a sort of skeleton gateway, — the scaffolding for a gateway which the architect had thought of building and then, concluding to abandon the attempt, had been too lazy to remove what he had put up in preparation. So it might appear to any one who saw it for the first time; for it stands all alone by itself in the middle of the road, a couple of cross-bars connecting two tall posts. It is akin to the torii of Japan, and is the outer portal to the magistracy. A portal, and yet entirely disconnected with that of which, in one sense, it forms a part, it seems to typify Pusan itself; for you enter at both to find yourself nowhere, after all. At Pusan you are in Korea, and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

yet you are not. Though you might thence travel overland to the capital, practically to reach it the road lies once more by sea; for to travel overland is a wearisome journey of ten days, devoid of all those means of comfort and of locomotion which to a European are a part of the necessaries of life. When the journey by sea is an impossibility, because the port on the western side of the peninsula, the one near Söul, is inaccessible for the ice, Korea becomes once more shut off from the rest of the world.

From Pusan it is a voyage of thirty-six hours, when everything is propitious, to Chemulpo, the port of Inchön on the western coast. If anything goes wrong with either the weather or the vessel, — and such, at the period of which I write, was very frequently the case, — it may take an indefinite time to reach one's destination. (We were comparatively fortunate; we were but two days and a half from port to port.) The coast is but imperfectly charted; and if it comes up to blow or the fog rolls in, navigation at once becomes dangerous, and vessels make for some natural harbor to await a better season. Besides, the greater part of the few steamers that ply there, are not what they might be; and accidents — serious, fortunately, only to time — happen at intervals.

Just as the sun was going to his setting, and the shadows of the hills behind were creeping stealthily out over the town, like giant arms extending to enfold it in the embrace of night, the steamer weighed her anchor, as if hastening to escape, and stole past the gaunt sentinels at the harbor's entrance out into the deep. As she turned the point and began to breast the wind and the sea that rolled in from the southwest, everything changed of a sudden to an ashen gray; and a chill, to the thought as to the senses, took the place of the peaceful quiet of the bay. The sea had lost its color; and the spray, as it dashed up from off the vessel's bows, seemed to heighten

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the cold, hard look of all around. Then all deepened into night.

The next morning we were off the southern end of Korea, amongst the archipelago of islands. A solitary ship, off a still more solitary coast. The Japanese captain, dressed in European clothes, together with the pilot, a man of the same race, slowly paces the bridge, and anxiously watches the islands as they grow from out the deep, the only beacons on an almost unknown coast. Group after group rise into view, like deeper blue dots, upon the blue circle of the horizon, increase in size and distinctness, are passed, and sink again in like fashion in the distance behind.

As soon as one passes Quelpart, the largest of these islands, as also the one farthest to the south, there is a most marked change in the character of the sea. Off Japan and through the Tsúshima Straits, the water is a beautiful blue; but the Yellow Sea, into which we now come, thoroughly deserves its name, yellow being a poetic idealism for the color of mud. The Whang Ho Kiang and the Yang Tse Kiang, besides numerous smaller streams, bring down vast quantities of sand and mud in suspension, the very name of the former river testifying to its peculiarly muddy character. These rivers, from the shallowness of the sea into which they empty, spread out to a vast distance and color the water. To increase the effect, the tides are enormous; and it is no doubt principally to their scourings, sweeping in and out four times a day along a wide expanse of flats, that the result is due. We can notice a kindred effect in the color of the English Channel and in that of the head reaches of the Bay of Fundy, in both of which places the tides are peculiarly high, combined with a shallow depth of water. In the midst of these flats stand innumerable islands. Any one who has seen the Mont St. Michel and its attendant setting of ooze will, by depriving it of man's

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

handiwork and then multiplying it indefinitely, be able to form a very good general idea of the west coast of Korea.

These islands or hills — for, amphibian-like, those nearest the mainland are either, according to the state of the tide — are forbidding when more closely approached. They are really submerged hills, which Time and its follower, Disintegration, have been at work to render bare. In the smaller ones they have succeeded in their process of denudation; and precipitous rocks, devoid of soil, rise from the water's edge like the skeletons of their former selves. So they must look to Korean fancy; for, in poetic metaphor, the people call rocks the bones and soil the flesh of the warm living earth. The larger still have the appearance of mountains, though much has been washed from them by the rain to help make up the ooze around them. A short grass covers them; but of bushes and trees there are almost none. Only along the foot of some of the slopes a clump may now and then be descried; and it invariably betokens a collection of low thatched roofs. The barrenness is to a certain extent a consequence of the soil, but to a much greater degree the result of the need for fuel. As the Government has forbidden the working of the coal-mines, the population is driven to timber, even to twigs, for the means of warmth during the rigorous cold of winter. Its ruthless hand has not spared beauty, nor been stayed by thought. Only superstition has caused it to pause, and that at the very summit of its profanation. All the more conspicuous for their loneliness, two or three trees stand out to view, here and there, upon the very top of a hill. Seen against the brighter background of the sky, they look like silhouettes of solitary vegetation. They would seem to be the last survivors of destruction as it creeps slowly upward. But it is not so. Their position, indeed, but not their inaccessibility, is their safeguard; for they are sacred. They are symbols of a cult which, for no merit

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of its own, has outlived the religions that were planted long after. And so there they stand to-day in grand isolation, singled out from all that once have been, proclaiming a superstition of a far past, like sentinels in sight of one another across the dreary expanse of waters.

Two days out from Pusan found us steaming, like some lost vessel, up the long reaches that were to end at Chemulpo. "The world forgetting, by the world forgot," only a strong faith in human testimony justified the assumption that we were approaching anything. The feeling was heightened by the strange look of both people and land. About me were men clad, as imagination might paint the denizens of another planet, but not such as I had once supposed existed on this; while, on turning to the coast, I seemed to be carried back in geologic time as before I had felt changed in space. Around me lay suggestions of the earlier unformed ages of the earth. Huge porpoise-backed mounds, unsightly because deprived of Nature's covering of trees, and vast plains of mud alternated with stretches of sea. The scene had the desolateness of the early geologic ages.

Especially dreary was the spot on the December day when I first saw it. Over it was spread a leaden canopy of cloud. The weather was cold, and it had begun to snow. The flakes fell softly down and disappeared alike in the heaving water and the hardly more stable ooze; while a few gulls, like uneasy departed spirits, circled endlessly hither and thither, vainly searching for something they never found.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER V.

CHEMULPO.

CHEMULPO is, by nature, a desolate-looking spot. Man has made it more so. It is the port for Söul. To call it the port of Söul would be to dignify it, and belittle the capital out of all proportion. It was formerly a little fishing-hamlet, a few thatched huts nestling in a hollow of a bare hill. It faced neither the sea nor yet the land, but as it were a compromise, — a small island with a corresponding collection of thatched roofs. So like their surroundings are these twin villages, that one has to look carefully for them to discover them. It would wellnigh be possible to sail by and report the land uninhabited. Especially true is this in winter when grass and thatch are the same dull brown; and there are almost no trees to break the uniform monotony.

The place is not a harbor. In this region of islands and mud-flats a harbor is an impossibility. It is a roadstead, and an uncommonly distant roadstead at that. Out beyond several islands, utterly cut off not only from any view of the town, but from the slightest suggestion of the presence of man, lie the one or two foreign vessels which may at the moment be anchored off the place. It is a voyage in itself to come ashore.

On the seaward slope of the same hill has sprung up the mushroom Japanese colony. It contains but one European-built house, which, paradoxically enough, is the Japanese

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

consulate. It is painted white. Its size and its color make it a landmark far out to sea, the only sign at a distance that one is not approaching primitive desolation.

The place lies at the mouth of the river Han, — if, indeed, a stream whose current loses itself gradually in the ebb and flow of the sea for eighty miles above the point where it enters the ocean, and which then, long after it should have parted with its identity, still persists in wandering aimlessly about among innumerable islands, can be said to have a mouth. The village is not far from the nearest point on the sea-coast to the capital, and it is the nearest point of the sea-coast to the sea. Usually the port of any city fulfils but one condition of proximity. Chemulpo has to try to satisfy two. Even as it is, the steamers lie more than a mile out. Owing to the character of the land, isolated hills and level valleys between, and to the great rise and fall of the tides, the coast may be said to be amphibious. At high water, islands like huge lazy porpoises dot the surface of the sea; when the tide is out, they change their element, and assume the rôle of mountains in a peaty district. The height of the rise is between twenty and thirty feet; but this is enough to lay the strand bare for miles, so that, at low water, the sea would seem to have left never to return. What were large bays have become glistening ooze, and the ocean itself can only be made out on the verge of the horizon.

The Koreans have never been a maritime people. The disposition of the race forbade intercourse with their neighbors by sea as well as by land, and the piratical craft of these same neighbors destroyed any domestic coast-trade that sprang up, and compelled the Koreans to retreat, snail-like, yet closer into their shell. Nature certainly offered little to tempt them out. Owing to the great rise of the tides, wharves are wellnigh impossibilities, even supposing the idea of such contrivances ever entered the heads of the people, which, from collateral evidence,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

seems very improbable. They would therefore have been obliged either to moor at an incredible distance from shore or wait for high water to beach their boats. In the first case, it would have been necessary to wait for high tide to get out to their boats; and in the second, to wait for a like opportunity to get out in them, for the unstable ooze which is left bare much resembles a quicksand. Of the two evils they chose the latter. They thus became dependent upon the moving of the waters, which rose favorably either for landing or leaving practically but once a day. If they got off, they found great difficulty in getting back, and if they returned, they could not get off again; so that, in their case, both the will was weak and the way wanting, and they stayed at home. The result is that to-day the eastern half of the Yellow Sea is as deserted as the coast looks desolate. Only now and then one comes across a junk carrying supplies to an island village, or bound fishing. Instead of the fleets of huge square sails, as in Chinese or Japanese waters, there is but an occasional wanderer, like some belated traveller hastening to be gone. Two masts are the rule; and the latteen sails are laced horizontally, like the Chinese, to slender strips of bamboo, which, with the unavoidable vertical seams, give the effect of a patchwork of a dirty yellow. This peculiarity in the lacing is one of the most obvious differences between Japanese and Chinese junks, for in the one case the lines of the sails run vertically, in the other horizontally. However, though belonging to the same general style of boat, the two so differ in detail that they can be distinguished almost as far away as they can be seen. The Japanese are the more beautiful.

Duly respecting other causes, one may draw inferences of a nation's devotion to any pursuit by the wealth or poverty of the nomenclature on the subject. Both the Japanese and the Korean tongues testify to their original inland origin by the paucity of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

nautical names. Boats are classed, with touching simplicity, as "boats" and "little boats." No discrimination is paid to the means of propulsion; and as for form, the one kind differs from the other only as an adult specimen differs from the young. The stern of these craft is high, and the bow low. At a distance the effect is to reverse the apparent motion to our eyes, accustomed to the opposite construction. There is, however, a good reason for the seeming inversion. Their build is not to enable them to battle with the seas, — few of which they are supposed to encounter, — but to give the helmsman a better view.

As for the Korean sailors, they hold in appearance a middle position between the Japanese and our own, — that is, they neither resemble a set of old women nor do they look like tars; for, of all incongruous associations, a Japanese junk and its crew are the oddest. With their heads tied up in blue and white cotton cloths, the hardy company of mariners, engaged in sipping tea and jabbering, suggest to the stranger some afternoon party of grannies accidentally blown off to sea. But there is plenty of pluck underneath the checked handkerchiefs. The Korean sailors look for all the world like their relatives on land, only a trifle dirtier.

The meaning of the name "Chemulpo" is "various articles river bank." It would be interesting to discover whence came this name. There is a Korean tradition in regard to it, which, however, smacks of an *ex post facto* flavor. A thousand years ago, so it runs, it was prophesied that the spot would eventually rise to be what it now hopes soon to become, the foreign trading-port of Korea. The prophecy included the neighboring magistracy of Inchön, whose characters mean "the river of the love of humanity." Owing to its being the magistracy, it is the place mentioned in the treaties. Like many another figure-head, it dozes in indolent seclusion, wraps itself in the name of office, and leaves the work to be done

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

by inconspicuous Chemulpo. It lies about five miles away over the hills in a little valley of its own, and it is almost too small and insignificant to presume to its title. It rejoices, however, in a multitude of names, — not names that really differ from one another, but something after the familiar Elizabeth, Elsie, Betsey, and Bess fashion, so to designate it for want of any more accurate simile. The Chinese character with which the name is written is uniformly the same, but the expressions of it vary. Both Koreans and Japanese borrowed from China, many centuries since, her system of ideographs, and attempted to imitate their pronunciation. So radically different, however, were the tongues of the borrowers, that they twisted out of all recognizable sound what they took. Under this metamorphosing process the town becomes either Inchön, Genchuan, or Jinsen, according as it comes from Korean, Chinese, or Japanese lips. You may hear it in all three forms within a few minutes.

Chemulpo itself bears a very strong resemblance to a mushroom Western village. It is in the earliest stages of the hobbledehoy period, when its wants far outstrip its capabilities. A few shanties hastily thrown up shelter temporarily the small Japanese colony and the handful of Europeans in the customs service. The only house worthy the name is the Japanese consulate. It stands with its outlying houses in an enclosure formed by a high palisade; and patrols are kept constantly on duty, for it is meant for defence as well as for habitation. It is but eighteen months since the Japanese legation fought its way from Söul to the sea.[1] Its dead sleep now on the neighboring hillside, and the white stones that mark their resting-places stand out to the eye from among the short brown grass.

[1] The first retreat in July, 1882, is meant. When this was written, it was little thought that there would be a second so soon.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

From Chemulpo to Söul is a distance of twenty-seven miles. So it is called. It is as accurate as estimates repeatedly quoted but never verified by measurement are likely to be. Like the enchanted valley it has so long been, the city lies quite truly over the hills and far away. And yet all these ascents and descents profit one nothing; for Söul itself, though utterly secluded, withdrawn even from a distant suggestion of the sea, lies but a few feet above tide-water. The road thither — one of the main thoroughfares of the kingdom, as it has suddenly become — is only a broad bridle-path. Horses, chairs, foot-passengers, and bulls of burden share it. The great mass of the people walk; officials either ride on the ponies of the country or are carried in palanquins. The latter is the commoner means of transportation.

The ordinary Korean chair, or palanquin, is not comfortable to European legs. Luxurious as it sounds, and pompous and dignified as it looks from the outside, it is a hollow sham. It owes its name only to analogy. It is not a chair at all, but a square box on poles. It is an empty cube, two feet and a half each way. The box, however, is fitted up to cheat the occupant into the belief that he is in a walking room. Little windows look out in front and on either side, each fitted with its tiny pair of sliding screens. Into these are let still tinier panes of glass, two inches square, so that even in cold weather the traveller may not be quite cut off from the outer world, should he care to look. But such are their size and position that he must peer on purpose, or he sees nothing. Commonly one feels very much as if at sea out of sight of land. The swinging motion helps this delusion. Two men carry the box, and divide the burden between their arms and backs by means of a yoke with straps that fit over the ends of the poles to which the box is fastened. This contrivance not only brings their whole bodies into play, but affords a pleasing

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

security to the carried; for jostles are by no means infrequent in the narrow crowded streets, and the chair might be, and often is, knocked out of the coolies' hands. At such times, thanks to the straps, nothing worse than a sudden jerk is the consequence. On journeys two other men accompany as a relief. Each of them is armed with a long stick. It is their duty at intervals to insert this under the chair and lift it up to ease their fellows. By this means the unavoidable rests are less frequent. As no warning of the change of portage is given, the effect is as unpleasant as it is unexpected. The contrast to the ordinary motion is very much like that due to coming suddenly on paving-stones in a carriage after a smooth bit of road. When the rest does come, it is an even chance whether carriers or carried are the more tired. European legs have been used for so many generations to walk with, not to sit upon, that where they are not considered as entitled to consideration, comfort is out of the question.

The scenery between Chemulpo and Söul one might describe as wanting. It is, perhaps, as dreary as any in Korea; and this not so much from the great underlying features of the land as for a dearth of pleasing details. We may find difficulty in believing, after Clifford, that space is corrugated; but any one looking upon this portion of Korea would realize that the earth certainly can become so. A sheet of paper soaked in water and then suffered to dry spontaneously will furnish an excellent example of the profile of the land, for the surface of the earth there looks as if at some past geologic epoch it had been crumpled. Range after range of hills necessitates continual ascents, to be rewarded only by immediate descents on the other side. Expectancy is balked by the certainty of a prospect to come exactly similar to the one which has been left behind. Now, these ranges might be very picturesque were they well wooded, but they are not; and in this bareness lies the un-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

H. M. THE KING OF KOREA.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

attractiveness of the scenery, — it being a treeless region, and one deprived, principally by man, of Nature's covering. Above are hills covered with short brown grass and occasional patches of young pine; below is a vast checker-board of rice-fields. The whole landscape wears a dull sombre brown hue, relieved in winter only by the white of the ice and snow. In the summer time the rice shoots and the wild flowers give it something of beauty, but when these are wanting it is mournfully colorless. To one coming from Japan, the contrast is most striking. Where color is so essentially a part of any view that the very name for landscape embodies it, it is no wonder that the few Japanese wanderers hither miss their lovely land; for their word "keshiki" ("scenery") means, analytically, "landscape color," and where thoughts are turned more to Nature than to man in admiration, it may be translated, not inappropriately, "couleur locale."

The country, though in no sense densely populated, is, after all, not so sparsely inhabited as one at first sight imagines. The houses are deceptive in both size and color. There are several villages scattered along the line of the road, and many more a little distance from it; but it passes through no large towns. This is because it is a new road. Its surroundings have not yet had time to grow up to its own importance.

Another feature of the country is the absence of barriers. Generally speaking, there are no stone walls, fences, or other obtruding marks of personal exclusiveness. Only in immediate connection with the houses themselves are hedges or walls built, and then only to enclose a bit of land peculiarly domestic. For the rest, the eye roams at will. This absence of boundary-lines is due not to the fact that the Koreans do not divide their land individually, but rather that the land to be divided is of such a kind that prominent marks of division are not only unnecessary, but impossible; for rice is the principal

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

agricultural product, and most of the land under cultivation is laid out in rice-fields. As these are under water for the greater part of the year, the barriers between one man's land and his neighbors' subserve the double purpose of division lines and causeways of approach.

The roads in Korea are of the poorest. They hardly deserve so fine a title. They are simply tracks. They were not made; they grew. At least they have the appearance of having done so, and certainly no labor is ever bestowed upon them after they are once started. But this is quite in keeping with Korean customs. In the peninsula nothing is ever repaired.

Though the roads are not much of a comfort on the journey, care is taken that the traveller shall not miss the one he wants; for they are thoughtfully provided with sign-posts. A certain figurative suggestiveness is universally accorded to the sign-post. It is granted a certain personification, that it may seem the more naturally and vividly to convey its information. We are all of us familiar with the conventional hand that with stern inflexibility indicates the road we ought to take, but a sign-post with a face is peculiar to Korea. To come upon one of these mute and motionless guides suddenly on turning a corner is somewhat startling. The face, though unfortunately grotesque, is a portrait. It is the portrait of a gentleman or of a notorious malefactor; for accounts differ, and the portrait does not explain the character of the original. He lived, according to Korean indefiniteness, a thousand years ago. Some say that he was a famous general who gave his attention to opening up the country, and instituted an improved system of roads throughout the land, especially in out-of-the-way districts (for the eastern provinces were at that time trackless), and that his effigy was taken for the sign-posts, to commemorate his work, — an admirable hint for redeeming from utter worthlessness some

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of our uglier public statues. Others affirm that he was a celebrated criminal, as bad as he could be; and they go so far in evidence as to narrate his particular crimes. To deter others from following in his footsteps, they add, his likeness was placed at all the cross-roads. There is, thus, some difference of opinion as to his moral character, though the general verdict seems to be that he is guilty. But everybody knows his name, which is Chang Sun. On the lower part of the post, which will pass for his body, are the characters that represent his name, and below them are painted the necessary itineraries.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER VI.

THE JOURNEY UP TO SÖUL.

To travel with another, while it halves the seeming length of a journey, shortens at the same time the road to that other's character. The first day on Korean ground, dependent, as perforce you must be, for attendants, if not companions, upon the men of the land, will disclose to you one of the most salient of the national characteristics. This is an insatiable appetite.

With the native means of locomotion, the journey from Chemulpo to Söul takes a full day. Bound from the sea-coast up, it is specially important to start betimes, as the city's gates are closed at nightfall, and any one reaching them too late must stay without. Disagreeable as it is anywhere to arrive after dark, here the precaution to avoid doing so becomes a necessity to any arriving at all. In view of this, therefore, and of the fact that, being December, the days were at their shortest, and the time at our disposal reduced to its minimum, it was imperative to leave early. Everything had been made ready the evening before, and there was no reason why we should not set out at a respectable hour in the morning.

So I thought as I fell off to sleep, and so I remembered to have argued as memory struggled back in the morning. This induced me to get up.

But I had reckoned without my Koreans; and, unfortunately, we were not together. The Japanese consul had kindly

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

made me his guest, not because he was Japanese, but rather because he was not, — at least, in what prompted the invitation, his mode of life, — for he possessed the only European house in the settlement. This was the occasion; the deeper cause lay in his great kindness and hospitality, which were charmingly combined with diplomatic astuteness and *savoir faire*.[1] The Koreans who were to accompany me to the capital had quarters in the native town. They were under the direction of a colonel in the army and a returned refugee. The latter was neither personally nor politically an outcast, but simply a man with a history, — one which, as he told it to me later, brought back to memory the stories of the "Arabian Nights." The minister himself had gone up the day before, to report to his Majesty the result of his mission. He was to send down palanquins for us, as none were to be procured at Chemulpo. The palanquins had safely arrived, but still the Koreans tarried. As they failed to come, word was sent to remind them that time does not stand still. The answer, both in letter and in spirit, strikingly resembled, as it appeared in the light of after events, the advertised "immediate despatch" of vessels about to put to sea. To judge from the reply, we were already off; and yet, somehow, we did not go. The language lends itself easily to such pleasing delusions. One hour, two hours, three hours, passed by, not without frequent requests sent to the Koreans to hurry matters. At last the cause of the delay came out: the escort were waiting to dine.

The average Korean does not eat that he may live, but lives that he may eat. This view of life is never more painfully apparent than when one is about to set out on a journey. After

[1] In the Japanese system, the diplomatic service and the consular service are not rigidly separated, as is the case with most European countries. Japan is like the United States in this, but fortunately unlike them in that her representatives abroad are men trained to the position. The system, in fact, resembles that recently adopted by France. Korea has not yet reached the point of having any system at all.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

everything is in readiness, and any other people would be actually on the road, the Koreans sit down to a slight collation. The uncertainties of travel add, to their minds, a further inducement to so generally precautionary a measure. The consciousness that they are thus sure of one good meal and that they may not get another, sharpens an appetite that by nature needs no whetting. For such special cause is never in the least important to the act. The idea that eating can be looked upon as a necessary evil is foreign to their conceptions of things; as they practise it, the act is usually unnecessary and invariably considered good. To most Koreans it is always meal-time.

Finally, toward the middle of the day, they appeared, — I am afraid their repast had been unduly hurried, — and we started off amid the farewells of the kindly consulate gathered in force on the steps. Leaving with joy the holes and pitfalls which may eventually grow into streets, but which are now only dangerous gaps between the shanties that cling to the side of the hill, the caravan struck into the path. It was a motley assembly in *personnel* and equipage. The company consisted of a Chinaman, a Japanese, several Koreans, and myself. The means of conveyance were no less various. We had a horse, some palanquins, called by courtesy chairs, and two jinrikisha, — the last a species of large baby-carriage drawn by a man. The jinrikisha were a foreign importation; we had just brought them over from Japan. They were among the first to arrive in the country; and great things were expected of them by the Koreans, who had learned to like them abroad. But the roads in the peninsula are altogether too rough — even the best of them — for wheels, and the native coolies are perfectly innocent of the way to handle the vehicles. We had not gone a mile when one of the two broke down, and spilt the Colonel, who had been trying to look as if he enjoyed an uninterrupted succession of jolts. The unfortunate jinrikisha was

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

smashed beyond the possibility of mending on the spot, and had to be abandoned. Then the horse went a great deal faster than the chairs, though his pace was not such as to alarm the most timid, and disappeared in the distance ahead. To my own lot fell one of the palanquins, — or, to use a more descriptive word, boxes, — and what with the freezing cold and the cramped position I soon found it intolerable, and took to walking; whereupon my coolies, left to themselves, abused their liberty, and were not even to be seen, so far had they lagged behind, when I bethought me to vary discomforts by entering it again.

Amid this general wreck there was but one thing that remained praiseworthy. As might have been expected, this was the commissariat. From Japan the Koreans had brought over much beer, which, with kerosene and matches, are the products of Western civilization that first strike the native fancy. Before leaving Chemulpo they had taken the precaution to lash a couple of bottles of the beer into each chair. These gave a well-regulated, almost military look to the column when closely scanned; but then the leader of the party was a colonel in the army. This admirable commissariat unfortunately availed nothing; for in losing one's chair, one lost of necessity its contents, and to the loneliness of desertion was added the misery of being cut off from one's base of supplies.

As the reader has gathered from the description of the scenery, there was a certain monotony about it which turned one's attention all the more to his fellow-travellers along the highway. They would have arrested it in any case. From white dots in the distance, they developed, on a nearer approach, into figures clad in bluish-white tunics suggestive of dressing-gowns, black halo hats, and large goggle spectacles. There were plenty of them; and the greater number walked, only the occasional few riding on horses or being carried in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

palanquins like our own. Otherwise they represented all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest. Their long flowing robes suited well the natural dignified slowness of their behavior. Whether it is the quiet temperament that fashioned the clothes, or the clothes that subdued any natural excitability in the people, is a problem resembling that of progenital priority between the egg and the hen. At any rate, the two are now in complete accord.

To suppose, however, either from the temperament or the dress, that the Koreans are not a people who travel, would be a mistake. Although far-Orientals are slow in their actions, as compared even with the European middle classes, not to speak of energetic and nervous Americans, they are, in no sense, people that stay at home. Travel in China, Korea, or Japan surpasses that in olden times in Europe; and even in these days of travelling facilities, rapid transit, and studied accommodation, the practice is probably quite as much in vogue in the far-East, if we reckon it — as of course we should, where it is the spirit of travelling we are considering — from the time spent, and not the distance traversed.

To what causes this ant-like activity is due it is not easy to determine, especially in Korea. In Japan the pilgrims furnish the largest contingent to the travelling class; but the pilgrimage itself is more of an excuse than an end. The journey is quite as much a pleasurable excursion as a religious devotion. The latter gives, as it were, a sanction to what would otherwise be looked upon, however enjoyable it might be, as an unpardonable waste of time; for it is principally the working middle classes who undertake it. In fact, most of the pilgrims belong to so poor a class that they could not afford to travel were the journey at their own expense. They enroll themselves as members of associations to which they annually contribute their mites, and these enable a certain

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

number to make the pilgrimage every year. A different set are sent out the next summer; and so the list is gone through, until eventually each member has had his journey.

But in Korea the travelling public is differently constituted. You cannot take it for granted that those you meet are the picturesque transmutation of the force of faith into the energy of action. On the contrary, you see here the result of purely secular causes, and not a reflection, however dimmed, of deeds which shall profit *in sæcula sæculorum*. Nor are the white-robed wanderers principally pedlers, though such exist. In addition to itinerant hucksters that thrive by perambulating, the world over, there is a large class in Korea who journey either for pleasure or for some other reason than trade upon the road. If we define a traveller *par excellence* as a man who is singular enough to journey for his good and not his goods, a large proportion of those we meet would still have a right to the name. In the first place, the Koreans are passionately fond of scenery. The possessions of each province in this respect are not only thoroughly known, but they are systematically classified and catalogued. A grove of trees is celebrated here, the precipices of a mountain there, the moonlight falling on a pool of water in a third spot, and so on. Such places people come from long distances to see. Then, again, every year it is fitting to visit the tombs of one's ancestors; and all who can afford to make the journey do so. Annually, also, the literary examination is held at the capital, and students gather from all parts of the country to attend it. Several hundreds in this way journey as many tens of hundreds of miles, and then return again, the greater part unsuccessful in the contest, to their homes, to try their luck once more another year. Lastly, among the official class there is a good deal of promiscuous travelling hither and thither, either to get a place, or to keep one's place, or to

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

wring money out of some one else who holds a place by threatening to defame and oust him unless he pays.

The travel differs in one respect from that among us. It is nearly all within the limits of its own country. Each of the three nations — Japan, Korea, and China — is intensely patriotic, and cordially dislikes and despises the others. Consequently, in olden times there was little desire to urge men abroad. Besides, they were, as a rule, too poor to go. To journey to foreign lands was an unusual occurrence until Western nations forced themselves upon the people, and by showing them a little of the luxury of Western ways, gave them the desire to learn more. Nevertheless, such international journeys have been undertaken; and it is almost proven that most of what we call the civilization of China was imported from the Altaic table-lands by Chinese travellers. In fact, as has been elsewhere pointed out, the more we learn of the past the greater we discover international intercourse to have been among the old-time nations of the world, in spite of the drawbacks with which it was attended. But such journeys were, after all, sporadic, and did not affect the general restriction in the countries in question.

In consequence of this spirit of travel, the roads present a lively appearance; and often in the distance a highway can better be made out by the people who are strung along it than by any other indication.

The custom also affords a foreigner an excellent opportunity for the study of physiognomy; and it is surprising to note, under such conditions, how quickly you pass from the stage in which all faces look alike to that in which you would never mistake one man for his neighbor, though both might be to you unknown.

The speed of a company is unfortunately, like the strength of a chain, dependent upon its weakest member. The halts of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the palanquin-bearers reduced ours to an average which, under the circumstances, became little short of agonizing. Were we to arrive that night or not? And if not, what? For, on inquiry, I learnt that such a thing as an inn did not exist. While there was light there was hope; and with hope, vexation of spirit. It was almost a relief when the setting of the sun took away all doubt with him. The gloom of the improbable settled into the darkness of certainty. We were not going to reach Söul that evening.

Experience may be rough in its teachings, but it impresses its lessons. I learnt more about wayside lodging in general that night than much study in some comfortable arm-chair before a good fire could possibly have yielded me. To begin with, inns, I discovered, are unknown in Korea. This may appear surprising at first; but the dearth is explained when we consider for a moment the constitution of society there. The reason lies in the absence of a middle class; for it is to its existence that we owe a patronage which has evoked not only such simple inventions as inns, but those more complex contrivances with which we make life easy to-day in our own part of the world. When that class which as individuals is powerless, but as a class is strong, wants a thing, it gets it by the economic force of numbers. Conveniences are provided for the many, which the wealth of the few fails to procure. Now, an inn (one of the simplest and therefore the earliest of such productions) is both impossible and unnecessary in a land where men are divided only into two great classes, — the upper ten thousand, on the one hand, and the lower ten millions, on the other. The officials are but a handful in number, but they are Korea; while the rest help only to swell the number of the population. The officials form an oligarchy; and when they travel they quarter themselves as a matter of course upon their *confrères*, and put up at the various magistracies which lie along their route. They thus

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

get the best the land can give, and the help of the magistrates' band to provide amusement, and so promote digestion. Exclusion from the privileged few engenders a feeling of common brotherhood among the masses, so that when they journey each after his kind is offered hospitality by his neighbor. The wayfarer carries with him his food, which means principally his rice, and his lodging is kindly given him by the first house at which he is minded to stop.

In keeping, as it were, with the military character of the Colonel, we were not going to adopt either of these modes exactly, but something which savored slightly of seizure. There was a house, the Koreans said, about an hour's march ahead, which they had in mind. This they intended to make their own for the night. The weary hour slowly dragged along, till at last we stopped at what we were told was the place. I crawled out of my box much numbed, and entered the enclosure. Some women were tending what stood apparently for the kitchen fire, in a side room. So I sauntered in; whereupon they incontinently fled, and this in spite of the circumspect manner in which I flattered myself I had looked at everything else while intent upon them. It is not only stars which can best be observed by looking a little off them; and the edge of the retina is more sensitive than the middle for other than purely astronomical purposes. The precaution was not appreciated. They regarded me as a sort of tiger, I was told, — flattering, but fatal.

On reaching the guest-room we found it already occupied by some interpreters of Chinese, on their way to Chemulpo. At this sad discovery the Colonel was seized with a violent fit of repentance. He at once began to reproach himself to me in no measured terms for the pass matters had reached. He said he was bad, very bad; that it was all his fault. His contrition was touching. I was much moved, though quite convinced

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

that, on the return of a like opportunity to dine, he would exactly repeat his dilatoriness of the morning. However, repentance, if not efficacious in the present, is to a certain extent an effacing of the past; and far-Eastern politeness finds words much cheaper than deeds. At all critical points of that disastrous evening he repeated his would-be expiatory formula. It finally took to itself the similitude of a propitiatory prayer to inexorable fate. Apparently it had as little effect on destiny as it had on me. However, as in duty bound, I protested the entire groundlessness of his only too evidently justified self-accusations.

After the inevitable slight collation which filled up the awkward gap of waiting while the coolies rested, we pushed on; for there was another house, it appeared, which the escort considered suitable for seizure some distance farther ahead. It was getting every minute colder and colder, and by this time had grown pitch-dark; for the night was cloudy.

We halted a moment to light our lanterns. In Korea all wanderers abroad at night are required by law to be furnished with lanterns, which, as they swing to and fro by the motion of the men who carry them, look like fireflies flitting about in the darkness. A tallow candle is enclosed in a white paper screen, and this is dangled from the hand by a string. Sometimes the lanterns are given names, — an honor which poetry is fond of bestowing upon almost everything in the far-East. By this distinguished attention their lustre has been much diminished; for the names are painted in large black characters, through which no light can possibly pass. My own lantern was significantly entitled "The Bright Moon;" and never was moon more needed than over that particularly rough road on a cloudy night. It took three characters to paint this name; but they tried to make up in meaning for what they obscured in light, for they represented no less than two moons

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and a sun. To express the idea of brightness, the Chinese, and copying them the Koreans, have found it necessary to outdo Nature. She considers one luminary at a time sufficient for purposes of illumination, but to their minds it requires both at once to indicate true brilliancy. So bold a conception as a conjunction of the sun with the full moon did not deter them in the least.

With the darkness and the lanterns, the caravan took on an even more picturesque appearance than it had worn by day. The shouts of the men, their occasional stumbles, and the little earth-born moons flitting from place to place, as they were specially needed, looking in the distance like so many will-o'-the-wisps, made up a scene as delightfully fantastic as the march would otherwise have seemed uncomfortable; and the sights and sounds came to me in the interior of a box swaying in its motion like a ship at sea.

In spite of the rugs with which I vainly endeavored to keep warm my legs crossed in front of me, my feet ached with the cold, and I began seriously to consider how much longer the thing would be endurable, when suddenly the swinging motion ceased, and I was violently set down upon the ground. There is at times in the acts of palanquin-bearers a resolute abruptness which is simply startling; it is only equalled by their more usual automatic inflexibility of purpose, — a dogged determination that is beyond praise as it is also quite deaf to expostulation. They are somewhat like well-regulated machines which, once set going, it is impossible to stop, and, once stopped, take forever to wind up again. In this case, for once, their actions coincided in intent, if not in execution, with my desires; and I willingly emerged with some difficulty, feet foremost, and then began to tramp rapidly up and down, in the hope that circulation might be coaxed into returning.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

In the mean time any lingering scruples on the part of the owner, any reluctance to receive us that he undoubtedly felt, were being calmly set aside, and we were asked to enter. Passing through a doorway in a wall of mud, we found ourselves in the courtyard. The night was so dark that the buildings which surrounded it could hardly be made out against the sky. In the midst of this cavernous enclosure several figures were bustling about, revealed in silhouette by a lurid glow that came apparently out of a hole in the ground. Into this hole the figures were busily engaged in stuffing brushwood. The subterranean crater and its attendant demons were all that was to be seen. It argued for the warmth of Korean hospitality, but it vividly suggested the jaws of some infernal region. It was called, in Korean, not inappropriately, "the mouth." It turned out to be, inoffensively enough, the opening to the khan, a sort of underground furnace, whose flues take the place of basement to a house, and are made of such materials — stone and wood — that the floor above, once heated, is kept warm during the night. The men were at that moment heating it up for us. The room on top of it was in this case exceedingly small, — a mere little cell, about eight feet square, and having for apertures only a small door and a tiny hole completely covered over with oil-paper, so that very little light at any time, and absolutely no air, could enter through it.

Supper, such as it was to be, was preparing; and in the mean time my young Japanese and I squatted on the floor of the cell, — for there are no chairs in a Korean house, — wrapped ourselves in our robes, and, longing for the earth beneath to heat, already felt a trifle warmer by anticipation, but for any material change waited for a long time in vain. At last, after repeatedly feeling carefully all parts of the flooring, we discovered a slight increase in the temperature

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of one corner. From this corner, the one nearest to the fire without, the change slowly spread till every part of the oil-paper, which lined the stone beneath, had become warm to the touch. From the floor the heat was communicated to the air, and we began to throw aside our wraps, one by one; and by the time supper was over and we were ready to go to sleep, the room had become quite comfortable. Relying upon things remaining as they were while we slept, and ignorant of the character of the demon we had evoked, we dozed off; but oblivion was short-lived. It was not long before I awoke with a start to find myself in an atmosphere like the inside of a furnace. The heat was stifling. I scrambled to the door, threw it open, and tried to breathe; but the doorway was very small, and instead of leading into the open air, it gave exit into an anteroom open only on one side, so that the ventilation in consequence was almost nothing; and the heat from below, instead of abating, increased. I threw off as much of what was still left of my clothing as I dared, with the air outside many degrees below the freezing-point, and, so freed, again courted sleep, but all to no purpose. I was painfully awake. Then I tried science, and endeavored to estimate dispassionately the comparative discomforts of intense heat and extreme cold under my exceptionally favorable opportunity for experimentally contrasting the two within so short a time; but feeling overwhelmed philosophy. I could only cursorily note the much greater sensitiveness, as a thermometer, of the foreign over the native body; for was it not from Korean kindness that I was at the moment profiting? Perhaps even this generalization was hasty; for though the Koreans were sleeping quietly enough in some neighboring rooms, their comfort had not been so particularly looked to as mine. I was the victim of the too complete fulfilment of my own previous desires; for I myself had unwisely

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

urged them to feed bountifully the flame. Then I yielded to misery. I reflected upon the exceeding vanity of human wishes. I moralized upon the universal truth of our obtaining in this world, if we only know how to wait, all we can desire, and sometimes much more. And then I fervently desired that for once, at least, the more might mercifully become less, and I tried to imagine I detected symptoms of cooling off. For some time I failed even in deceiving myself. At last my longings were fulfilled. Owing to the men whose duty it was to stuff in the brushwood, having long since fallen asleep, and the fire for want of fresh fuel having now been extinct for some hours, the constant radiation into the air and thence through the doorway ultimately produced its effect; and, the room becoming once more habitable, I fell asleep.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER VII.

THE JOURNEY UP TO SÖUL. — THE SECOND DAY.

To one reflecting on the utter contrast between the feelings that enwrap us with the deepening gloom of night and those we inherit with the birth of the new day, it would almost occur to doubt a continuous personal identity. In the gloaming our sensitive side, our feelings, our passions, seem to awake to a strength, an acuteness, that had lain dormant during the light. For joy or for sorrow, the heart measures then all things by itself. But with the morn awakes the thrill of being. We feel the throb of the life within us that answers to the pulse of the life without. Action in thought has paled before the thought of action, and we forget our world of fancy in our fancy for the world.

I stepped out into the clear blue winter's morning. It is not altogether a conceit that the hour to see the Land of the Morning Calm is that from which it took its name. Of the two paintings in colors which Nature grants us every day, at the opening and the closing of it, — for all the rest is, in her chiaroscuro, blue and green, — the sunsets in the far-East are rarely fine. As for the sunrises, whenever I have by accident witnessed Aurora arise from her dewy couch, I have been so overcome with her roseate blush of surprised confusion that I felt like an impertinent intruder, who would better have waited until he was expected by the sun. But the early morning hours in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Korea are certainly very beautiful. The landscape lies, as it were, in a trance. A misty haze gives a dreamy look to the distance, and the morning seems to tarry till the middle of the day.

As for the house, — a work of man, — it had lost a good deal of its picturesqueness of the night before, seen now under the scrutinizing light of day, and stood revealed, I must confess, in much plainness and more dirt. However, as our object was to leave it as soon as might be, appearances did not signify. As for the cell, I will do it the justice to say that it compared very favorably in size with its fellows of the same rank in life, as I involuntarily discovered in the course of the next few hours.

A Japanese cook, skilled to a certain extent in the art of European cookery, did the best he could under the circumstances to give us a breakfast. He had been imported on purpose. To live continuously upon native dishes anywhere in the far-East is to almost all foreigners disagreeable, not to say injurious. To banquet after that fashion occasionally is one thing, and to adopt it as a steady form of diet a very different matter. In the former case you get, in the first place, the best of its kind; and then, if one dish does not happen to please you, and you are hungry, you eat all the more of another, so that you end, as a rule, by eating too much rather than too little. After a little familiarizing practice, a Japanese feast, even to a European palate, is delicious. But to eat thus for a livelihood, not *en amateur*, is no such enjoyable affair. Even in Japan, where the experiment is tried under more favorable conditions than in China, and far more favorable than in Korea, it is not easy. To start with, it is usually when travelling in the interior that it is attempted; and the inns, though as good of their kind in Japan as anywhere else in the world, are of course wanting in the luxury of the city restaurants. To

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

European culinary ideas of essentials, the situation is one grand negation. When we say that the cow is never milked and rarely killed, and that yeast is unknown, we express the facts; but one must have made the experiment to realize fully what is meant. It means no milk, no butter, no cheese, no bread, and in the country often no meat, and sometimes even, as a last deprivation, no eggs. Life resolves itself into this all-embracing question: To which of the two great classes of mankind does the traveller belong, — to those who like rice or to those who do not? If he belongs to the first class, he can just manage to get a living; if to the second, he is hopelessly lost. As a passing tribute most justly due, I may add that no food I have ever seen is so artistic and beautiful to look at as the Japanese.

Korean cooking, judged by our standards, and also by as nearly impartial criteria as possible, is better than the Japanese. The Japanese admit it themselves. It is much more substantial. Unlike the latter, the Koreans eat a great deal of meat, though in both countries rice is, after all, the staple of subsistence, and more than takes the place of wheat with us. But enough. I am becoming like unto a Korean myself, and practise on paper what I have just held up to opprobrium. I reserve what I have to say for a more appropriate occasion, for all this has been suggested by the lightest possible of breakfasts.

For the moment the important matter was not so much what we ate as how often we ate it; for every stopping-place was turned by the Koreans into an extempore buffet. When we had time, we retreated into a room, like the cell of the night before; when we had not, we took our refreshment *al fresco:* but we always ate.

The excuse for stopping was that the palanquin-bearers might rest. This they were obliged to do every mile or so,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

involuntarily furnishing us with a practical exact comparison of the superior advantages of wheels; for in Japan, where the kuruma men (the men who wheel the jinrikisha) draw the same weight these others carry, and at much greater speed, — twice as fast, on the average, which means four times the exertion, — they stop to rest only every five miles. This would give us about one to twenty for the ratio of fatigue of the two means of transport. When they do halt, rice and tea are all they take, in either land.

One never regrets the land of the rising sun in the land of the risen more than when it becomes a question of motion. In lieu of one of the most delightful means of conveyance, the jinrikisha, — which, with the hansom cab, is in some sort the poetry of transport, — one finds himself a prey to that instrument of torture, the native box; for there is not a single wheel in Korea. The thing remains uninvented. That veritable round of pleasure, as it is to many, has no existence there. But even to one who looks upon it with impartial vision, simply as a means of shortening distance and devoid of itinerary delight, not to have it at all is as great a discomfort as it is interesting as a phenomenon.

Here are a people who have never reached that stage in practical physics where the immense use of the wheel as a factor in transportation is discovered, — indeed, have not even reached the point where the thing is invented at all. We have not here so much as the Church and State phase of its introduction; for commonly before it comes to be honored as an article of use, it is used as an article of honor. It is met with first in ceremonials, religious or royal. It figures as a car of state, in which now a king, now an effigy of the gods, is dragged slowly along in the pageant of procession. As such it existed in Japan. And yet so little real acquaintance with its peculiar properties does this betoken, that when a few years ago the first wheeled vehicle for

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

general use was invented, and by a European too, the Japanese called it simply a "wheel." In revenge, as it were, for the neglect, the invention has thriven exceedingly throughout the far-East, — this "man-power car," as the Chinese call it. One finds it as far from its birthplace as Singapore, where it is drawn, comically enough, by the lazy though mercenary Chinaman, and yet, thus handicapped, competes with horse and carriage. With one of these vehicles still struggling along with us over the uneven path, we emerged, after a couple of hours' journey, upon the top of a short rise, and upon a view quite out of proportion to the size of the hillock that gave it. Beginning at our feet, and occupying not only the foreground but all the middle distance, lay spread out before us an immense plain of sand. It would have seemed limitless but for the ranges of mountains that rose beyond. Scattered over its surface could be seen black and white dots in irregular files, going and coming like trains of ants. They were figures walking, of men and bulls of burden, and marked the highway to the capital. The main road, never very well defined at best, coming upon the vast sand tract, is utterly lost, and separates into filaments as a stream in falling is scattered into drops; and the various paths, continued by custom as they were created by caprice, divide at will to unite again at the ferry at the further end. For the plain is the bed of the river Han in the spring-time of its fulness; at all other seasons the stream follows a much narrower pathway. It cannot be made out across the sand; for it clings to the edge of the bluffs as if fearing to lose itself in the sameness of the waste, and its banks on the nearer side are sufficient to hide it from view. In winter it lies gathered into a deep sullen stream, half asleep under its coverlid of ice.

It is called at this point the river Han, but this is not the name it bears throughout its length. Korean rivers remind

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

one of the oft remarried. The same stream bears a different name for every few miles of its course. *Née* Miss Coldstream up among the mountains, she no sooner gets into the world than she changes her name for another given her by the land she blesses. As she flows on, time and distance tear her from her love, but only to wed her to another. And so it goes on, a new name taking the place of the old, until at last she too disappears into her Nirvana, the sea.

"Han" means "Chinese." It is the name of that dynasty which had the greatest influence on Korea, and the one under which she first conformed herself to Chinese thought. The Chinese, among their other self-given appellatives, have always been prone to call themselves after their ruling dynasty. Most naturally, therefore, other nations, on making their acquaintance, learned to call them by the name they gave themselves; and then, getting accustomed to it, continued its use long after the Chinese had given it up, — a curious instance, indeed, of being more conservative than the most conservative people in the world. It was in this way that we came to get our name for the country, — China, — from the Tsin dynasty. The Malays so mispronounced what they heard; and the first Europeans, imitating them, still further mangled it. With Korea the case was slightly different. Being a neighbor, and also for centuries a tributary, she has never since the first been behind the age. Her people use "Han" as we might have used "Tudor" or "Hanoverian" in speaking of anything English, if only the ruling house in Great Britain had given its cognomen to the land. The name, therefore, carries on its face a history and a date. The date is of five hundred years ago; and the history will be better told when I come to speak of Söul itself, with whose history the name of the river is closely bound up.

After a most wearisome toil over the sand, which seemed to the muscles even more endless than it had looked to the eye,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and just as I had finally made up my mind to the belief that a small creek at the place where we had entered the expanse must have been the river, — for we had now got almost under the cliffs, and there seemed no room left for a river, — we came upon it. It was a sheet of ice, through which, in one spot, a passage had been cut for the ferry-boats, and the dark green of the water took on a more brilliant color from being reflected from the pale blue transparent ice. The river was evidently quite deep at this point, and the banks descended somewhat abruptly, even on the side away from the cliffs. Although it is seventy miles from this point by the river itself to the sea, the tide is felt many miles farther still up-stream. This does not preclude the fact of a strong current when the tide is out, as the rise is so great at the river's mouth. The ferry-boats were large scows, flat-bottomed, into which we all got, — men, palanquins, jinrikisha, horses, and bulls. It was so primitive a method as to be eminently democratic. There are places in the world where one would not be over-desirous of crossing with a domestic menagerie; but here the beasts were as quiet and well-behaved as any of the other passengers. It speaks much for one side of the character of the people, that they have so humanizing an influence upon the brute creation. This is a point in which we should do well to copy the manners of the far-East. Our very nomenclature points to a vicious state of things. We talk about breaking in a horse, and we find sometimes a good deal of difficulty in doing so. We might as well talk of breaking a creeper we were trying to train on a wall. We allow the animal to grow up in as nearly wild a state as possible, and then, all of a sudden, at our caprice, he is expected to become tame. No wonder coercion is necessary, and no wonder it rarely wholly succeeds. Throughout the far-East both horses and cattle — which means, for beasts of burden, in Japan both cows and bulls, in Korea only the latter — grow

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

RIVER SUBURBS OF SÖUL.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

up to labor from their birth, in anticipation long before it becomes a fact, and are treated with gentleness all their lives. In Japan, colts always run beside their dams on transport journeys; and thus, from the moment they can amble, begin their apprenticeship by learning the roads. As they get a little bigger, a wisp of straw is tied to their backs to simulate a burden, and give them the feeling without the fatigue. Then, as they become stronger still, a real load, proportioned to their youth, is put upon them, which is gradually increased as they are able to bear it, until they attain adult stature and adult habits together.

On the further side of the ferry begin what may be called the suburbs of the city of Söul, — a series of detached villages, gradually consolidating as you approach the city proper. They are the river-ports of the capital. What little commerce by sea is carried on, passes through them. The banks of the river are lined with the masts of the native craft, like a thicket of bamboo; and when a fair wind gives them a chance, they spread their sails and sweep slowly down the river.

The distance from here to the city gates is about one and a half miles. Leaving the river banks, we toiled slowly upward, now through narrow lanes between the low mud walls of the houses, — for few of them here belong to the better class, — now on raised paths between the rice-fields. Men and boys collected in knots, and stared curiously at the passing procession. Though almost hidden from view in the inside of our itinerant boxes, some lynx-eyed loiterer among the crowd spied the one strange figure within and passed the word to his fellows. The less curious only stopped in their walk and turned slowly round, as if on pivots, their eyes remaining fixed on the moving sight; while the more inquisitive and audacious made no scruple to bend down and peer in, sometimes almost thrusting their heads inside the box itself. In spite of being thus a prey

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to curiosity, their demeanor was dignified, much more so than would have been true in Japan, and slightly better even than in China; and though they differed in expression somewhat, I cannot say that I think them either more inquisitive or ruder than is the case at home.

The trail gradually became steeper, entered a defile, and passing through a cut in the hills emerged upon other suburbs more densely populated than those below. The travel increased, the houses thickened; we turned a corner, and the great walled city of Korea lay spread out at our feet.

I have seen sights as beautiful, as strange, before; but I never beheld anything that so completely realized the fancies of my boyish dreams as what I stood gazing upon then. There they all lay spread out before me as if conjured up to life, — the imaginations of the time when, as a lad, my thoughts sped away from the pages of the "Arabian Nights" to the dreamy Orient. In front of me rose the south gate, — by name, "The Gate of Everlasting Ceremony," — one of the eight clasps of the city's girdle. On either hand stretched a crenellated wall, encircling as with an arm the spot it loved. Protected within, nestling to it for safety from without, huddled the low one-storied houses, — a sea of roofs, some tiled, some thatched. I seemed to recognize the very spot where the princess of my youth was let over the wall and made good her escape. I saw the house where the robbers rendezvoused on the night before the deed. The men I descried walking about, bore the look of those with whose lives the old tales had made me familiar. It was all there before me. It was all real, and I was myself an actor in the scene.

Entranced, oblivious, I was at last roused from my reverie by a voice at my side begging me to enter my palanquin; for it was highly undignified, it pleaded, to walk where one could

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

be observed. I acquiesced; and as I stepped inside, felt as if the act was in some sort an entrance to the life of which it unavoidably shut out the vision.

We descended, a few hundred yards, into the thick of the throng, and amid the bustle of pedestrians, palanquins, and bulls of burden, — the ebb and flow of the tide of Korean life, — were carried through the southern gateway of Söul.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENTRY INTO SÖUL.

ONCE through the gate, I found myself in the midst of one of the main thoroughfares of the city. The street was thronged. Men in crowds, clad in their white-flowing robes, were slowly passing to and fro. There was the appearance of being busy, without any of its hurry. The greater number were moving, but their motions were slow and dignified. There was bustle, too, after its kind, yet all without speed. , Bulls of burden plodded along in the centre of the road; while every now and then some horse with his rider ambled by, giving to the whole, by contrast, a seeming dash of liveliness. Pedestrians journeyed more particularly on the sides, yet there were plenty of them in the middle; nor was there any line of demarcation between the two kinds of travel, — no sidewalk to separate man from beast. One level breadth, the street stretched from booth to booth. Only just as it touched the houses, was there any break in its uniformity. By the side of these ran a narrow ditch, half gutter, half moat. The affair is probably related to both ideas. It is now certainly used as a gutter, and it was in all probability descended from a species of ancestral moat; for both here and in Japan, where the same thing exists, it has very much the look of one. This gutter was hidden from view, in the street through which we were being carried, by the rows of booths which occupied the side of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

highway; for, wide as the street looked now, it was, in fact, much wider still. Nor was it so crooked as it appeared. This effect, again, was due to the booths. These booths were for the greater part small open-air shops. As they were as large as the houses, or nearly so, and were permanent, not temporary structures, it was not till some time afterwards that I learnt that they were only intruders. Each stood by itself, and without the slightest regard to the position of its neighbors. The only rule seemed to be that they should not encroach too far upon the thoroughfare. The highway was very much like a river with a superabundance of islands in it, and the current kept the centre of the stream clear. This trespassing upon the public domain is common to most of the wider streets. They were left so broad, originally, that the people deemed them a waste of space, and have appropriated a part of them to individual uses. In ordinary times the practice has been no hindrance to travel; for the street is really sufficient for its purposes, as it is. But every now and then the king decides upon a promenade, and then there is no room for the royal procession. On such occasions the booths are all taken away, and the street swept and garnished of the artificially grown fungus. The next day they all make their appearance again, as if nothing had happened to disturb them. A short time ago, a minister, imbued with the spirit of reform, issued an edict abolishing the century-sanctioned squatters. But the measure was so unpopular that it had to be revoked. Even in so downtrodden a people as the despotically ruled Koreans there was still enough of humanity left to resent being made tidy. Who has not felt the same intense aversion to having his littered room put in order for him?

Meanwhile we went on and on, until it seemed to me that the city was interminable. That the view I got of it was through the tiny windows of a box, did not tend to diminish its apparent

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

size. Besides, within the box was the old discomfort, — cold and cramp; and I will confess that in my then state of mind the sight of the inhabitants did not afford me nearly so much pleasure as a glimpse of me seemed to give them. At last, after a couple of miles of street, — as I afterwards discovered the distance to be, — we turned sharply to the left, passed through a gateway, traversed a courtyard, passed under another gateway, and entering a second courtyard were deposited on the ground.

The long journey was ended. I stood within the threshold of what had been prepared for me as my home, on this the other side of our globe.

But though I had crossed two thresholds already, I was destined to pass over several more, wind in and out through a labyrinth of buildings, and finally ascend a short flight of steps before I was at last ushered into a handsome room, in which I was invited to sit down. The request was meant, too, in European fashion; for, on looking about, I saw foreign chairs and a table. These, it afterwards appeared, were given a short time before to his Majesty, and had been sent from the palace to furnish the house. The escort then produced a box of European biscuit, and opened some beer. Everybody gave me a warm welcome, but no fire. I sat, smiled, and shivered. My good hosts were to all appearances insensible to cold. Later, on donning their dress, I discovered the reason. Of course, tea was served to us at once, and the subterranean oven was immediately kindled; but it was a long time before I could swallow the one for its heat, or feel the effects of the other for the want of it.

The sliding-doors, being negligently left open, contributed nothing to an increase in the temperature of the room. When I began to get the reins of household government into my own hands, on the following day, I suggested that they should be

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

kept shut. Those appointed to see to my comfort replied that they would do all in their power to have it so, but that they very much doubted their ability to succeed; for the servants, they said, were not in the habit of paying the subject any attention, and it would be impossible to train them to it. It is, at times, a disheartening truth that doors in Korea are made rather for the purpose of being opened than shut; and that servants are servants only in name.

House-warming (here most literally applied) well begun, I was conducted over the rambling collection of houses which was to be mine as long as I chose to remain in it. It was a set of buildings so connected as to give the idea of a suite of rooms seen from within and a suite of houses looked at from without. It was known as the Guest-house of the Foreign Office. This was a recent title. Before this it had belonged in turn to various Koreans; among the last, to Min, the present court favorite. It had almost as many gardens and courts as it had buildings, and one might easily have lost himself while still strictly within the limits of his own dwelling. As to the whole compound, of which it formed the northeastern corner, there was so much of it that simply to enumerate the parts would be an unpardonable presumption upon the reader's patience. By the time I had mastered its intricacies, I had learnt the rest of Söul pretty well by heart.

As for the interior, it was furnished partly from royal and Foreign Office loans, and partly from native attempts to copy foreign descriptions. Besides the chairs and tables above-mentioned, there were some wooden wash-stands, made in Korea, — the hasty inventions of genius. Then there was my bedstead. It might, with more propriety, be described as a bed-instead. It was a rectangular box, made of pasteboard and thin strips of wood, about a foot high. On this was spread a futon, or quilt, upon which I laid my sheets and blankets. These hybrids

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

were the welcome to those diplomatists whom the opening of the Hermit Land had brought to Söul.

In my tour of inspection I came across another hybrid, — a most singular production. It was a painting on one of the walls. It purported to be a circular opening, to give, there on the flat wall, a vista into student land. It represented the shelves of a bookcase, its compartments filled with the helps to learning. In one were some Korean books, not all rigidly upright, but leaning against one another as if overcome by the weight of the wisdom they contained; in another, brushes in marble stands; in a third, the ink-slabs; and so on. Truly, an *experimentum horribile in corpore vili.* It was evidently the *chef-d'œuvre* of some artist who had made a voyage to Shanghai and, becoming enamoured of European art, had tried to reproduce its worst variety, prostituting the details of his daily life in the attempt. It was more than a relief to turn to the native flower-pictures on the opposite door.

With the exception of the few pieces of furniture, the house was still in pure Korean garb; and, for a Korean house, it was a very rich one. There were scattered through it the usual painted scenes and painted panels. The interior of the particular house which constituted my sitting-room was especially handsome. The whole of one end of it was covered with a picture representing a flock of wild geese alighting. A circular opening, closed with sliding screens, — not an uncommon form of aperture, — connected with the rest of the suite; and on these sliding screens were two paintings, — an owl in the moonlight on the inner side, and a sort of triumph of a Korean Galatea on the outer.

The makeshifts of furniture seemed like intruders, they looked so out of place with their surroundings; yet they were the foundations upon which the best of native intentions was to rear my domestic happiness. The desire was great, but the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

means, to our thinking, scanty; for the servants were as incompetent as the appliances were wanting. One's every-day routine is commonly considered sacred, probably from being too dull to tell. It is a secret which we jealously guard, because we fondly believe that to be distinctive of ourselves which a moment's thought would teach us to be the common heirloom of mankind. But in this case the situation had in it something original. The mode was not a routine, but an experiment. It was neither Korean simplicity nor European luxury. It was a sort of cross between the two, — one peculiar to the time and place, — which, in its exact details, will probably never be repeated. I may be said to have lived on inventions of native ingenuity, and to have tasted dishes which, on the part of the cook, were experiments justified only by success; for he was as new to the ingredients as I was myself. He was forever getting hold of something strange, and trying his hand on it; and I must say his talent was equal to the emergency. As I have said, he was a Nagasaki man, whom the Koreans had brought over for me from Japan. He proved to be a jewel. At first he seemed homesick, and inquired anxiously how long it would be before we sailed. But the Jap is wily. He was eager for departure, not that he might return to his native land, but because he had conceived the ambitious project of founding the first foreign restaurant in Söul. But he never volunteered this to me, and only acknowledged the intention when directly taxed with it, on the occasion of bidding me good-by at the sea-coast, months after, though he was about to stay behind in Korea for the purpose. I had learnt the fact from one who had made him offers for the future, which the man had refused. So I left him at Chemulpo. Whether he carried out his scheme, and whether, if he did, he survived the massacres of the next December, I never heard. But he was a good servant to me.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

All the other servants were Korean. There were so many of them that I never so much as took the pains to learn the names of more than one or two; and I never was sure of their exact number.

Details of one's household arrangements sound sadly out of place in a description of the charmed valley of Rasselas. There is something almost belittling in our modern conveniences. As for the feebler minds in a community, they actually worship these expressions of the mind, its images of wood and stone, firmly believing that they are thus showing their superior nineteenth-century civilization. One sometimes wonders how far some of those who affect them the most patronizingly, would get, if left to their own unaided devices to originate. On the other hand, there is a certain grandeur in the simplicity of the life of an Oriental. He almost rises above the body by neglecting to occupy himself with its momentary comforts. Except, perhaps, for his peculiar fondness for eating, the Korean is no exception to the general rule. However large his house, he is content to inhabit but one room. He sleeps in it at night; he eats, studies, and lives there by day. Thick quilts, upon which he and his visitors squat, cover a part of the oil-paper floor; and at one end, facing the entrance, is a low table, eight inches high and not much wider or broader, that holds his writing materials. For his life centres upon his brush: it is to him the medium of expression of both those arts in which alone he lives, — painting and poetry. His walls are hung with pictures, and his floor littered with books and rolls of writing; for he is always *in petto*, if not in fact, at once artist and poet.

Two functionaries were appointed to look after me. One of these lived in a part of the suite of houses. He was a colonel in the army, my old friend of the escort. His business was to act as head of the household and officer in charge

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of the treasury. He was as good and kind a soul as ever walked this earth, and very quiet and deliberate. He seemed to radiate a mild glow of content whenever he came in to see me. The other was one of the secretaries of the Foreign Office. His duty consisted in periodically visiting me, — once a day on the average, — discovering what I might want beyond what lay at hand, and seeing to its fulfilling. The Sa Kwan — such was his title — was a most celebrated folk-lorist. He was admirably adapted to his temporary office, for he was a born entertainer. In any other land he would have been a diner-out. The stories he could tell and the legends he knew would fill a volume by themselves. Superstition had consecrated him one of her high-priests. He was a consummate Korean mythologist, except that he believed what he narrated.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER IX.

A WALLED CITY.

THE name "Söul" means simply "capital." There is nothing very original in this name. It lacks even the trifling merit of spontaneity. Though the word is pure Korean, the idea is borrowed. It is an imitation of the Chinese assumption of peerlessness.

To an inhabitant of the Middle Kingdom, there is nothing to be compared, in dignity or importance, with his own land. The very name he gave it betrays the feeling. He himself stood at the centre, all else upon the outskirts. Pekin and Nankin were to him "the northern and southern capitals," in all the dignity of simplicity, because to him they had no peers. In copying, therefore, the customs of China, the Koreans thought it fine to ape its pomp. What the Chinese had taken for granted, they must needs assume. They had not the blindness of self-conceit to plead, for their own model was but too evidently their superior. The Japanese did the same. They were even more ludicrously illogical in their behavior; for they did not so much as clothe the idea in native garb, and thus give it at least the semblance of originality. Tokio and Saikio, "the eastern and western capitals," are not only borrowed in thought, but the very expressions are mispronounced Chinese. Thus their desire to seem as great prevented them from ever seeming greater; for, in lowering their aim to copy a title, they necessarily lost all inducement to surpass it.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Söul is the name by which the capital is commonly known; but there is another which even more marks an intellectual dependence upon China in the past. This will be better given and explained when we shall have glanced at the situation of the city.

The site of the city of Söul is very striking. An amphitheatre of high peaks almost completely encloses a small circular valley two to three miles across. In this little valley, thus cut off by Nature from the rest of the world, stands the capital of the Hermit Land. Round about towers the circle of hills, whose slopes on the one side seem placed to give panoramas of the life at their feet, while on the other they form a barrier against the intrusion of the outer world. Their bases rise with considerable abruptness from the little stretch of level ground, and their summits are fringed with crags and pinnacles that continue still to defy the levelling forces at work around them. The nakedness of the land — characteristic of this part of Korea — here has a touch of grandeur in it, and the bare granite rocks are all the more imposing for being destitute of vegetation. The highest peak of all is called, in Korean, "The Three peaked Mountain." But the French named it better when, in 1866, on the occasion of their warlike demonstration against Korea, they had it as a beacon before them on their journey up the river. They called it "The Mountain of the Cock's-comb," as its jagged peaks flushed red in the first rays of the rising sun, and, like its namesake, seemed to awake before the rest of the world to tell of the new day to the valley still slumbering in the mist. Its exact height is not known, for it has never been measured; but all that there is of it is seen, which is so rarely the case with mountains, — for the valley itself, whence you view it, is almost on a level with the sea. In winter it is draped in snow; for its peaks are so sharp that it is only in places that the snow can find a lodging

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and glisten here and there in silvery streaks against the grayer rock. Upon its slopes tigers are said to abound, and leopards certainly exist. Its foot-hills are composed principally of a sort of sand, and support only a stunted species of pine, which grows as sparsely as it grows small. The formation of these foot-hills is most curious. They resemble ridges in the sand of some sea-beach which is tilted at a considerable angle. They are due partly to natural formation and partly to the washing out of the rains. On considering such a mountain-chain, — the common type in this part of Korea, — you cannot help thinking of some past great passion of the earth which has burnt itself out and left behind only a superbly grand monument of ashes.

Nearer to the city, resting like the pinnacle of some supporting buttress upon the foot of the Cock's-comb, is the North Hill; and opposite it, across the amphitheatre, rises the South Mountain. The former is eleven hundred, the latter eight hundred, feet above the houses. Both are wooded to their summits, — the South Mountain heavily, the North Hill only scantily, — and both are equally untenanted by man.

So striking a situation is not the result of accident. The city of Söul is a monument to the last dynastic revolution in Korea. On the overthrow of the then ruling house, it was founded by the successful insurgent as the capital for his new line. Each dynasty in Korea has had its own capital, much as a private individual would possess his own house. The usurper's first care, therefore, after seating himself on the vacant throne, was to move this throne to a new spot. He came by his new dignity in some sort accidentally. He was a general by the name of Tai Jo, and on the occasion of one of the many invasions by the Chinese, was sent to repel the invaders. Realizing the futility of the attempt, he summoned a council of war, and announced his intention of treating with

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the enemy and then returning home. He did so; and this led, not unnaturally, to a breach between him and the king, which ended in his deposing his Majesty and reigning in his stead.

For Korean national interests the success of the so-called patriot was most unfortunate. Right as his judgment may have been in regarding the result of a war with China as disastrous to his country, and wise as it undoubtedly was to make what terms he could, his subsequent wholesale adoption of Chinese customs was suicidal. He made of his country not only a tributary of China, but her intellectual slave; for at this time swept in that deluge of Confucianism which has swamped the land to this day. For centuries, indeed, Korea had borrowed, not one thing but many, from the court at Pekin; but now everything had to be modelled after foreign thought. The results were even more far-reaching, as we shall see later, than Tai Jo could possibly have foreseen or even hoped.

Dazzled by the brilliancy of the dynasty which had then just begun its reign in China, called for its greatness the Ming, or "Bright," he did not hesitate to perpetuate, by the names he chose, his unbounded admiration. To his capital fell the first badge of Sinicomania. He called it Han Yang, or "The Sunshine of China;" and such, in both fact and feeling, he meant it to be. To do this, he selected, in the first place, a spot which Nature herself had fortified, and then he set himself to add to Nature's work. Along the very summit of the mountains he built a wall. Here, unfortunately for his Chinese predilections, the sarcasm of destiny willed that he should perforce follow a Tartar custom. Very possibly he was ignorant that it was such. The wall was of the same kind, indeed, as those which surround all large Chinese cities, and has its most famous example in the so-called Great Wall of China. But in spite of a most natural inference, the Great Wall of China is not Chinese. To surround

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

one's cities or one's country with walls is not a Chinese idea. It was a practice brought in by the conquering Tartar hordes. To them are due the hundreds of miles of barrier that defend the Middle Kingdom on the north. They built these colossal ramparts to keep out their own kinsmen, lest the latter should follow in their footsteps, and deprive them in their turn of what they had won.

The wall of Söul is imposing in itself; in position, it is wellnigh matchless. In building it, difficulty was ignored and height forgotten. From whatever point you gaze, within the city or without, it is one of the most striking features of a most striking landscape. Rising steadily from the south gate, it climbs the mountain to its very top, and now dips, now rises, as it follows the irregularities of the summit. At one time it disappears behind some nearer spur, and then again comes into view higher still on a projecting ridge. It falls to meet the northeast gate, at the summit of a pass, descending, apparently, only because it must, and starts steeply up again to the high peaks of the Cock's-comb. There it winds in and out, now lost, now reappearing, till distance merges it with the mountain's mass. Like some great python, it lies coiled about the city, stretched in lazy slumber along the very highest points, — over peaks where it can, along passes where it must.

From without, the wall looks formidable enough. It appears to be a solid mass of masonry. In truth, like all these walls, it is a shell of granite blocks enclosing earth. Wherever the ground is level, its height, except for its outside parapet, is the same on both sides. But in places where a steep descent offers an opportunity, the falling away of the ground is taken advantage of, and the wall gains in height on the outer side as much as is rendered unnecessary on the inner. The wall is crenellated along its outer edge by a parapet, and the embrasures and loopholes give it at a little distance the appearance,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to modern vision, of a train of cars. Behind the parapet runs a broad pathway of beaten earth, to wander along which is by far the loveliest walk in the city. Like everything else, the wall is sadly out of repair, and loses yearly in strength what it gains in picturesqueness. As you stroll along its top, you come, on the inner edge, upon great chasms that yawn obstructingly at your feet, where some block has given way, and the rains have washed out a gully that falls away toward the town. Great trees in the neighboring gardens raise their heads above the wall, and send out protecting branches to shield it from the sun. Destruction has not as yet overtaken the outer edge, because ruin has been stayed by man. The path itself now rises, now falls, turns here to the left hand, and there sweeps round in a grand curve to the right as it follows the wall in its endless twistings and turnings; while below lies spread out the city on the one side, and on the other is a sheer descent to the level of the plain.

At irregular intervals stand the eight gates. In theory they stand at the cardinal points and their half-way divisions. Practically, they stand where they may. They are as imposing as they are important; and they are among the finest buildings in the city, unless it be contended that they are outside it. For each, though connected with the wall, is, in truth, a building in itself. They resemble houses raised on perforated foundations. So much so, indeed, that as you approach one of them from the top of the wall, you would imagine that you stood on a level with the ground before some house of the better class. You almost forget that underneath you is a solid arch of stone, till looking down you catch sight of the crowd perpetually swallowed up on the one side, and disgorged again on the other. Fitting into this arch, that from above seems a tunnel, are massive wooden gates, four inches thick, sheathed with iron.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

These gateways have names in keeping with their importance. The west gate is called "The Gate of Bright Amiability;" the south gate, "The Gate of High Ceremony;" and the east gate, "The Gate of Elevated Humanity." The various gates differ in size, the east and south gates being much the largest. Some of the gates, too, are consecrated to particular uses. The southwest gate is the gate of criminals; and the southeast one, the gate of corpses. A criminal condemned to be beheaded is always taken outside the city for the execution, and the procession invariably passes out through the southwest gate. To pass out by any other gate would be to defile that gate. The same is the case with the southeast gate for the dead. Only the body of a dead king may be borne through any other. This gate is also called "The Gate of Drainage," because the river flows out beside it. Lastly, the north gate stands high upon the Cock's-comb. It is always kept shut, except at such times as it may be needed as a means of escape for his Majesty; for this purpose alone is it used.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER X.

THE WATCH-FIRES ON THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

IF you should chance to be abroad in the streets of Söul in the gloaming, that lingering farewell of the day that is gone, your eyes, as they followed your thoughts from the gloom of the highway to the fading glory in heaven, would surely rest upon the towering form of Nam San, or the South Mountain. Dark, mighty, mysterious in the twilight, its mass stands out in bold relief against the southern sky. In this light it seems fairly to overhang the city, as if about to fall upon and cover by night what it has guarded by day. Instinctively you watch it as it slowly disappears into the growing darkness of the sky around. Just as it is lost in the gloom, and your look, freed from the spell, returns to the street, and a shudder creeps over you to find that all has become suddenly so dark, four little stars flash out where the top of the mountain lay a moment before. Poised so high in the heavens, they might well be the light from other worlds. They are the watch-fires on Nam San, — the nightly sign to the capital that all is well.

Stars they look to be; bonfires they really are. And the word is the true symbol of their meaning. They are lighted, not as warnings of danger, but as signs that throughout Korea all is security and peace. For fifteen minutes they burn there to tell Söul of the message from the provinces, and then they vanish again into the night.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The system of which they are the final link in the chain extends throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is a sort of light telegraphy. On prominent heights along the entire sea-coast and across the northern land-frontier of the kingdom are distributed cairns for bonfires. They gird the land like a cordon of sentries. Within sight of these, to take up and transmit the message they send every night, are posted others on the tops of neighboring hills; and so they succeed each other, one hill telling the next, till the news reaches the central point of each province. From these centres the message is sent along in like manner from point to point, on towards Söul, till at last all are received together upon the top of the South Mountain.

To telegraph good or bad news, as the case may be, there is an elaborate code of signals. On the summit of Nam San are five cairns. In times of peace, four only of these are lighted; and each of the four, respectively, represents two out of the eight provinces into which Korea is divided. As peace is fortunately the normal state, the system in this case is the simplest possible. The danger-signals are complicated, so complicated that to give a careful account of them here would be useless. We should be making an exposition of the signal service of the Korean War Department. An example or two will serve as a sufficient illustration. If, for instance, an enemy makes his appearance off a certain province, say Chullado, an extra bonfire is built close to the main one that represents the province of Chullado, and to its right, its left side being allotted to the use of the other province which it represents. Then, again, in times of danger other bonfires are lighted above the first in number, according to the imminence of the danger, — one when the enemy are observed off the coast or near the frontier, two when they are about to cross it or disembark, three when they have done so, and four when the fighting

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

has actually begun. As I never saw them lighted, I leave to the reader the difficult task of understanding their possible disposition. The system is carefully expounded in Korean books on the subject.

In the day-time the cairns themselves, even when you know where to look, can barely be made out from the city, — from the plain, it would be more exact to say; for they lie, in fact, within the city's wall. Although they are separated from the mass of houses by the whole mountain-side, which is covered with forest, they are nevertheless a more integral part of Söul than the densely settled suburbs that nestle to her outside the gates. For the city's wall runs directly over the middle of the mountain; it climbs by a series of steps — so steep is the profile of the rise — to the summit, tops a sharp ridge, and descends again in the same fashion on the other side. Taken in connection with the mountain itself, it is certainly one of the highest fortifications in the world, — eight hundred feet of Nature's breastwork, topped by fifteen feet more of man's. But for Söul this is, relatively, rather low; on the north the height is many times as great.

Here, as elsewhere, advantage has been taken of the ridge. The wall has been placed just beyond the highest point, so that but one side of it had to be built. As you stand upon it, your look sweeps down through the forest, off into the distance, to where the river Han, reflecting the sun, gleams like a belt of silver in the plain. In one vast semicircle it girdles the amphitheatre of peaks that surround Söul; and beyond it rises range behind range of mountains, like the billows of a frozen sea for the snow on them. At this height villages merge into their surroundings, and you are left to commune alone with a scene as grandly desolate as the ice and snow that cover it.

Parallel to the wall, on the other side of the narrow ridge that makes the summit, which is of the form of a thin long

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

saddle, and rises somewhat higher on both sides than in the middle, are built five well-like structures of stone. They are of the same form as the wells, — circular, — and are of about the same diameter, — five feet across. These are the cairns.

On the southern edge of the ridge stands a house for the shelter of the people engaged in tending the watch-fires, and near it is a small temple. Its isolation preserves it, for it is against the law that it should exist within the city walls; and technically, though hardly for practical purposes, it does lie within them. It corresponds to a shinto shrine, but with images, paintings, and rich and gayly colored ornaments crowding its eight feet by ten in a way quite unlike the stern simplicity of its counterpart in Japan. Its isolation was also the cause of its being. The temple is said to have been built in memory of the last king of the last dynasty. The king himself does not lie buried there; but after Söul was founded, the new line, which owed its existence to the extinction of the one before, resolved in this inexpensive manner to honor its predecessor. This place was fixed upon for a site, first, because it was high, and thus would do the king the greatest honor, and secondly, because it was remote, and so would do the people the least harm.

The ridge itself is a little bit of park land, where grand old trees possess, in undisputed sovereignty, their own square rods of earth, and the wide branches arch, in lordly protection, over a level greensward of silky mountain grass. Below, on the steep slope, hustling one another for pre-eminence, grow the rank and file of a fairly primeval forest. Through vistas in this you can catch glimpses of the city far below, — a mass of purplish-black roofs in a great hollow towered over by sharp and jagged peaks. You seem to be invading its privacy, looking down upon it thus, — to be

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

gazing from the standpoint of another world upon some charmed valley.

But a little below the summit, where the shoulder of the mountain falls abruptly away, is a view yet finer still. It is a place where the ledges break suddenly off, and the trees can find no foothold on the bare rock above, and no slope to cling to for some tens of feet below. It is a spot, chosen by Nature, from which to scan the city at your feet. You are so high above the town, and yet so near it, that it lies there like a map spread out before you, — a map that is alive. The streets come out like bright ribbons between the dusky houses, and the men in their light dresses look like slowly moving white dots as they walk along them. And yet there is no sound; it is only a pantomime of the life of Söul.

Close under your feet, leading diagonally away on the right, is a very conspicuous thoroughfare. It is the main entrance to the city. It leads from the south gate, which lies concealed on the left, to a sort of square in the very heart of the city. On it the white dots are near enough to be made out as men walking. This street, as it advances, curves gradually to the left till it crosses on a stone bridge one of the dry streams, and then widens into the square. This square is a veritable human hive. On one side of it rise the only two-storied buildings in the place. They are at present tenanted by the largest merchants of Söul, who hire the buildings of the Government, into whose hands they have in some mysterious manner fallen. On the other side is the big bell, encased in a small house of its own.

At right angles to this street runs another from the east to the west gate. Running, as it does, almost directly across the line of vision, it is so hidden as to be indistinguishable. Considered both for its length and width, it is the most important street in the city. The other highway is the principal entrance; this is the principal internal thoroughfare of Söul.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Following it farther to the left, — that is, farther to the west, — you will see a very broad avenue branching off to the north. At the upper end of this is a large, conspicuous building. It is the outer gateway of the Old Palace. Even at this distance it is one of the most striking objects in the view. From it up to the base of the North Hill, — the conical peak directly across the valley, — stretch the Palace grounds. The two buildings that tower in its midst are the Audience Hall, on the right, and the Palace of Summer, on the left. Its enclosing wall can easily be made out, as it starts from the gate and sweeps around on either hand, meeting again on the slope.

To the right of the Old Palace, but separated from it by a portion of the city, are the New Palace grounds. Its wall is visible, but the buildings within are hidden by the trees. Between the two is the Foreign Office, fully two miles away from where we stand.

Just at our feet, with its back up against the base of the South Mountain, stand the buildings of the Japanese legation. From a flag-staff above it floats the Japanese ensign, the red ball on the white field. Here lives the little Japanese colony, — a true bit of transplanted Japan, — all alone in an alien land. Some of the legation have with them their wives, and many children play about its courtyards. It has its own force of soldiers, kept constantly recruited from home; its doctors, its policemen, — all that it can need to be sufficient to itself. The minister is as much a governor as a representative at a foreign court. Day and night the soldiers stand before the gateway of the legation buildings, and change guard as if it were a camp; and whenever the minister goes abroad, a certain number of them accompany him as escort. The soldiers are needed. Once before, and once since, that day when I looked down upon it, the legation has had to fight its way from Söul to the sea.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Over to the left is the American legation with its flag, — a large compound, with fine old houses, formerly a noble's palace. The compound of Von Möllendorff, the foreign member of the Foreign Office, stands in the centre of the panorama, between the two palaces, a little nearer to Nam San than the Foreign Office itself. Between us and the American legation rises a skeleton gateway, one of the two "Red Arrow Gates" of Söul. It foretells what is called "The South Set Apart Palace," now occupied by the resident Chinese commissioner.

These were the salient points, few in number, in the panorama, almost virgin to European eyes, that lay at my feet that day, as I gazed upon the capital of the Hermit Land; and back of all, in majestic grandeur, rose the serrated peaks of the great Cock's-comb.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOVERNMENT.

FOR two reasons it seems fitting to say something here on the subject which has given the title to this chapter. In a land where the Government is, in one sense, everything, it surely deserves mention; and courtesy would also seem to require a word where the same power has played the part of host. I therefore consider myself absolved for what may possibly be thought prosy.

In front of the Audience Hall of the Old Palace of Söul, — which is, perhaps, the finest building in Korea, and which, where king is country, may with a certain right be taken for the reception-room of the land, — there stand, facing the entrance and flanking on either hand the approach which leads from the innermost of the three gates to the first flight of steps, two rows of granite slabs. They are placed on end, upon small square pedestals, in the midst of the grass of the inner court, somewhat after the fashion of our gravestones; and like them, too, they have inscriptions carved upon their faces. With the exception of these inscriptions, they are all precisely alike, and follow one another at equal intervals on either side of the pathway. Each is exactly in line behind its predecessor, and the stones of the two rows correspond in position and lettering. There are eighteen of them arranged thus on a side.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

A translation of the characters engraved upon them explains, seemingly, rather their position than their use. Beginning at the end toward the Audience Hall, the first stone bears the inscription, "the true first rank;" the stone behind it, "the following first rank;" the next, "the true second rank;" and so on to "the following ninth rank." But to him who knows how to read between the carved words, there seems almost a personality in the stones; for they are the outward expression of the spirit that shapes Korean society. They are mute emblems to the great god Ceremony, and embody, as it were, in granite, the *régime* of the land.

They are ceremonial bourns. They mark the limits of approach to the person of their sovereign permitted to the various ranks of officials. So far off must stand each rank in the Korean official oligarchy when, on occasions of governmental pageant, they come to assist at a royal reception. The ranks are the outward immaterial expression of office, just as the elaborate system of court clothes is the outward material expression of the ranks. They have nothing intrinsically to do with office; and yet each office has its own rank, to which, as a matter of course, a man is raised when he is appointed to that office. Many totally different offices possess the same rank, so that the stone slabs indicate both the Government, and what, for want of a better word, we may call social standing in Korea. We cannot call it a nobility, though it possesses many of its attributes, because, as we shall see later, there exists a nobility beside, but a nobility which, though indirectly powerful, directly commands neither obedience nor obsequiousness. In a book on court etiquette, whose weary, statistical-like pages of catalogue I have had translated, each office and its corresponding rank is most minutely described, from that of the crown prince to that of a maid-servant in the palace. Such a schedule is exceedingly interesting to those for whom the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

posts are so many rungs of the ladder to fame, but endlessly tedious to any one beside.

The king of Korea is an absolute monarch. Divine by birth, he is omnipotent by heredity. But his will, though law, is transmitted to the people through an elaborate system of magistrates. Some of these are counsellors, some are only executors of the royal or vice-royal commands. All of them — the highest with the lowest — hold their positions directly from the sovereign, and any position is revocable at once at the king's good pleasure. In theory, therefore, each is independent of his fellows; in practice, of course, those who are the highest stand nearest to the royal ear, and can largely influence the appointments and removals of the lower magistracy. They not only have the power, but use it most iniquitously; for the administration of offices is a very lucrative profession.

Nearest to his Majesty stand the three great ministers of State, the State referring in its broadest sense to the whole land. They are consulted by his Majesty on all matters touching the kingdom. They are called the Counsellor of the Right, the Counsellor of the Middle, and the Counsellor of the Left. This is their order of precedence. They resemble the three great ministers of Japan.

Below them come the six departments of the Government. They are as follows: Ri Chyo, or the Department of the Interior; Ho Chyo, or the Department of the Treasury; Pyöng Chyo, or the Department of War; Ré Chyo, or the Department of Rites; Hyöng Chyo, or the Department of Justice; Kong Chyo, or the Department of Public Works.

Each of these is presided over by a Pan Sö ("decisive signature"). He is aided by several Cham Pan ("help to decide"), and by Cham Wi ("help to discuss"). As their name implies, the last are inferior to the Cham Pan in power, and are rather

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

advocates than judges. Both precede the secretaries of the department. The number of Cham Pan, of Cham Ui, and of the secretaries varies with the particular department. These compose the central Government.

Among the six, it will be noticed, is included none for foreign affairs. This was for the very good and sufficient reason that there were no foreign affairs to transact. The only intercourse the Koreans had with foreigners was forced upon them by China, and that was of the nature of tributary to superior. With other peoples, like the Manchus and the Japanese, they were only brought in contact by being occasionally conquered by them; and in such untoward emergencies they appointed special envoys to treat. It was only recently, in consequence of the first treaty with Japan, that the need of such a department came to be felt; and shortly after, it was created in addition to the other six.

The creation of this body necessitated by antithesis a home department, which was instituted a year later. In constitution, the Foreign Office was based upon the Chinese system, the Home Office upon the Japanese.

Next in position follow the governors of the different provinces. Each of them has six assistants. Instead of Chyo, these six departments of provincial government are called Bang, or "chamber." The heads of the chambers rank with the grade next below, the district magistrates; for each province is divided into several districts. Each district magistrate has in his turn six assistants. In fact, six seems to be a magic number in Korean bureaucracy. So the line goes down.

Then there are several unattached offices, so to speak, — the several military positions, the position of inspector of the coast, etc.

One man often holds many offices. For instance, one of the Cham Pan of the Foreign Office was at the same time governor

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of the province of Kyöng Keui To, and held a high military position, and I know not what else to boot.

How are these officials appointed? Is such appointment entirely arbitrary, or is it subjected to any law? In answering this question we are brought face to face with one of the most singular, and all the more striking because one of the most fundamental, of Chinese phenomena; for it is not a product of Tartar, but of Chinese thought. Literature is in Korea the only portal to political power. In order to become eligible to the magistracy, a man must have passed several literary examinations. Only after he has received his diploma can he be appointed to office. The Koreans took the Chinese system, and have changed it simply in unimportant extrinsic details. With them, as with their models, the capacity for poetry and pedantry is the test of mind. To be able to write unlimited verse, and to interpret the Chinese classics with due reverential regard, are the qualities to win success. What in China is a species of literary worship of its own classics becomes in Korea the worship of another people's classics, and finds for devotion to the thoughts of a foreign past a parallel in the study of Greek and Latin during the Middle Ages in Europe, — a study kept alive by the monks and continued by scholars to the present day. A magistrate is, therefore, first a poet. Then he is, to a certainty, in what pertains to China and incidentally to his own country, a very learned man, though by no means necessarily a man of original thought. When Latin was still a password to respect in the House of Commons, English politics faintly suggested the present Korean state of things, only that what was there but an aid to influence one's colleagues is here an admission to the body itself.

In Korea, as in China, there are three grades of examinations, all of which must be passed by the candidate in due course. Unlike the Chinese custom, these examinations are

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

held exclusively in Söul. For the preliminary grade they take place every year; for the higher ones, only when his Majesty sees fit to appoint them. As soon as a young man — or, for the matter of that, he may be a very old man, for unsuccessful candidates may keep on trying as long as they like, and many of them grow gray in these praiseworthy but futile attempts — passes the final examination, he becomes potentially a magistrate. He does not at once always become so in fact, because the profession is somewhat overstocked as it is; but before long he is given some place or other, and after this his rise depends solely upon his ability to persuade his Majesty of the desirability of promoting him.

His position is purely personal. He transmits to his son only the plunder his office has enabled him to amass. His rank and his honors die with him.

The extreme rigor of the literary examinations is to some fortunate mortals tempered by the accident of noble birth. If a man is born a noble, heredity is allowed to count for something, and his poetry need not be so good nor his learning so exact as would otherwise be deemed necessary. Such blindness in the examiners is quite unrecognized, — every man is supposed to be judged alike and impartially, — but somehow it exists. And this introduces us to yet another factor in Korean society, — the lingering trace of an old nobility. There still exists in Korea, in spite of the levelling deluge of Confucianism that has swept the land, the surviving spirit of family prestige. Whether it is the remains of a feudal system such as existed in ancient times in China, and such as lasted till the other day in Japan, is a question. It is certainly a survival from the time of the old petty princes who, in early days, ruled each his little province till all were eventually conquered by one. This we know from the traditions of the present family names. While they lost their

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

former power, they kept its shadow in that they are still honored, though no longer obeyed. They have no particular political rights; but favoritism in the elections keeps the class alive, and enables them still to look down somewhat upon the *parvenus* whose individual ability has made them their peers in office and their equals before the law.

What with the ranks in station, the degrees of the examinations, the actual offices, and a trace of hereditary nobility, — all four of which are entirely different matters, — the subject suggests at first something of a ceremonial chaos, hopeless in its intricacy. But for a Korean its intricacies possess no mystery, for they have been from infancy his study. To him the subject wraps up in itself the whole aim of life. Intellect, ambition, gain, — all are to him embodied in the Government.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIAD OF PRINCIPLES.

THERE is among us a prevailing impression that the far-East — China, Korea, and Japan — is delightfully but hopelessly odd, and that the interest attaching to these lands lies solely in this irrational oddity. For any people to write backwards, to talk backwards, to sit upon their feet, to take off not their hats but their shoes on entering a house, and in countless other ways to conform to what seems more like a photographic negative of our own civilization than a companion picture, — this is indeed a social phenomenon to rouse the most sluggish curiosity; and then, with an admission that the sight is very interesting because so passing strange, the subject is dismissed and the interest is supposed to terminate. Partly from want of opportunity, partly from neglect, we open the eyes, shut the brain, and think we see.

In truth, the interest in it has but just been awakened; the life of it, its strength, is yet to come. It is because the far-East holds up the mirror to our own civilization, — a mirror that like all mirrors gives us back left for right, — because by her very oddities, as they strike us at first, we learn truly to criticise, examine, and realize our own way of doing things, that she is so very interesting. It is in this that her great attraction lies. It is for this that men have gone to Japan intending to stay weeks, and have tarried years. A far more

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

potent magnetism than the most delicious of climates, the wonderful urbanity of the people, the quaintness of the customs, are the vistas into the springs of the world's life, as a whole, that these customs open out to us, in the loadstone that holds us to the spot.

We cannot truly be said to know anything apart from its relations. Unless we realize the dissimilar, we do not fully appreciate what lies at our elbow. We may see or even do a thing, day after day, and yet awake some morning to discover that we never understood it. Habit blunts the perceptions. We insensibly confuse the accidental and the unimportant with the vital and the fundamental. But let us change our attitude toward the subject in question; let us see it from a slightly different point of view, and we begin to be aware of what it really is in a way we never were conscious of before. It is such a point of view that the far-East affords us in sociology.

Few people, we imagine, would assert, even to themselves, that the far-Oriental is not a man, — that is, that his constitution in mind or body is radically different from our own. And yet, in spite of this tacit consent to admit him to the human family, there is a secret tendency to overlook the principle that humanity is and must be human, — that is to say, that he is a being like unto ourselves, with like motives to urge, like reasoning to determine, his actions, and that our character is just the particular key made to fit the lock of his. It is a key grown rusty with time, perhaps; climate may have corroded and changed the lock; but, with a little patient study, it will at last turn and reveal to us more familiar sights than we had thought possible.

If, then, we admit that the extreme Oriental is a man, — that, traced far enough back, his genealogy and ours meet in a common point, — the contrasts we observe to-day in the two modes of life acquire a significance and possess an interest

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

far beyond what is afforded by the odd simply because it is such. Taken in connection with our own way of doing things, his, from its very dissimilarity, will yield us, as it were, an historical parallax for the determination of our common remote past and of the possibilities and adaptabilities of the human race. The greater the contrast, the greater the resulting parallax. The more diverse, therefore, the two races we study and compare, the more will it be possible to discover about sociology in general, if only we are able to mark the steps in the line of progress; for we are speaking of civilized nations. Were one of the two a savage tribe, we should discover from it only a reflection of its own past; barbarism being but the stagnation of society. But the peoples we have now before us are civilized peoples. Their condition is in most respects not so high as our own; in some ways it is higher. But the important point is that in both there has been an advance from a similar original state, although along two very different lines.

Now, of all the races upon the earth's surface, the Japanese race, and, closely allied to it, the Korean, are probably the farthest removed from our own. The broad expanse of the Pacific is now the birthplace of the day, because for many centuries it has been a gulf that has not been crossed save by waifs, the involuntary sport of ocean currents. Before this, probably, certain of the Mongol races did wander round it to the north; and to their dead civilizations in Mexico and Peru attaches an interest only just now beginning to receive its due. Roughly speaking, we may measure the degree of divergence in the customs of two peoples by the distance they live apart. In detail, of course, the criterion would not hold; but in general and for our present purpose it is in the main true. As we proceed from India westward we find a greater accentuation of what we call European; as we go eastward from it, an ever-increasing dissimilarity.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

But, interesting as is the study of such comparative ethnology, it is not for the purpose of investigating it with reference to ourselves that I have spoken of the universal kinship of man. Here it is the converse I propose to touch upon. Important as is the knowledge of ourselves, we are at present engaged upon the study of our antipodes in longitude, if not strictly so in latitude. Now, in any sense to know them, it is not enough to glance at what we find, but in some sort, however hastily and briefly, to look backward till we meet with a past which is to us familiar in a way their differentiated present is not, and without such help never can become. It is not to expound the past, but to explain the present, that I ask, for a moment, the reader's attention.

There is another reason why such consideration is even superficially most valuable. Korea is not China; it is not Japan. This may seem an unnecessary remark, and especially in a book that purports to tell of Korea. But I can assure the reader that it is not. If he had been asked such questions as whether the pinching of the feet in Korea is not a horrible sight, when, as a matter of fact, such pinching is as unpractised and as condemned there as it is with us, — if such inferences were to be numbered by hundreds rather than by units, — he would realize that a *tabula rasa* of anticipatory misconceptions is first needed before anything can wisely be written thereon. Were they simply in appearances, a description might indeed be allowed to speak for itself; but, as is known to every painter, it is not alone those colors that lie on the surface that give the picture its effect, but others deeper down, whose existence the unpractised eye scarcely suspects.

To understand Korea, therefore, we shall perforce be obliged to consider, as briefly as possible, her relationship to China and

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Japan. The position she bears and the position she has borne in the past to these two lands will lead us by inference still farther back, and reveal to us the springs from which her customs have flowed. We shall learn, at the same time, why these customs exist, and what they mean, — the motives, in short, which have caused her to assume at last what appears to us to be so curious a condition of society. By thus following out her past it will be found, as it seems to me, that there have been three great characteristics, partly individual, partly social, which have been especially conducive to the result; and I have called them, therefore, the triad of principles. They have acted and interacted upon one another, increasing each the other's individual effect, and yet each is in itself quite independent of the other two. These three principles are, — the quality of impersonality, the patriarchal system, and the position of woman. Following these principles as clues, the enigma will cease to be perplexing; and many a custom, so singular at first sight, will be found explicable in as natural a way as the simplest of those with which since childhood we have been familiar.

Before explaining the three influences which have played so large a part in the moulding of the far-Eastern character, — for it is not Korea alone that has been affected by them, — we must begin by examining the pedigree of the Korean people. This will lead us at once to their relationship to China and Japan.

As has been ably pointed out, there are two factors in the history of the evolution of the language of a race. They are similar in kind to those which help to form the character of an individual, — blood and education. What is true of the language of a race is equally true of race-characteristics. In short, two questions must be answered, — "Who are they?" and "By whom were they brought up?" Let us apply this scientific diagnosis to the Korean race.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

First, then, as to their blood. Both Japanese and Koreans are Tartar peoples. They are distantly related to each other, and are still more remotely connected with the Manchus, the Mongols, and probably the Tartars, particularly so called, and the Turks. There is an old Japanese legend which allegorically hints at the kinship, but which national pride insists upon construing too literally, and thereby exposes to doubt and disbelief. I mention it here, not as a proof of a kinship otherwise known, but because it is in itself a most striking tale. It relates to the famous Japanese general Yoshitsune, perhaps the most celebrated warrior of that most warlike land. Defeated in a rebellion which he attempted against his brother, he disappeared at once and forever from the scene. As Yoshitsune he ceased to exist. What became of him was never known; and speculations as to his subsequent fate became in their turn the most fascinating of problems to imaginations of a certain class. Some said that he was dead. But this was too prosaic a termination to so illustrious a career to suit the dreamers. So a legend grew to the effect that, beaten, he travelled northward, until, crossing first to Yesso, thence to Saghalien, he at last arrived upon the continent of Asia; that his fertile brain came to the aid of his intense will, and that, smarting under the loss of that for which he had been striving, he resolved upon a magnificent revenge. He would mould to himself, from out the Mongols, a people who under his lead should overrun and conquer the world, and, incidentally to this great scheme of his, subdue and humble Japan. His most daring flights of fancy could hardly have exceeded the reality. His career partook of the supernatural. It seemed that he had but to wish, to see his desire fulfilled. To conquer China, subduing Korea as a detail in passing, and seat himself upon the dragon throne, was the work of a surprisingly short space of time. If his own had driven him from home, he was

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

amply revenged in the glory that encircled him now. Northern Asia was his, and even Europe trembled at his name, — for that name was Yenghiz Khan.

But if he was the Yoshitsune of yore, he never accomplished, in spite of his superb triumphs, the direct object of his revenge. Her position as an island saved Japan from being made to feel his power, — a power to which all else indeed bowed. So seldom does even the most successful career intersect its former path.

There are plenty of Japanese who firmly believe this tale, unsupported as it is by anything which can be called proof. But it seems more just to look upon it only as an instance of the immortality of fame. That he lived on in the thoughts of men prompted the belief that he must yet be alive somewhere in the flesh.

How closely related are the Koreans and the Japanese it is difficult to say, from the fact that, belonging to the so-called Turanian peoples, — that is, those for the most part without a known family relationship, — the language (always one of the strongest indications among Aryan or Semitic races) here becomes of little use to the determination of the connection. In Aryan or Semitic speech, root-forms are subject to such slow laws of variation that they become very important, and help to fix degrees of relationship with great nicety. Among Turanian languages they are of almost no account. They alter, like the quondam habitations of those who use them, the tents of their own nomadic tribes. A few decades suffice radically to change the words in use among a people. It is position in the sentence alone that is invariable. But this yields only the most distant of clues; for though the position in its turn is subject to the law of change, it is not so easy a matter to trace the steps in the process, so that two peoples quite closely connected in fact betray it no more than those who may be very far apart.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

In the case before us, Mr. Aston and Mr. Chamberlain have recently discovered certain words of common origin in Korean and Japanese; and this discovery is one of the proofs that the two peoples are kin, but it does not enable us at present to say how near of kin. We only know that both belong to what is called the Altaic family.

So far as is yet known, neither of these peoples has the slightest affinity with the Chinese by blood. In the first place, as to language, Chinese in its fundamental conceptions is as far removed from Japanese or Korean as these are from English; that is, there is as yet no apparent connection whatever between the two.[1] Not only are there no root-forms in common between Chinese and Japanese or Korean, but the structure, the position of words, is radically different in the two tongues. The same is true of aboriginal manners and customs so far as we can observe them. Such observation is not so easy as it might be, for a reason which brings us to the second factor in the shaping of Korean character, — the education of the race.

The history of the development of a race has many analogies with that of the growth of a single individual, and in no feature perhaps more strikingly than in that of its intellectual life. A boy is born of a certain stock; certain blood flows in his veins, bringing with its ebb and flow certain inherited tendencies. For the first few years of his life he grows up under like influences, — those of his home. Then comes a time when he is sent to school. He is taken out of those earlier ways to be taught something beyond what hitherto had lain beside his path. For a period he is busied not so much with his own ideas as with the learning of others. He grows older and leaves school. Complete concentration in the study of what

[1] It is, however, quite possible that the connection is not so remote as would appear to be the case; but, as yet, this is only hypothesis.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

comes from without is changed into an interaction of what he thinks with what he learns. He digests, assimilates, gives out.

Now, all this happens just as truly to a race. There have never been, since the very earliest times, races that have been entirely self-contained, wholly self-taught. Almost all of them have gone to school abroad. But there is a most marked difference in the result, according to where they went to school or by whom they were brought up. European nations received their education at the hands of relatives, — of cousins, and that of no very distant degree. The far-East got theirs from strangers; or, if they were in truth originally of kin, they had at least come to be regarded as alien. In consequence, the pupils remembered the facts; but they never imbibed those subtler influences which, if in the least allied to his own nature, creep into a boy's heart while his head is busy with paradigms or formulæ. They learned the letter of a civilization without feeling innately its spirit. This applies to most of the higher and later forms of Korean civilization, but it does not apply to the deeper race-characteristics; for in these, to a certain extent, teachers and taught agreed.

China was the schoolmaster at whose feet Korea the pupil sat. So vastly superior at that time was the Chinese civilization, that it is no wonder that the comparatively rude Tartar races should have been impressed — dazzled by it. They adopted it wholesale, and then tried to live up to it. This they succeeded in doing so far as outward expressions were concerned. We have seen why they found it difficult to do more. Then there was another reason. That upon this as a foundation they reared no subsequent superstructure is due, perhaps, to the character of that very foundation. If they did but little in original development, it must be remembered that China herself did not accomplish very much more. In the general

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

directions in which she was fertile, the Tartar peoples also were productive, and in those lines in which they did nothing she herself was barren.

The Koreans had some slight home influences before they received their foreign tuition. They were by no means barbaric, even at that early period. They had developed race-characteristics; they possessed institutions which have survived in spite of the new superim osed mass. Faintly, in places yet, traces of the old local color can be seen through the stronger tints of foreign decoration. That the aboriginal traits are not more plainly visible to-day, that the discovery and explanation at the present time of purely Tartar characteristics are such difficult matters, is due to the fact that the most important, perhaps, of the foreign acquisitions was the very power of self-perpetuation itself; for it was then that the Tartars first became acquainted with writing. Before this time they had possessed apparently no means of recording their thoughts or preserving the memory of their actions.

Now, the three principles which may be considered to be the most important parts of the groundwork of the Korean character, and equally of the Japanese, depend upon both the factors above mentioned. They were originally in the blood, and they have been strengthened by subsequent Chinese education. Both alike have been affected by a very peculiar conservatism, much stronger, however, in the Chinese than among the Tartar races. The result is, that they have from circumstances acquired a life and a strength not properly their own. They are the crude ways of thought of boyhood perpetuated into middle age. The race has the semblance of being grown up while it has kept the mind of its childhood; and thus it is a living anachronism. No wonder that its customs should appear so odd to nations whose career has been more normal. It is not, then, to the existence of any

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

traits peculiar to the race that the result is due, but to the permanence, beyond what has happened elsewhere, of those characteristics common in a greater or less degree to all races at the same stage of development. It is the crystallization, as it were, into a rigid form of what should have been but a passing phase. It is a curious case of partially arrested development. The evolution of the fundamental principles was checked, while the superficial details of civilization went on growing. It will be well to outline with a few bold strokes these three principles before taking up a consideration of them more in detail.

First, then, as to their impersonality. This, of course, is the state in which all nations begin their life. Every man is made aware of external objects before he becomes conscious that it is he who sees them. But most nations pass from this objective condition at a comparatively early period into the more attractive state where the body is recognized as something better than a mere automaton. In certain ways a man or a nation reaches at last another period of impersonality; but the second state is wholly different from the one we are now considering. The Tartar peoples are still in the first state of impersonality. In this respect they have changed but little since primitive times. The trait with them is even more a question of blood than of education; for impersonal as are the Chinese, the Tartars are more so. All nations vary in the extent to which this characteristic is still retained; and the most marked results follow its absence or presence, as the case may be. We have only to turn to the history of the French and the English, for instance, to see what different political and social modes of life it can cause a nation to assume. Bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the institution of the home, on the other, are in part the results of comparative impersonality on one side of the Channel, and of personality in the island beyond it.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The second is the patriarchal system. Like the quality of impersonality, it has survived from the earliest ages. Like the other, too, it is a race-characteristic. While the people were still nomads, it was a very useful as it was a most natural institution. They wandered in bands for the sake of defence and sociability, and the head of each family was its most suitable chief. From the immediate family time itself would extend the practice to larger and larger bodies of descendants. As they settled down, they clung to the ancient custom, although the reasons which had given it birth had ceased to exist. It continued because to the power of its momentum — if we may so speak of an imponderable — there was added a new impulse. This accession to the force of the custom came to them with their foreign education from China, and was due there to a concurrence of circumstances which we shall take up later. Instead of growing lighter and more lax, the yoke of obedience became — as, under the circumstances, if it was to continue at all, it was bound to become — heavier and more binding. The duties of a son in the former state were principally out-of-doors, and from their very nature less engrossing. As the herds were exchanged for farms, his attention took on a more domestic garb. To serve indoors was a much closer tie than to owe obedience in the field. Obligations multiplied and were more compelling. The son served the father in a way he had never done before, and filial subjection was raised from the position of a necessary fact to the rank of a virtue.

Lastly, we come to the position of woman. The lower man's place in the scale of nations, the lower, relatively to his own, has always been that of woman. Woman, being physically less strong, naturally suffers where physical strength is made the basis of esteem. But as men have advanced in civilization, gradually a chivalrous regard has been paid the weaker but fairer sex. Now, though the countries of the far-East have had

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

their age of feudalism, in a general parallelism to those of the West, loyalty took the place of chivalry as one of its attendant feelings. At the point where woman elsewhere made her *début* upon the social stage, here she failed to appear; and she has not done so since. The history of these races has been a history of man apart from any help from woman. To all social intents and purposes, woman has remained as she was when she followed as a slave in her lord's wanderings. She is better fed now, better clothed, cleaner and more comfortable than she was; but, relatively to the position of the people, no higher. She counts for nothing in the life of the race at the present time, as she has counted for nothing in it from the beginning.

These three traits developed into institutions, which I shall take up separately and more at length presently. But I have dwelt upon them, particularly and at first, because I consider a full appreciation of them to be vital to an understanding of the thousand details of far-Eastern life and the still more interesting methods of far-Eastern thought. Really to know a people, it is not sufficient to be conversant with their actions; we must understand the motives from which those actions spring. Otherwise, however well we may remember the past, we shall never be able to predict the future.

With these principles, then, as guides, the ways and customs of Korea and Japan will become capable of explanation, and will cease to appear, as they certainly do at first to our modes of thought, a jumble of unintelligible eccentricities.

NOTE. — To prevent a possible misunderstanding, it is perhaps wise to state that what has been said of the Korean and the Japanese languages applies, of course, to pure Korean and pure Japanese. Sinico-Korean and Sinico-Japanese are simply mispronounced Chinese. The present speech of either Korea or Japan consists of a mixture, not however indiscriminate, of the two classes, roughly paralleled by, though much more distinct than, the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman parts of the English language.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XIII.

THE QUALITY OF IMPERSONALITY.

AFTER many years of diligent study, a celebrated metaphysician was once enabled to demonstrate to his complete satisfaction that the *ego* was the *ego*, — to prove, that is, in English, that I am not you and that you are not somebody else. Most of us are perhaps rather prone to act upon this principle without quite so much previous application. But we are of the West, Western. It is to the far-East that we must look if we would realize at once the importance and the insignificance of the idea of self. There the matter is shorn of its trappings of inborn affection and respect; it is reduced to its lowest possible terms, and then these terms are omitted as of little or no account in the conduct of the race. The *ego* might there as well be the *alter ego* as itself, for all the treatment it receives. In short, personality, that great central fact of consciousness, would seem at times, to the Western student, to be nothing more substantial than a chimera of his own brain.

At the threshold of your acquaintance with any far-Eastern people, you are made aware of a something more than usually separative in the barrier between you and them. Like all such instincts, you could hardly formulate it, still less prove it; but you feel it. As you get to know them better and look for it to crumble away, instead of a disappearance you find that you have only approached nearer to a wall that bars your progress. And the feeling is somehow different from any such

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

feelings you have had before. As you ponder on it, at last it dawns upon you what it is that separates you. It is not simply a matter of two differing personalities; it is a question of an absence of personality in them altogether.

As soon as you attack the language, the suspicion becomes a certainty. It struck you in the conduct of the coolie who waylaid your arrival; you learn it in the initial sentence of the speech you succeed in mastering. The man did not seem to be conscious of his own identity. The race does not realize itself; while to the student, Nirvana, or the absorption of the individual soul into the soul of the universe, seems to have descended from its abstract sphere of speculation, and become an every-day fact. Mirroring, as the speech of a people must mirror, the character of that people, let us glance a moment at the quality as it shows itself in the tongue.

Conceive, then, a language devoid of gender, number, and person, — one which takes into account neither sex nor plural nor individual. Here is a speech which at the outset utterly disregards what seem to be the fundamental principles in our own processes of thought. It denies, by ignoring it, that question which not only has perplexed metaphysicians for centuries, but which is tacitly assumed as innately proven and acted upon by the world at large, — the conscious yet controverted distinction between man's mind and the universe beside. What is mind? What is matter? are problems which the far-Oriental solves by regarding himself and others in the light in which he would regard a house, — namely, simply as a material fact.

Let us examine the three distinctions, — person, number, and sex, — in order clearly to recognize the force of such omissions; and let us begin with that of person, for it is the one perhaps that most strikingly exemplifies the quality we are describing.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Except by later invented circumlocutions, there is no way of discriminating between the three persons. To the original Tartar mind, "I," "you," and "he" were not distinctions recognized as founded in Nature, and therefore needed not to be expressed in speech. Later, when a more complex form of society introduced relative conceptions in addition to absolute ones, personifications like "that side," "that honorable corner," and the like, were improvised to do the duty of pronouns. But even these are used as sparingly as possible; and it is one of the commonest mistakes made by the European beginner in Japanese to intersperse, as the Japanese deem it, his conversation with unnecessary personal references. They are never employed when not absolutely indispensable to make the sense clear, or for the sake of emphasis. And it is really surprising to us to notice, under these conditions, how superfluous they are nine times out of ten. It is usually quite evident from the rest of the sentence who is the actor or the acted upon that may happen to be meant.[1]

Now, in itself, there is nothing anomalous about this. It is the way in which every child begins to express himself. The peculiarity enters when we consider that it should have been preserved. It is now grown-up baby-talk, as it were. The man continues to look upon himself as an observer when time has pushed him on to take his part in the action of life. An impersonal race is never truly grown up.

Consider next the distinction of sex. In dealing with living beings this differentiation, we should think, must certainly be necessary. In them sex exists, and therefore must be recognized. Woman, girl, grandmother, mother-in-law, are pleasing or disagreeable facts. For such we assuredly must have particular names; and they have them, too, — that is, words to

[1] This is most strikingly exemplified in Japanese; but a kindred construction is observable in Korean.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

denote the objects themselves. But this does not in the least involve the matter of sex in grammar. A girl is a girl, and a stone is a stone, and both are things or facts; and there the matter ends. When we refer to such objects, "it" or "thing" is really as good a word for the purpose as "she." The idea of using them is only shocking to our inherited prejudices. Our fundamental conceptions about the matter, in the way of grammar, are shaken; but there is no natural propriety that is violated.

But are these conceptions in reality so fundamental? Are they even so necessary as we commonly suppose? After a short study of Japanese or Korean, it seems to me we shall think not. In our own language, having passed through the period of inflection, we are coming back again in many ways to former simplicity. We have learned what can, without loss of precision, be discarded, and what not; and there seems to be no reason why we should not take a few more steps in the same direction. Our ideas of the things themselves will never coincide with far-Eastern materialism; but we need not, for all that, carry into speech distinctions which there only become useless. Witness, for illustration, the comparative simplicity of English as against German.

Next comes the brute creation. Now, it is sometimes useful to be able to specify a cow, for instance, from a bull, but not always. There are many occasions in which either is equally to the purpose. In this particular instance such occasions are more numerous in the far-East than elsewhere, as there the cow is never called upon for her distinguishing characteristic, — milk. Again, either a horse or a mare will do to carry a burden, so that all that need be called for is a horse (genus). Whenever special stress is laid upon the question of sex, particles denoting male or female are prefixed.

As to merely fanciful discriminations, they are evidently

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

more poetic than indispensable. The gender of an umbrella or the sex of a shadow can hardly be vital. That *la pluie* should be feminine and *le beau temps* masculine, is rather a surprising want of gallantry to the fair sex, from so generally gallant a nation, than suggestive of any occult principle in Nature, despite the fact that in the Chinese philosophy sunshine is correlated to the male essence, shade to the female.

Number — that is, the want of a plural, and the consequent necessity of employing what are called "auxiliary numerals" — leads us into the most interesting philosophical speculations. But as it does not bear particularly upon impersonality, I omit it here. Suffice it to say, that such an expression as "three coolies" is impossible. "Coolie three man" would be the somewhat circuitous path necessary to reach the idea.

Here, then, subjectivity vanishes. The whole cosmos — man himself included — is reduced to its objective existence. It is the boldest expression of materialism the world has ever seen. It does more than posit a theory on the subject; it assumes such a theory to be a fact.

Other details of the language bear the same impersonal stamp. The order of words in a sentence is inverted, as we regard it. This is in order that the nouns may come as early as possible, the connecting particles being considered less important, and the verb still less so. But nouns denote natural facts, while verbs express action; and action, as immediately recognized by man in the every-day life around him, is mostly human. Here, again, a prominence is given to Nature, and man's doings are as much as possible ignored.

Thus examples might be heaped upon examples, all proving a materialized, though in no sense a deep generalized, conception of things. It is no return in manhood to abstract speculation upon what may be the essence of things. It is the most unpondered concrete assumption, — man's first idea

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of things around him of which he himself is a part, before he has realized the later consciousness of self.

Having seen how the quality finds expression in forms of thought, let us glance at it as, unconsciously perhaps, it is expressed in action. The traveller will not have to wait long for an example. It will meet him when he first sets foot in Japan. As soon as he has passed safely through the ordeal of the custom-house, — which has been among the first importations of Western ways, — he will need something in which to carry himself and his traps away. He has been told that a jinrikisha, or large baby-carriage, drawn by a man, is the vehicle in common use, and, seeing some standing idly in the distance, he calls one of them; for, in addition to those kurumaya[1] who court fate by trundling the thing slowly up and down the highway, there are regular stands, appointed by law, where the vehicles may be seen in rows awaiting customers. To his call a score respond, hurrying towards him so quickly as to suggest nothing so much as a rush of autumn leaves started by a sudden gust of wind from the quiet corner where they lay. In a twinkling they are all about him, and the shafts have fallen at his feet as if indeed they were but leaves, and had come once more to rest upon the ground as suddenly as they had left it. As he is only one, and his baggage, after all, is limited, he cannot use them all. So he prepares to make a choice. He turns his attention for an instant to his traps, to judge what he shall need, and on turning back again, behold, the men have all vanished, and he finds himself

[1] The word "kuruma" (literally, "a wheel") is the pure Japanese expression for the Sinico-Japanese name "jinrikisha." The word "ya" meant originally "a house," and then came to be affixed to various articles or pursuits; as we might say book-house, clothes-house, etc. From denoting the place of business the name was extended to denote the business itself, till finally it was actually applied to the man who carried on the trade. This very word, therefore, most ludicrously typifies the impersonality of the race; for a fixed place, "wheel-shop," now denotes a man whose sole business consists in constantly travelling.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the centre of a mute but expectant-looking circle of baby-carriages, their shafts all pointed towards him and bowed to the earth as if in an attitude of importunate entreaty. He wonders what can so suddenly have happened to the men, until, on searching for them, his eyes at last light upon them in a group in a corner of the square. It speaks but meanly of human nature, or rather of what experience on his side of our planet has taught him to be only too true, that at first he supposes them to be wrangling over his capture. But on patiently watching them, as if he were the most disinterested of spectators, — for he is well aware how useless interposition is in such cases, — he becomes conscious that it is no quarrel, but a settlement that is going on. The coolies are actually drawing lots for the privilege of the opportunity. One man in the centre holds the strings, and the others select each his ribbon, and then abide in the best possible humor by the result. Imagine for a moment such a method resorted to by our cabmen to settle a difficulty!

Now, that such action springs partly from good nature and innate delicacy or refinement of character is doubtless true; but more important than this is the underlying principle of impersonality. Each man has not yet fully realized the division of the world into self and not-self. He recognizes intuitively an equal right, or something approaching it, in his fellows to what he possesses himself, so that the drawing of lots to settle matters strikes him not only as having the keeping of the peace to recommend it, but as being peculiarly the rational thing to do.

We see the same quality, a motive cause alike in their business and in their pleasures. It shows itself in the want of both combination and competition in the one, and it betrays itself in what they consider to constitute the essence of the other.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

We are prone to think, and most naturally, of the East as of a swarming mass of humanity, — a mass devoid of individuality. We always think of that of which we have not personal cognizance as devoid to a certain extent of individuality; but we imagine it particularly of the far-East. In one sense we are right. Both education and thought are more on a level than with us. The hills and valleys of intellect are less far apart. But in another sense we are quite wrong. This mass, as we take it to be, is distinctly and peculiarly a collection of units. Like round units, they are, who, for the amount they contain, expose the least surface to contact with their fellows. They roll through the world easily, lazily to themselves, and they touch others but little in their journey. Charity, we are told, begins at home. Equally true is it that the quality we so truly and prettily call "humanity" — as if, indeed, it were the essence of man — begins in his own being before it extends abroad; for it has its springs in selfishness, — that is, in the thinking of self. A man must realize himself and his own feelings before he can sympathize with others; and thus, paradoxical as it may seem at first, personality, or the differentiation of one's own from other individualities, lies at the bottom of that combining together which constitutes society. The far-East is impersonal, and that very impersonality separates one man from his neighbor. Each lives by himself in a way unknown among us.

The effect shows itself very markedly in the matter of business. In spite of the great skill which Korean artisans of the past and Japanese artisans of to-day have attained in their various manufactures, these manufactures are still carried on after the most primitive fashion. Each man works for himself, and works himself. He may chance to be the most renowned man in the profession, and yet his shop is hardly larger or better than that of his neighbor who is just starting on his career.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Co-operation, except as introduced into Japan by Western ideas, is unknown; large establishments, under one or more heads, are equally unknown. This is really conducive to better work; so is the fact that father transmits his business to son, and that sometimes for many generations the same pursuit is the distinctive mark of a particular family.

Yet such isolation is in no sense the outcome of self-consideration, nor intended for self-advancement. Antithetically, competition is as non-existent as co-operation. The man is not thinking of excelling his neighbors; he does not seclude himself in order the better to distance them. He does not consider them in the least. He works alone, because such is the natural way. The motive cause is not selfishness; it is just the opposite, the very absence of all thought of self. We see how deep-rooted in his nature and how strong the quality is, that even trade has so little influence to alter it.

In Korea, indifference on account of this quality is still further increased by the action of the Government. The desire on the part of the officials to make money prevents the merchants from making any, and naturally takes away what little incentive to work might still remain. The getting of office is not dependent upon successful business, but business depends upon the successful getting of an office. The merchants have the outward appearance of engaging in trade, but it is the officials who really do business. But with them there is, in like manner, no competition, as their operations are limited each to the field of his own magistracy.

One result is that, in Korea, there is no such thing as a price. Each man has his own price, as he has his own shop. Price also varies from day to day, not from change in value, but from change in caprice. This, however, is not so surprising as is the general unwillingness to part with their goods, except in the smallest possible quantities. Instead of hailing

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the opportunity to get rid of large amounts by a reduction in price, there is not only no such thing as a reduction in price dreamt of, but the dealer will not consent to the sale on any terms. His argument is that if he were to dispose of so much of his stock, he would be obliged to buy more, and the price would go up, which eventuality seems to him for some inexplicable reason a consummation most devoutly to be shunned. If, then, in buying, say, half a pound of tobacco, you hint that you will in all probability shortly want fifty pounds more, far from producing a favorable impression, as you intended, you will have made of yourself an object of suspicion and fear. This is what takes place in the necessaries of life. If, instead of these, you coveted certain luxuries, such as old curios, you would encounter much more difficulty. It is true that the articles lie patent to all, in shops that have no glass to shut them off from the passers-by, and may be touched and handled without hindrance or objection. But to attempt to buy them is a different matter. If you are bold enough to suggest such a thing, the proprietor treats you much as if you were some ruthless brigand who would deprive him of his little all. He names, in a forced sort of way, what he hopefully believes will be a prohibitory price, and then is horribly dismayed if it or anything in its neighborhood is accepted. If at last he does consent to part with the coveted object, he does so under a tacit protest that makes you feel as if you had seized the pet lamb or some reverenced family heirloom. You certainly have permanently altered the look of the place, and the gap will mutely reproach you as you pass his shop in your after walks. For purchasers of your temerity are so rare that for months together the same articles are to be seen day after day in their prescriptive corners of the same shops; and trade with these men is equivalent to a revolution in the established order of things, as objects exposed for sale get to be well-recognized

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

landmarks by which the comparative stranger learns to tell his whereabouts.

The same principle that thus underlies and saps all business modifies, though differently, his pursuit of pleasure. The Korean does not, it is true, always seek his pleasure alone. He finds it commonly in gatherings with other men, — all-day dinners or excursions in Korea, which the evil communication of Western ideas has corrupted into night entertainments in Japan. But though he seeks his pleasure in company with others, the company of others is not the pleasure he seeks. When he can, he goes on a garden or landscape party, in which the country plays the part, not of occasion, but of cause. Only when he must, for the state of the weather, dine without scenery, does he do so. The results in the two cases seem to be alike, but the motive causes and the adjuncts have in reality changed places. His off moments are given to his associates, but his soul is with Nature.

Lastly, in the matter of the affections, we see the same thing. So far as such a thing can be true at all, the far-Oriental might be said to be possessed by impersonal affection. The statement is almost a contradiction in terms, but not quite. For instance, his love is hardly worthy the name. Of all the higher mental and moral aspects of the feeling, he knows nothing. On the other hand, his filial affection, in which he seems at first far to surpass European nations, is largely a question of rigid etiquette.

Thus, then, the subject of impersonality is linked on the one hand with the position of woman, and on the other with the patriarchal system. To follow, therefore, the chain of our argument, we shall have next to glance for a moment at the ancient patriarchal system and its outcome to-day.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM.

THE second of the triad — second in place, because second in importance — is the patriarchal system.

Probably all nations, during their earlier stages of development to a position worthy the name, have lived under some form of patriarchal government. Such rule was equally true of each as a whole, and of its smallest divisible parts, — the families of which it was composed. Either in fiction or in fact, father and ruler were synonymous terms. But most nations also outgrew the system as they advanced in civilization. The nations of the far-East are peculiar, not in having had the custom, but in having continued it after they had arrived at what for a people are years of distinction.

To this result two causes were instrumental, — the general character of the people and the advent of Confucius. Both China and the Tartar peoples, Korea and Japan, have from the dawn of history evinced a most remarkable inclination and ability to stand still. It can hardly with propriety be called conservatism, especially in the case of the Tartar races, because while these races have showed a great attachment to their own things, they have always displayed an equal fondness for the things of others. They have invariably been as eager to borrow as tenacious to retain. The rapidity to adopt foreign ideas wholesale, which astounds us in Japan to-day, is no new trait. The Japanese did precisely

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the same with China and its civilization a thousand years ago; and Korea in some ways even more markedly has pursued a like course.

What this betokens in mind-constitution it is beside the subject to inquire here. We have now only to do with it as a fact.

The other cause was the existence of Confucius. This great man, though in no sense the founder of a religion, had an influence upon his times and upon succeeding ages as potent as if he had been such. He may, therefore, fittingly be compared with those who have created a faith.

On considering the matter, we shall find that the men whose teachings succeeding generations have agreed to worship — such as Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet — all lived at a time when the nations that gave them birth were in a certain transition stage of their life. (An apparent exception is to be found in Christ; but apart from the belief that in other respects he differed from the rest, it is to be noted that his influence was not upon the Jews nor yet upon the Greeks, but principally upon the Romans, who were not much given to speculation, and upon the northern hordes, who were just starting on their career.) These religious thinkers were thus worshipped for their very opportuneness. Their own greatness was of course the cause, but the occasion was the favorableness of the time. Such devoted adherence to any one man's words would probably be impossible now. They marked the stage when the nation, to which they belonged, awoke to emotional thought, when it began seriously to crave for a hereafter for each man's personality, and what seemed linked to these wishes, the idea of an abstract good. They formulated these wishes, and were believed. At a corresponding age in Chinese history lived the great Chinese sage; and though he preached not a religion, he was reverenced as if he had.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The teachings of Confucius, then, became law, — a moral law which has remained as fixed from the time it was promulgated as all else Chinese, — a fixity to which the laws of the Medes and Persians were as ephemeral as the hastily successive constitutions of French governments seem to the rest of mankind to-day. Now, Confucius lived at a time when the continuation or development of what had been the patriarchal system was still in full vigor, and it is not surprising that he should have given his attention rather to the improving of what he found already in existence than to the inventing of a new scheme for society. He did not start the custom, to be sure; but finding it in motion, he gave it an impulse which has helped to send it down through so many centuries. But it is most unfortunate that he did so; for, stamped with his sanction, it has had a life not properly its own. Its existence has been artificially, because arbitrarily, prolonged, and it has long since outlived its usefulness.

Instead of outgrowing, therefore, an undue reverence for age, — a reverence which was at least more natural when the age of the father bore a somewhat greater ratio to the age of the son (both being reckoned, as by heredity they should be, from the birth of mankind) than was true as the centuries rolled on, — the peoples of the Asiatic eastern coast perpetuated and crystallized a changing phase into a permanent condition. Tied not to their mother's apron-strings, indeed, but as securely to their father's will, they have suffered from the practice as surely as a boy does.

It is not, indeed, with a rude primeval patriarchal system that we have here to do. The lapse of time has, to a certain extent, changed the external features of the custom. This was inevitable as society passed into a more and more civilized condition. But as the reason for it became virtually less, it became virtuously greater. It passed from the sphere of necessity to that

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of morals. To say, therefore, that the father of a family is, till the time of his death, a law to his descendants, is to express but one half of the fact, and the least potent half at that. An intense filial piety on the part of the son must be taken into account to give a true idea of the power of the custom. This filial piety is the one great moral principle of the far-East. All others exist, as it were, in abeyance. Truth is unknown, honesty largely out of practice, and chastity a luxury wherever it is a fact. Most of these principles are preached, and the good in books are held up to reverence as observing them; but for every-day life they have lapsed by desuetude.

After a peculiarly aggravating instance of Japanese household cheating, I was, one afternoon, in Tokio, discussing this subject with a friend who had opportunely dropped in. He had lived for years in Japan, and had studied Korean, — one of the three men at that time who had. "I will give you," said he, "a preface to the state of things. It happened to me, but it might as well have happened to you. For art's sake the person is immaterial. The very first word I learned in Korean was the word 'suspicion.'"

Around the father there gathers almost a religious veneration; for to a Korean there is nothing, from ministering to his thousand daily wants to sharing his exile, which a son is not compelled by his own right feeling to do for his father, and the more he makes of himself a slave the more is he by others esteemed a master. In books of moral tales for the young or old, the greater number of stories turn upon examples of self-sacrifice of this kind. In our social system we commonly receive first kindness and care from the generation before, and then transmit it to the one to come. In theirs, a man pays it first, and then looks to his own children for repayment of the debt.

The far-Eastern peoples believe in a future life and also in a personal immortality. In Buddhism this at last fades away

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

into Nirvana; but in the aboriginal belief, so far as it is formulated at all, personality is supposed to last forever. Granted such a belief, it is but a step from the reverence paid to one's ancestors during life, to continue that reverence to their memories after death. The worship of ancestors, so called, follows then directly from the patriarchal system; and its observances are logically in keeping with the idea. To call it a worship, however, is misleading. It is simply a form of showing respect. Worship, in the sense in which it can be shown to another human being, is paid to their spirits, as is befitting those who were held so high in estimation during their life on earth. Food is placed before their shrines, but only to show the watchful care of those who loved them when alive. That they can materially need or make use of it is held only by the lower classes, who, in matters of superstition, will swallow anything themselves, and credit others with a like capacity. Prayers are made to them; but what are prayers but the inward communing with such as are far from us, and beyond the reach of spoken words or written thoughts? Stated times are set apart for these observances; but do we not the like, when on the first day of the new year we call ceremoniously upon our friends?

The worship of ancestors is, properly speaking, only a communion with the dead. It is in no sense a religion, nor a part of one. The dead are not deified; they are regarded as beings of the same order still that they were known to be on earth. As depending upon the belief in a personal immortality, the rite suggests at first the supposition that it must be religious itself. But though it follows from an intrinsically religious idea, the idea is not, as it were, an intrinsic part of the rite, although absolutely necessary to its existence.

From these observances depends a singular custom, — one which at first seems to us a reversal of the natural order of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

things, — the ennobling of a man's ancestors to the rank conferred on him, instead of so treating his descendants. And yet, of the two methods, it is the more strictly logical. That a man's descendants shall inherit his great qualities is at least doubtful; that all his male descendants shall do so, is practically impossible; and that the eldest son of the eldest son *ad perpetuum* shall invariably do so, while all the rest do not, is simply preposterous. On the other side, from what we now know of the principle of heredity, we can safely affirm that among his ancestors, and probably along a tolerably well-sustained line of descent, there must have been a part, at least, of the talent which the man himself displayed. Somewhere it existed, though it might be hard to fix the spot. For fear, therefore, of missing the deserving, all are honored alike.

On this subject there occurs, in a certain book called, as we might paraphrase it, "Illustrated Moral Tales of the Great and Good," the story of a dream. It was a dream which was not all a dream, not only because it all came true, but because it was written down, and so has lived for years in the memories of successive generations of readers.

There was once in Korea a certain man by the name of Pok. In a certain year of the period Kong Sin, he came to be promoted to the literary fellowship called "the improved gentleman." About a month before he was thus honored, he dreamed one night a very peculiar dream. Suddenly he seemed to see standing in the middle of the room three human figures. The stature of one of them was of the size of life. He recognized it as his father's. The second of the three was that of an unknown man, whose size was half that of a human being. The third was also unknown to him, and of a very small stature. As he sat bolt upright, staring at them, the three figures spoke, and with one accord said to him: "Before long you will be promoted, and become

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

'an improved gentleman.' We had much toil and trouble even in attempting to attain this rank. We could not compass our end. You, in our stead, will win the honor and fame we so long strove for. You also should try hard to do good, and thus leave to your descendants the reaping of the harvest of your good actions." Then Pok, amazed, asked of his father, "Who are these two figures?" And his father replied, "That figure with half the stature of common men is your grandfather. That other, of a still more diminutive appearance, is your great-grandfather." All three then vanished. This was what Pok told to others when he awoke from his peculiar dream.

The importance of apparitions, as we see, is measured by their bulk. The race has long since gotten over the estimating of the size of minds by the comparative size of bodies, but the sarcasm of dreamland has preserved it in that world whose denizens are purely immaterial. The family had been gradually increasing in worth. As the increase of ability was apparently one half at a generation, it is open to those who advocate the theory that great men inherit their qualities solely from the female side, to believe that instead of being the result of continued application on the part of the sons, as the tale would have us suppose, the intellect came in with the successive mothers.

But it is rather the concrete of the principle than the abstract that is potent with the far-Eastern mind. Once every year a man must journey to the tombs of his ancestors, there to perform certain rites. To this visit attaches the pomp inseparable from the rank of the pilgrim. Now, it would be out of all keeping that a man of high rank should take a long and laborious journey in order to do honor to those of meaner position. They must therefore be of the same position as the man who comes to visit them, and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

consequently they are ennobled at once to his own station. A man must not look down upon those, when dead, whom he has looked up to when they were alive.

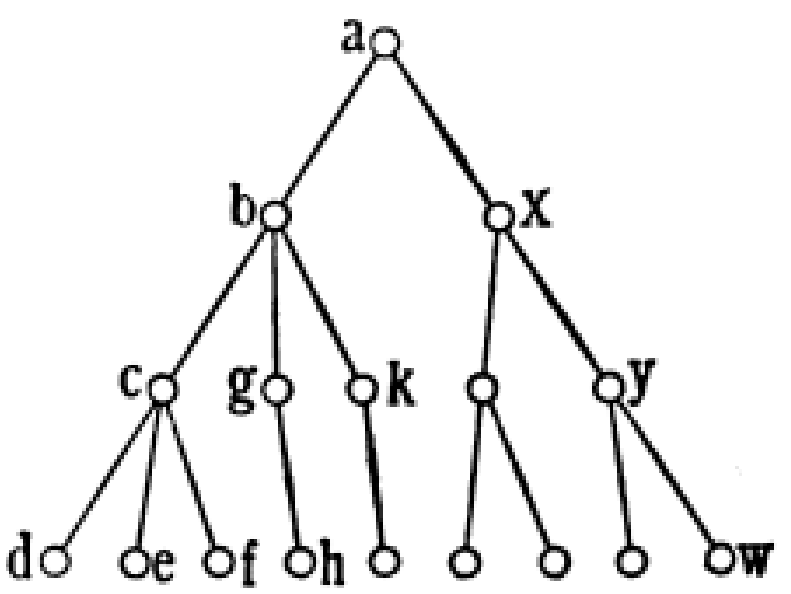
The honoring of ancestors is the most important outgrowth of the patriarchal system. The next in importance is the question of property and its distribution. As we should suppose from the general principle, the ownership is vested absolutely in the father. During his life no son can really call his soul — still less such dross as property — his own. The son lives by himself with his own family, cultivates his farm, and lives from out the proceeds. Apparently he owns it; but in truth it is all his father's, both land and chattels. His father can sell it over his head if he feels so inclined. Of course, the paternal position has duties coextensive with its powers; and a father is always bound to support his child, whether that child be four years of age or forty.

At the father's death the eldest son becomes the head of the family. But here the two powers cease to be one; the headship of the clan and the ownership of all the property become separated. If the father dies intestate, the eldest son divides the property among himself and his brothers at his pleasure. If the father leaves a will, it must be of a specified form, by which two-thirds of the estate go to the eldest son, and the other third is divided among the other sons. The daughters inherit nothing. In fact, if married, — the usual case, — they have ceased to belong to the family at all. The large proportion left in this manner to the eldest son is to some extent accounted for by his obligation to support his mother and impecunious brothers. These laws exhibit a curious inversion of our principles; a will is not optional, and the distribution of the property of an intestate is.

There is, however, a sort of lien upon all this property. The head of the family is the ancestral representative. To his

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

charge are committed the expenditures for the deceased. For this purpose, and for this purpose only, he has unlimited power over all the property. He may call upon any member to furnish him with what he deems necessary, and may sell his relatives' property, real or personal, for this end. Such occurrence is, however, not common, as his means, due to the lion's share he inherits, are ample for the purpose. On the death of the eldest son, his eldest son becomes the head of the family. If he should not yet be grown up, the oldest uncle acts in his stead during his minority. And so the post descends, the eldest of the eldest being always the head of the clan. The annexed table will make this clear: *d*, for instance, is head of the clan, *a*, *b*, and *c* being supposed dead. Now, in ancestral matters touching *c* alone, only *e* and *f* are affected, and owe him obedience. In matters connected with *b*, *h* would also be included.



So would *g* and *k*, although of an older generation, because *d* represents the common ancestor. While if the rites had to do with *a*, all the rest as far as *x*, *y*, and *w* would be subject to his command.

Dependent upon the clan relationship is the subject of names. Commonly, a Korean has three names, — for instance, Yu Kil Chun. The first name, Yu, is the family name, — the name that he shares in common with all the other members of the same clan. Next in generality, comes what we may call his degree of relationship from the common ancestor name. This is a peculiar and exceedingly convenient appellative. Every kinsman the same degree removed from the common ancestor

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

is given for one of his three names the same cognomen, and each degree has a different cognomen from all the other degrees. Let me make clear what I mean by an example. Suppose Yu again the common ancestor. All his sons would have, let us say, Jin as the degree name. One would be Yu Sok Jin, another Yu Ik Jin, and the third Yu Yong Jin. Their children, again, would all be Chun, as Yu Kil Chun, Yu Sok Chun, Yu Mok Chun, etc. Thus, though Yu Sok Chun and Yu Ik Chun were so far apart that they had never seen each other, still on meeting for the first time they would at once be able to recognize the degree each was removed from their common ancestor, — to what generation each belonged. This is not only useful in ordinary life, but it becomes an easy criterion of legality in questions of adoption, as we shall see presently. This degree name is decided upon by the head of the family. He announces his choice, and all his relatives must conform in the naming of their children. Its place among the three names is not fixed. It may either come in the middle or last. But this is really no bar to its discrimination, as every man knows himself which it is, in his own or other generations, and can therefore easily pick it out from among the various names of his relatives. The remaining name of the three is each man's individual name.

I said that commonly a Korean has three names. Sometimes he has but two. In this case his given name, which stands last, his clan name always standing first, is spelled with two Chinese characters, although pronounced as one word, and the first of the two is the degree character, so that even in this case writing would give the clew, though speaking would not.

So closely related to the above is the matter of adoption, that it seems fitting to speak of it here. It is an exceedingly common practice both in Korea and Japan. In the latter place, indeed, it is frequently a matter of no small inconvenience to foreigners

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

who have to do with young men, — as, for instance, the foreign professors at the University of Tokio. In an average class, once every fortnight or so, somebody comes up to announce his change of name; and not content with one such change, the same man will often change and change about till memory refuses to follow the endless complications. The instructor starts with one set of students; and before the year is out the class has apparently changed, to the extent of half of its members, into other personalities. Whether a man is eligible to adoption, by whoever it may be, I do not know; but certain it is that he can be, and frequently is, adopted by his maternal relatives, which is sufficient to produce a complete alteration in both his names, surname as well as given name. (Our term "Christian name" is of course unmeaning here, and "Buddhist name" is not in accordance with the mode of investiture.)

In Korea, matters are not so confusing. A man can be adopted only by his paternal relatives, and only by a certain number of them. I do not mean simultaneously, of course, but consecutively. To a Korean the name seems a great part of the personality; and indeed most of us too, men especially, if pushed, would confess to a lurking quasi-belief in the same idea. However he may be adopted, therefore, a Korean never changes his name. And this is only possible, of course, under the first of the given conditions. The second condition is for the purpose of conforming as nearly as possible to the process of nature, — namely, that the elder should adopt the younger. This would be likely to arrange itself in the actual matter of years; but complications might arise as regards the family standing of elder and younger in the matter of ancestral duties, as of a distant cousin who was of a generation younger than the man he was desirous of adopting. If, therefore, promiscuous adoption were permitted, it

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

would soon throw into inextricable confusion the matter of comparative relationship to the common ancestor. To guard against such a catastrophe, the degree names come in most usefully. A man can adopt only those whose degree name is at least one degree lower than his own. By this means the same step is taken down the line as would be the case had the adopted been born a son, instead of being so constituted by law.

To enumerate all the various duties of a son to a father would be as tedious as it would be difficult. All that the utmost filial affection can suggest, it lies within his province to do. To obey his father in everything from the pettiest minutiæ to matters of the gravest concern, is but a title of what is expected of him. He should anticipate as well as accomplish the paternal desires. To suppose that such affection always, or even commonly, exists would be to contradict what we know of human nature. That the outward expression is there, is certainly the case. As for the spirit, it is like all ideals which we believe in and to which in our better moments we attempt to conform our lives.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XV.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN.

WE now come to the last of the triad, — the position of woman in the social economy. More properly, we may speak of it as her want of position; for the principle is, in Korea, hardly more than a negation, and, like negations generally, has been most influential, not in what it denies, but in what the absence of it has permitted to take its place. Indeed, beyond analogous cases, the influence so exerted has been indirect in its effect. In other words, the withdrawal of the influence of woman from the social system has not had the destructive effect upon that system which might have been anticipated for it; for in Korea woman practically does not exist. Materially, physically, she is a fact; but mentally, morally, socially, she is a cipher.

It has been suggested, and by some even maintained, that were woman to cease to exist — her physical place in reproduction being taken by a principle of self-perpetuation — mankind would speedily descend through a stage of lawlessness back to barbaric brutality. With us such a problem is purely imaginary; for since we left our primitive condition of savagery, no such state of things under large, general, and in other respects normal, conditions has ever been tried. Isolated communities have, it is true, lived quite apart from woman, but under circumstances differing, in other ways than simply by her absence, from the normal. Where a lapse has occurred,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

there have always been, in addition to this, influences at work sufficient of themselves to produce a state of barbarity.

Now, in the far-East the experiment has been tried, though, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, hardly with that intent. There could scarcely be anything more in contrast to such a thing than the taken-for-granted immutability of a far-Eastern custom. For decades of centuries social life has ebbed and flowed under precisely such a, to us imaginary, state of things; and the result is not in the least what might have been predicted. Instead of being rougher than his fellows on the other side of the world, man is there distinctly less rough and brutal, not only in his actions but in his thoughts, yet without losing a tittle of his pluck or his determination. Indeed, it may well be asked whether woman, on the whole, is a factor to an increase of gentleness of a race; whether her presence as a prize is not such as largely to offset, by inducing rivalry and animosity among men, what she engenders of tenderness toward herself. That she has a gradual effect toward an ennobling of the character of those to whom she is a cause of inspiration, and so of the race, is another matter.

One of the most interesting points in the study of the far-East are these instances of the every-day practice of, to us, seemingly visionary social conditions.

Man, then, in certain respects, has not suffered from a want of woman's help; and yet, for all the influence she has had upon his character, feelings, thoughts, she might as well not have been. When you have said that she is the mother of his children from necessity rather than from choice, you have said all that there is of positive on the subject to be said. But this gives only a silhouette instead of a picture. The outlines, indeed, are there, and one who knows the person beforehand perceives the resemblance; but it conveys very little to a stranger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

This is her history: From her birth to her seventh year she enjoys her freedom, untrammelled by those restrictions with which society will later entomb her alive. She runs wild as any other creature during this heyday of her extreme youth. Her ignorance of her sex is her excuse, for she is born to the misfortune of growing up a girl. At seven years of age she is shut up, — a seclusion to last her life. At this age boys and girls are separated, never in a general manner to meet again. Whether she calls up in after life the happy moments of these fleeting years may well be doubted, considering the tender age at which they are closed to her forever. To the boy belongs henceforward the world; to the girl only the narrow limits of the women's apartments, — a sort of secular cloister from which the only exit is by the veil of matrimony to the *régime* of another household, in every, its minutest, particular, save for the strange faces of strange women, like the one she has left behind.

While she lives in her father's house, no man save her father or her brothers may look upon her; after she has migrated to her husband's, only he and her father-in-law ever see her. Even to those who knew her before, she is now utterly lost, for she has passed from one family bodily into another. She has ceased to belong to the first and become a part of the second, and her position in this second household is precisely as if she had been born in it. Only in the brief monient of the marriage ceremony, in which she steps from one realm into the other, — neither of them hers, — is she ever, during the whole course of her life, visible to mankind. Yet even then she plays the part of a puppet.

Marriage, in Korea, is a very important rite. It is, as we have seen, the making of the man; and in another very different way it is the only great step in a woman's life. It is, indeed, no step upward for her: she rises not a whit by the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

move; but it is what is really quite as material, a complete change of environment. "My people shall be thy people," is with her no beautiful expression of self-abandonment to another, but a statement of a stern prosaic necessity. The subject turns, not upon the fancies of lovers, but upon the facts of life.

The marriage system is based upon two social principles: the one is the absolute power of a father over his offspring, and the other the existence of a species of brokerage as a means to the accomplishment of the transaction. There exist a class of men whose sole business in life consists in being matrimonial go-betweens, or marriage-brokers. To them is intrusted the whole management of the affair, much as in other countries a man would act in the hiring of a house, only that here the affair is even more blindly committed to them. In the hiring of a house a man would ordinarily go to see the house he had offered him, whereas here no such preliminary inspection is permitted. The whole matter is performed by letter, and the leap taken at last very much in the dark. Even this correspondence is carried on, not by the man who is, after all, most interested in the result, but by his father. The opportunities offered the middle men of plying their business lucratively at the expense of deceiving both parties are numberless, and it would be more than human nature did they not occasionally yield to the temptation. The way in which a father who has a marriageable girl or boy he is anxious to settle in life, goes to work to accomplish his object is this: He seeks out some marriage-broker, and states his case, — what he has to offer, and what he expects in return. The broker then looks up some other man who has one of the opposite sex on his hands, and makes overtures to him. Letters on the subject then pass through the broker between the parties. Then, in case of agreement on terms, the marriage contract is drawn up

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and respectively signed. The geomancer is next consulted, and a suitable day selected for the ceremony. The age of the groom is added to the age of the bride, and the star that rules the destiny of the two in one is the star whose day is chosen for the beginning of the new life. This is the universal custom; and but few dare omit it, lest misfortune of one kind or another overtake the couple so inauspiciously joined.

On the day so appointed, the bridegroom and his family repair to the home of the bride's father, commonly on horseback. There, in the principal room of the house, a large feast stands prepared, which is the only unproblematical bit of happiness in the whole matter. The important question is shrouded in doubt. To a man not inured by the hereditary stolidity of ages, the moment must be one of most unpleasant uncertainty, somewhat like the excitement with which a gambler, whose all is staked upon the turn, watches the dancing of the roulette ball. For the bride enters veiled, and so she remains through the whole of the ceremony. This consists of certain formulæ repeated by each in turn, during the mumbling of which the couple bow thrice to each other. Then the bride lifts her veil, and the groom for the first time gazes upon the face of her to whom he is now irrevocably united. Lucky he is, indeed, if the vision pleases him. The principal performers then vanish from the scene, and the real enjoyment begins. The parents — who, because they stand at a safe distance from the consequences of the act, are of course immensely pleased — fall to and refresh themselves, indulging meanwhile in a highly commendable outburst of feeling toward their newly acquired friends of the last quarter of an hour. The banquet disappears in clouds of smoke; and after several hours of prolonged festivity, the families separate, more affectionately united than one would suppose could ordinarily fall to the lot of the couple more immediately concerned.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The will of the two fathers is law. No properly brought up son would so much as dream of disobeying; and as for a daughter, she is not consulted in the matter at all. So much for what is usually considered to be the most important act in a woman's life. Thenceforward she is simply the mother of children. Her husband has absolute power over her, except that he may not take her life, or otherwise too brutally maltreat her. She lives in her own suite of rooms, and only goes abroad heavily veiled, or in a closed palanquin, to visit her female friends. Not only no man save her husband sees her, but even to him she forms no part of his life. A man may be another's intimate friend for a lifetime, and yet he would never know what his friend's wife looked like, nor even that he had one, save for the social standing such a relation confers upon the man himself.

To our ideas, a Korean marriage is a very odd thing, — not the ceremony, which is simply *sui generis*, but the fact. A Korean marries, not because he is in love, nor because he wishes for descendants, nor yet to gain money or to make an advantageous alliance, but simply and solely to be married, — abstractly as it were. To him it is the realization of no particular fancy, but the accomplishment of a general good, — a step upward in the social ladder. He loses nothing, unless the result of drawing in a lottery be accounted a loss; and he gains a position in society. He premises marriage to a conclusion of status; and his premises are about as important before, and as valueless after, the fact as are those of the logician. Unless he marries, he is accounted a boy, though he should live to be a hundred. He would then follow in position the youngest of the married men, in spite of having lived years enough to be their grandfather. In consequence, betrothals take place while still the principals are children, and are consummated at the earliest possible moment.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The etiquette of mourning sometimes interferes most sadly with a promised marriage, for while the mourning lasts none of the ordinary avocations of life may be carried on. *A fortiori*, the consummation of a betrothal — a marriage — is impossible during that time. The terms of mourning are of a ghastly length. A death in the family is thus a doubly serious event. Indeed, death, being in this manner brought into direct antagonism with possible births, has had a most marked effect in retarding the increase of the population. The population in Korea for many decades, not to say centuries, has hardly more than held its own

Difficult as it may be for a household to minister to the wants of a living father, it is an infinitely more troublesome event to have him die; for then a son is obliged to become to all intents and purposes a hermit for the space of three years. The father, of course, is, of all a man's relatives, the longest mourned; the mourning for a mother comes next in length, requiring a period of two years. But, curiously enough, if she survive her husband, although she has not become the head of the family, which, as we have seen, passed to the eldest son, she is mourned, when she dies, for the same space of time he would have been. For other relatives there are correspondingly long periods. No inconsiderable part of most men's lives is, therefore, taken up with mourning. When a man marries he would have the horror of seeing — like a spectre at the feast, a spectre of the wine-cup — a doubled vista of terrible days of gloom to come, were it not that once married the wife ceases to belong to her own family. But what might be perpetuated through life does indeed sometimes fall as a shadow across his path during that time in which new obligations have been incurred with no corresponding alleviations, the period of betrothal. Each new bereavement among the doubled circle of relatives,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

first on one side and then on the other, causes a further postponement of the wished-for event. Couples have, in this fashion, waited for twelve years before they were able to be united.

There is but one true wife, but any man may possess as many concubines as he can support. That they may inhabit the same set of houses, the permission of the wife is necessary; but this is rarely refused.

The children of concubines are in a sort of neutral condition between legitimacy and illegitimacy. As a rule they are illegitimate, though in no sense dishonored by being so, and under certain conditions they are legitimatized. These conditions are in default of issue by the true wife. When this happens, the children of some one of the concubines chosen by the father step into the shoes the others would have worn, and become in all respects what they should have been. As descendants are deemed very important, — as important as ancestors with us, — the practice of legitimatizing is universal. It is a most common occurrence for the reigning sovereign to have been the issue of a concubine. This is less the case in Korea, where the king appoints as his successor any one he sees fit, than in Japan.

The number of concubines being solely a question of the pocket, the great mass of the people have none at all, the poorer officials one or two, and the wealthy many.

Woman is thus no companion for man. She no more forms part of society in its restricted sense, than she enters as a factor into its more general meaning. Social gatherings are exclusively composed of men. But man, after all, even in the far-East, is human; and it is more or less than human not to crave the society of the fair sex. To satisfy this longing, was invented what is best known by the Japanese name "geisha," or "accomplished person." These "accomplished persons"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

form a class by themselves, whose duty is to touch with a little gayety the more serious feasts of men. We shall hear more of them later.

Woman has no greater legal than she has social standing. As she enjoys none of the benefits of society, it is but fair that she should be exempted from its obligations and even, in some sort, from its penalties. She is known to the law simply as the wife of so-and-so, and so-and-so is bound to answer for her good behavior. Except that the law admits of no such term, her husband might, with a certain justice, be called her master. If she is caught offending, he is made to suffer, exceptions being granted for a few specified crimes for which he cannot in justice be held to be responsible. It is much as in the Roman law: a master was responsible for the actions of his slaves except in particular cases. The relation also suggests the Roman *patria potestas*.

So far as their appearance is concerned, women in Söul may be divided into three classes: those who are completely invisible, because inside their palanquins; those who are practically invisible, because only to be made out as a mass of clothes walking; and, lastly, those who, though by their daily necessary vocations rendered visible to the material eye, are to the Korean mind as completely invisible as the other two. This distinction in visibility arises solely from wealth. The richer are carried through the streets in closed palanquins, attended by a maid-servant, who follows the cortege or hastens by its side. The less wealthy walk, closely veiled by a dress which, though made after the fashion of any other dress, is thrown, regardless of the odd appearance and staring uselessness of its pendent sleeves, over the head and held together in front of the face by the hand within. The very lowest class — such as draw water at the wells, which always stand in the street — are obliged to go back and forth bareheaded

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to their occupation, but are never noticed in any manner by the throng that surges past. To pay them the attention of a glance would be the height of impropriety. To accost one of them would be not only an insult, but so total a want of etiquette as to be looked upon as insanity.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XVI.

PRESENTATION AT COURT.

SHORTLY after my arrival in Söul took place my presentation to his Majesty. A presentation at court is certainly not a momentous affair; but it becomes something of an event in a land where to Europeans it is among the first of its kind. So, at least, it was considered by my sympathetic household. The officials connected with my daily well-being saw in the occasion a prophetic vision of what might, in the fulness of time, befall each of them, and to the servants it was a sufficient reflection of glory to look upon one who was destined so soon to look upon their king. In consequence, I found myself much in the position of a *débutante* dressed and waiting for the all-important moment when she shall depart to her first ball. I was correspondingly looked at, examined, admired, and finally devoutly pinnacled, as one who had suddenly become, by force of circumstances, an object of almost reverential regard. Their simple ecstasy instinctively called up a vision of that adoring family circle in all its personal detail, even down to the aged nurse, always specially summoned in such cases to behold her former darling emerging from the chrysalis of girlhood to become in an hour the resplendent butterfly of fashion.

The moment for departure arrived, and I descended to the courtyard, where my palanquin lay waiting, while my

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

household stood gathered on the steps to gaze. I crawled into the box, still feeling the glances I could no longer see. The coolies raised me from the ground, and bore me from admiring eyes through the gateway into the street.

The distance to one of the outer gates of the palace was not above a quarter of a mile. Just outside of it the palanquin was set down. I crawled out. As I emerged, I noticed sentries on either hand by the side of the gateway; and advancing toward it an official came forward from within to meet me and act as escort across the great plain of the outer courtyard. This area occupied several acres in extent, while through the middle of it ran a wide paved way made of many small blocks of stone. Along this we walked.[1] Around the square ran a high wall of brick, save where gateways gave admittance to other courtyards beyond. Through the farther of these gateways we eventually passed, amid a crowd of soldiers, not drawn up, as would be the case anywhere else, but gathered in an irregular body, in an off-duty sort of way, whose business consisted apparently in being very much interested in the proceedings. They were all unarmed, and quite without officers. Passing between the lines, or rather squads, we entered another courtyard, at the farther end of which stood a building thronged with officials within and servants without. At our approach several of the former came out on the steps, and among them I recognized the faces of my friends.

They were all clad in court costume. This costume was striking, and not without a certain picturesque beauty, in spite of its oddity. It began with a hat made of finely woven silk in the form of a rounded cone terraced in front. On either side of

[1] Officials summoned to the palace on important business enter by another gateway, — the Hap Mun, or Casket Gate, whence the name has in some sort come to signify the king. The name "Sublime Porte" had its rise in a similar natural custom.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

this projected wings, like gigantic ears, fitted into the lower part of the crown, from which they stuck out at right angles. They are said to be appurtenances to typify the ready receiving of his Majesty's commands. The dress was composed of a long silk tunic of a pale pink or an equally pale blue, reaching to the ankles, and tied by a ribbon in a bow over the right breast. Outside of this was worn a belt, rectangular in shape, which fitted the body on the sides, its shortest diameter, and stuck out several inches in front and behind. As it would never have stayed on of itself, it was unostentatiously tied on securely by a silken cord. Sewn on to the tunic just below the chest was an embroidered plastron in gold thread, representing two cranes in flight, correspondingly fitted to each other by being mutually upside down. To the lower ranks is permitted but one of the birds. The crane is, in some sort, a Korean official symbol, as the dragon is a Chinese one. Around the neck the tunic was cut out in an oval, and filling this, sewn on to the inside of the stuff, was a white collar of cotton. On their feet, instead of the customary low shoe, they all wore high boots, the tops of which were lost under the tunics. These imparted to the wearers a certain accoutred appearance, suggestive of heavy weather. The reason of this reversal of the natural order of things, as it seems to us, I was at a loss to understand till after I had observed the ways of the court, when it no longer struck me as strange.

They strode forward to welcome me as I mounted the stone steps, and led me inside to a reception-room, where the American Minister among various court-dignitaries sat awaiting me. As soon as we had shaken hands and I had been presented to such of the company as I did not already know, a collation was served to us on a table which, though by no means large, almost completely filled the room. It was of foreign origin, as were also the chairs about it, — gifts to his Majesty from abroad. It

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

is one of the strongest traits of Tartar blood, that the Koreans should have withstood their use so long, with China herself using them next door. As yet the supply is very limited, only his Majesty and the Foreign Office having any. Even in matters connected with them, I more than suspect that the chairs formed a part of the portable ornaments, and were carried about from place to place as occasion required. At times they certainly had an individually familiar air.

Among the company sat the Lord High Chamberlain, remarkable not for being Lord High Chamberlain, — for that is a dignity in which rotation in office is not infrequent, — but for having made himself the first official robber in a land pre-eminent in such official specimens of the guild. Barabbas Min had a hard and cunning expression, such as rarely falls to the lot even of those whose business it is to prey upon their kind. He was also distinguished for his relationships. In fact, he owed his position and business prospects to the most important of these, — that of being uncle to the queen. But another of them even more commanded my admiration for its apparent impossibility. He was father to his own nephew; in reality, he was adopted father to this young man who was court favorite. But as everybody omitted the adopted part of the designation in ordinary parlance, and in the same breath that they informed me that he was young Min's father, spoke of young Min's father as dead, and added that this man was very unlike his deceased brother, it was some little while before I clearly comprehended the connection.

We tarried in this hall, tea-drinking, some time, — for nothing in Korea is ever done in a hurry, — until at last a messenger arrived to summon me to the royal presence. We rose, my sponsors and I, bade good-by to the others, and filed out, down the flight of steps, into the courtyard. There were three of us: Hong Yŏng Sik came first, then the American Minister,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and then I. In this order we strode along, in solemn procession, across one court, through two or three gates, and then into another open space. The long court-stride of Hong — the official ceremonial gait, something after the fashion of the stage walk of the old tragedians — lent a certain theatrical impressiveness to our approach. The effect was not diminished by his costume, for he was clad in pale pink clothes. To Korean notions he probably suggested something quite different; for his long stride gave him an up-and-down rhythmical motion not unlike the stately march of a crane when walking, — a bird whose supposed dignity of presence, compared with other fowls, causes it to be greatly admired by both Koreans and Chinese. I had ample opportunity to appreciate his assumed manner; for to walk in Indian file is not the most reassuring of ceremonies. Personally, I have no scruple in confessing that, do my best, I felt I was not that mixture of dignity and ease which I was vainly trying to impersonate. I came to the conclusion that to walk in public is one of the most difficult of accomplishments. Indeed, I mentally indorsed the Hindoo philosopher's maxim — at least as far as dignity was concerned — that to sit is better than to stand.

During our advance it began to dawn upon me why long boots form a part of the court dress, while low shoes are universally worn elsewhere. For in spite of the occasion I could not be quite oblivious to the character of the ground. The truth was that wherever the paving ceased there was an abundance of mud; and with all due respect to one's bearing, it was at times advisable to pick one's way. The mud solved what had before seemed a riddle. Whether or not it be the true cause of the apparent solecism in foot-gear I do not know, but it offered to my mind a sufficient explanation. For within the palace the officials are all obliged

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to go on foot, whereas without they are invariably carried in palanquins; whence the need of boots in the former place and the luxury of shoes at all other times.

When we had at last passed safely through the ordeal of the courtyard, we reached a flight of steps at the opposite end, leading to the open pavilion, from which royalty had been scanning us the while. Down the middle of this had been spread a carpet; but our boots were so muddy that we all skirted it, and passed up, balancing ourselves on the bordering edge of stone instead. In this hazardous manner we scaled the eminence where royalty sat. It was a building like the others, except that it was entirely open in front. In the centre, toward the back, flanked by several ministers and protected in front by a table, was seated his Majesty.

No sooner had we reached the top of the steps than Hong fell nearly flat on his face, — the usual Korean prostration before royalty, — while we began the first of our series of three bows, and then continued alternately bowing and advancing till the last one landed us on the farther side of the table. His Majesty rose for the interview. He was a man of about thirty years of age. In stature he was rather under the average Korean height than over it. He may have been five feet seven inches without his shoes, which raised him an inch more.

The king was dressed in what resembled, in general, the court dress, and differed from it only in the details. His hat was somewhat similar to that of the officials; but instead of being black, was of a very dark-blue color. It also had wings; but they were fastened straight up behind, as if folded in rest. His tunic, which was after the same fashion as theirs and similarly tied, was of a brilliant red, — in Korea the kingly color. The belt was richer in material, but similar in shape; and the plastron, instead of having cranes embroidered on it, had the Chinese dragon. In place of the boots, he wore the ordinary

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

shoe. This, in some sort, carried out my theory of the mud, as he alone needs not to walk about.

His face was singularly pleasing, — one of those faces that you like from the moment you first see it, and that in time you grow to love; and my after-acquaintance with him taught me that his face was truly the mirror of his character. His smile especially was winning. As I stood there with his eyes fixed upon mine, a feeling crept over me that he was really as glad to see me as his words formally expressed. Presentations are not prolific in conversation. The fact is its own best expression. Like all moments which are long prepared for, it was quickly passed. To prolong an effect is in some sort to dull it. A few sentences, and the interview was over.

Then began the retreat. Precisely similar in detail to the approach, everything had to be performed backwards. To turn one's back upon royalty is of course impossible. So we retreated as gracefully as we could, bowing at intervals, till we had reached the mystic number three, and arrived at the same time at the top of the flight of steps. Hong, in the mean time, was prostrating himself as he had done on entering. Once at the steps, we fell again into line, and filed down them in the same order we had come. Then our supernaturally solemn procession took up its march across the courtyard. We had need to walk as impressively as we could; for, though invisible to us, many a female eye was watching the sight from behind the paper sides of the houses. Apparently there were only the group in the Audience Hall and a few soldiers to gaze at us, but in truth we were being scanned by an eager assemblage of fair ones gathered behind the screens. Cruel custom debarred them from witnessing more openly the ceremony. But nothing is insurmountable to female curiosity; and when, in addition to the universal inheritance of their sex in this respect, we remember the long-pent-up accumulation of ages bequeathed

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

them from an unsatisfied past, it is no wonder that the opacity of paper proved no obstacle to their ingenuity. Had we had the ears to listen, innumerable little pistol-shots would have spoken to us of holes where delicate fingers had perforated the paper to open views for observant eyes. It was under such a fire that we had to conduct our retreat across the square until we had once more reached the friendly cover of the feast pavilion. Here we were met with an enthusiasm befitting our orderly escape from so merciless a scrutiny. Good things were once more set before us, and we had soon forgotten the difficulties of being *en évidence* in the more solid delights of seclusion. But it was only an interlude, a mere truce between the battles; for the ceremony was but half over. There was more to come. There was yet the presentation to the Crown Prince. To add to the awkwardness of tramping about in evening-dress at that hour of the morning, it was horribly cold, and my muscles threatened to become even less manageable than under ordinary conditions. So bitter was it that the American Minister, who had a cold he was afraid of increasing, decided to forego this new ordeal. So Hong and I sallied forth alone. This time we took another direction. We turned to the left instead of to the right, but otherwise we exactly repeated the experiences of half an hour before. Two, however, is a much less awkward number in single file than three; and in spite of an equal number of courtyards, the distance did not seem nearly so long. Besides, custom began to tell. I was beginning to feel as if marching in solemn procession, through the mud, of a winter's day, insufficiently clad in evening dress, under eager examination, was my ordinary pastime.

The Crown Prince received us, installed in his own pavilion, after the same fashion that his father had done. He was a little boy of ten. Seclusion and an enforced dignity befitting his position had given him a look beyond

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

his years. His face lacked the beauty of his father's; but it is perhaps unfair to criticise what has never known a youth, and has not yet arrived at manhood. The face as yet knows not what it is. The complexion was singularly colorless, but I suspect that much of this, so marked was it, was due to the use of chalk, — a common practice in the far-East. His eyes were very narrow even for an Oriental, and gave him an appearance of being half asleep. His dress closely resembled his father's. He wore the same kind of hat, the same kind of tunic, a similar belt, and like plastron, and his feet were similarly encased in low shoes. Only in the color of the tunic itself was there any marked difference, and this was of a lighter shade than the king's. His life had taken expression from his face, and left only a sort of realization of the treadmill of his position behind. He stood between two tall ministers, who bent over and prompted him as to what he should say before he began to speak. He listened with statue-like passiveness to their whispers, and then repeated in his childish voice his lesson. Only when he got his answer did he turn to them again for counsel. He seemed a touching mixture of dignity and helplessness. The ordeal was rather too much for him. He was not always so quiet, as I discovered on a subsequent occasion, when I caught him peeping out of a back window at my camera, where he supposed he could not be seen, while he was waiting to give me audience, and when I looked up, shut the sliding screen like a flash. In this instance he acquitted himself creditably, and no doubt felt relieved when it was safely over, and he saw me traversing the courtyard on my return. As for me, I went back again to the haven of waiting, and drank more tea. This finished the proceedings. We effected our departure under cover of a cloud of smoke, walked once more down the immense outer court, got into our palanquins, and were carried home.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XVII.

A DAY AT HOME.

EVERY one has at some time been conscious of the half-guilty, no-business-to-be-there-at-that-hour feeling which takes possession of a man at a champagne-flavored morning entertainment. The wedding reception, being our commonest example, has embodied the sensation. It is the last twinge of the mental conscience of the serious man. When he loses that instinctive warning, he is on the high-road to the worst possible of Nirvanas, — an extinct mind in a living body.

I found myself not unfrequently of a morning a prey to one of these spasms. Because one of the first specimens of Western humanity the Koreans had ever seen, and on account of my friendship to their country, I received many morning calls; and I felt that my part in the piece required for its proper performance a little fluid to prevent friction.

In Korea it is never too early to call. The New Year's call of ceremony at the palace begins long before daylight. It is another good reason for not wishing to be born a king. Perhaps, however, the head that proverbially lies so uneasy may not be sorry to leave the pillow. Fortunately for my own comfort, calls upon me were made at a more Christian hour. This was what happened at a call.

As I sat in what I made my reception-room, a servant entered through a hole in the wall; that is, he pushed aside a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

pair of sliding screens let into the side of the room, which was cut out in a circle. In this manner the room connected with the rest of my suite of houses. When his long skirts had rustled over what stood for a sort of threshold, — the lower rim of the circle, a foot high, — he announced the visitor, at the same time handing me a strip of red paper, eight inches by four, on which was printed a series of Chinese characters, arranged in a single vertical column. This was the caller's card. In origin, the card is Chinese; and with many other social customs, it was engrafted upon Korean etiquette from the observances of the dragon throne. It is made of paper of the usual thickness, dyed a brilliant carmine on the upper side, which soaks through into a pale pink on the under. On this ground stand out in vivid contrast the black characters of the person's name. Like the customs of every aristocracy, which is still a powerful fact, and not its shadow, a respected feeling, the card is despotically plain. The name stands alone in all the strength of its simplicity. There are no titles of law or of courtesy. The name means more than any title, more than can be written, however finely done, on eight inches by four. It read simply "Hong Sun Mok."

At a nod the servant disappeared, to return ushering in the visitor. I rose. We both bowed, each of us at the same time raising his hands closed, and pressed against one another to the level of his head. This, again, is after the Chinese fashion. It may suggest the general advisability of shaking your own hand rather than the hand of your acquaintance. I purposely say acquaintance, for it is a very different matter in Korea when a man has become your friend. Then you shake his hand, as we should do. I like the practice. It raises hand-shaking to its proper level; for there they make use of the demonstration only after an absence, a separation, not at each fresh reappearance of the person, or in consequence of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the coming of each new dawn. With them it means affection, not affectation.

We then sat down again, and tea was brought in and then tobacco. The material bond of sympathy between host and guest in the far-East is invariably tea and tobacco, as it is coffee and tobacco in the near-East, and as it used to be wine and cigars with us. This was then supplemented in my case, to the delight of the visitors, with something from beyond sea.

In Korea, as elsewhere, there are calls of ceremony and calls that are not. It is only on an introduction, or on a stated occasion of visiting, such as New Year's day, that one's cards are necessary. Familiarity and mutual affection soon put us on a very easy footing. Especially was this the case toward a foreigner. My visitors, having come once, came again; and they stayed a long time — sometimes, I will confess, it seemed to me forever — at a visit. Except for a chosen few, I think short visits, often repeated, preferable. This was one reason why, of all others, I liked the visits of the Foreign Office the best. Its members dropped over constantly to see me, singly or in a body. Sometimes they had something political to say, oftener not. On these latter occasions they made of me an agreeable recreation from the toils of business. I was very conveniently situated. Any one who has inhabited a central room in his college, one easily made a loafing-place, will perfectly understand the situation. But, unlike some such visitants, they remained but a short time, business always affording them a capital stage-exit. Like historic Bob Sawyer, they were sometimes even summoned away; and they bustled off with great assumption of immediate and imperative necessity.

The next man to be announced was a merchant, or, to be more precise, a vender of old curiosities. Quite apart from the man himself, I always felt an excitement, when he appeared, akin to that of drawing in a lottery; for you could never tell

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

what he would not produce from his only too capacious sleeves. He always struck me as a species of real juggler who added, to the surprise of discovery, the still further delight of uncertainty as to what was about to be discovered. The number and character of the things that man would produce from the recesses of his sleeves was little short of marvellous. Books, paintings, fans, pillow ends, — all came out in turn from the same mysterious emptiness, — for the sleeves never had the look of concealing anything, — and the trick finally wound up with the drawing forth and setting upon the table of a large stone jar, a brush-holder, so thick and heavy that it was unpleasant to carry it across the room, as I found when I tried to move it. This capaciousness of what stood him in lieu of pockets enabled him to walk the streets without in the least betraying his calling. If he was as astute in making a trade as he was deft in concealing his own, I felt at once that I was no match for him. I was probably right in my self-distrust, though about this I was allowed to remain in blissful ignorance.

After the merchant had withdrawn with all his goods in consequence of failure to agree on a price, I heard a scuffling outside, then a tap at the paper screen, and a band of boys from the neighboring school dropped in upon me through the window. For the only material sign, as yet, of a desire to associate with the world at large had been the founding of a school to teach English, and the importing of an Englishman from Japan to teach it.[1] The boys were very proud of what little they had already learned, and took infinite delight in wishing me good-morning in my native tongue. One of them, either more adventurous or more advanced than his fellows, next tried to put a few words together, and then was summarily corrected by his more bashful friends, with that sudden temerity begotten in

[1] August, 1883. This was in January, 1884. They had therefore had five months' schooling.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

youth by the all-importance of the fact at issue, such correction being of course oftener wrong than right. At this point I was entirely forgotten for the far more absorbing controversy; and what was begun as a would-be polite speech ended as a successfully maintained proposition. But I turned up again as a final court of appeal.

The boys were very assiduous in their visits. One day one of the most attentive brought me some paintings of his own brush, and they were really exquisitely done. To be born a Korean is already to be born half an artist.

These various good people not infrequently stayed to lunch. In fact, they have been known to stay on and on for hours with that special object. Dinner I invariably ate alone, unless I dined in town or specially invited some one to dine with me. My evenings were exceedingly solitary. There was no happy mean. Everybody came in the morning, nobody at night. Many a night I have watched till the small hours with nothing but a pipe and the printed thoughts of others to keep me company. I had, however, one refuge from myself, in the person of the teacher of the school. He was agreeable, clever, and thoroughly conversant with the far-East, for he had lived fourteen years in Japan. There he had married a Japanese wife, and become the father of a pretty little Eurasian girl. He inhabited at present what had once been a temple in a high corner of the back part of the Foreign Office enclosure,—or compound, as such a collection of buildings and courtyards is called in the English of the far-East. It was not above a stone's-throw away from my own house. But to get there I was obliged to pass through three gates and four courtyards, or four gates and six courtyards, according as I went the longest or the shortest road. But I had not my choice of paths. I was obliged to go one way and return the other; for by so doing I foiled the gates. The way of it was this: At nightfall

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the watchman of the compound went his rounds and carefully fastened every gate. But as there were a great many court-yards and they all opened one into the other, what was an inner fastening to the one necessarily became an outer fastening to its neighbor. It was, therefore, always possible for any one who started by being within the outer gateway of all to wander wherever he pleased, provided only he went in the proper consecutive order. Going in that order, all the gates opened to him, — for they were not locked, but simply barred by a wooden bolt; but to walk in the other direction was impossible, for the bolts served all the purposes of locks from the impossibility of getting at them. There was nothing for it on this side but to scale wall after wall, — a difficult and by no means pleasant task. Thus, by always travelling in my unavoidable loop-fashion in one direction, I had nothing more arduous to do than to withdraw the wooden bolts as I came to the several gates, and to remember to return the way I had not come.

These night excursions of mine must have been a source of great annoyance to the watchman who perambulated the compound once an hour regularly through the night. For the very possibility of opening all the gates became, when considered from the other side, an impossibility of shutting any of them again after passing through. I therefore left them unbolted. So the faithful watchman spent his time in continually reclosing what he thought he remembered to have left securely fastened. One poor old gate suffered sadly from this constant opening and shutting. It came entirely off its hinges, and then split into two halves, which had to be propped up as nearly into their former positions as possible, and then kept there by means of a heavy stone rolled against their lower extremities. I found it in this plight one night; but not perceiving its crippled condition, pushed against it, and then felt positively guilty

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of cruelty when, after resisting my first shove, it fell at my second, with a sort of groan, into a heap of ruins.

On returning from one of these visits one night, I met the watchman. I say I met him, because in no sense did he seek me. I heard him off at the other end of one of the courts, and waited for him to come up. The light from a bull's eye and the incessant sound of a bell warned the only senses possible of his approach. I had seen his *ignis fatuus* of a lantern in the distance many a time before; and as to hearing him, I had done it so often that I felt some curiosity to examine one whose noise had formed an inseparable part of my midnight reveries. He and an associate — for a subordinate accompanied him — carried between them three odd-looking utensils of their trade. The chief patrol held in one hand a dark-lantern, — a most curious and ingenious invention, called, on the *lucus a non* principle, a thief's lantern, — while in the other he swung a bell. The last he only ceased to ring when, from some reason like the shutting of a gate, he had not hands enough for the purpose. He kept up this continuous ringing in order to give any thief that might happen to be about due warning to escape. It is a practice which the Korean watchman shares with those of China and Japan. This certainly renders the occupation of the night-watchman less exciting, if slightly more onerous; for any thief who waited to be caught under such circumstances would be not only a knave but a fool. Whether it equally prevents crime may possibly be doubted. In Japan the patrols also cry out at intervals, "Look out for fire;" but in Korea this danger, from the different construction of the houses, is not so imminent, and they walk their rounds in silence except for the bell. The lantern the watchman carried was a spherical shell left open on one side, and with a round piece of wood, like a broom-handle, let in diametrically opposite, and projecting about eight inches, for the hand to grasp. The whole was

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

covered with gaudily painted paper, on which were pasted Chinese characters and other designs, betokening long life, happiness, and other desirable tidbits of fortune. Why so much taste is wasted on the dark is a problem; for, being on the outside, they are of course invisible both to the patrol and to any one else. However, the feeling that they are there may possibly be found consoling in the long hours of the night. But the real beauty of the concern lies within. On the inside is swung, by a system of double joints, the tin frame for a candle, which, by this means, has motion in any direction. The object is that the broom-handle may be held in the hand in any position, while the lantern is pointed like a blunderbuss at the person to be inspected, without, in so doing, displacing the candle, whose stand is properly weighted to fall, from the vertical. The whole suggested the scooped-out pumpkin of one's boyhood, carved by youthful ingenuity to represent some diabolical apparition.

To the associate fell the duty of carrying the third implement, — an iron bar fitted with iron chains. This served for handcuffing. The bar was the only one of the tools not in ordinary use. The darkness saved me from discovering how rusty it had grown.

The patrol suffered my inspection with great forbearance, considering how reversed were the parts we were respectively supposed to play, and I left him with a sense of having not a little surprised the good man; but I judge that he may have found some consolation in the light the meeting threw upon a certain hitherto mysterious point. The secret of the gates ajar must from that moment have ceased to disturb his nightly cogitations.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOUSE OF THE SLEEPING WAVES.

ONE day a dinner was given me by the Governor of the province. Despite the fact that it was not the season for country parties, — the month was January, — he had, for certain reasons, chosen a spot outside the city in which to give it. In virtue of his office, he was the temporary owner of a villa on the banks of the river Han; and whether it was the fact of precarious possession, or a sense of the peculiar fitness of the place for festivities, he had fixed upon this villa for the occasion. We were not, on that account, however, to be deprived of the pleasure of seeing those city buildings of which he was ruler, for we were first to rendezvous at the province-house.

Accordingly, an hour before noon, we set out from home in palanquins, and were carried across the city and through the west gate, just outside of which stands the magistracy for the province of Kyöng Keui To.[1] The building is placed without the gates for technical reasons, but for convenience is put as near as possible to what it is not allowed to enter. The scrolls on its gates showed it to be a public building, and the number of soldiers that were lounging about outside gave further evidence of its being in use at the present time. Entering by the gateway, an imposing structure, even as among magistracies, we

[1] The words mean "five parts, or whole" (Keui), "of the capital" (Kyöng), "province" (To). The five parts meant are the north, the east, the west, the south, and the centre. The idea is Chinese.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA