

KOREA: A DEGENERATE STATE

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This is the first of a series of three articles founded upon Mr. Kennan's observation and study of conditions in Korea the past summer. They will deal with the personality of the Korean Emperor, the venality of Korean officials, the degradation of the people, the Japanese administration of affairs in that country, and the future of Korea.—THE EDITORS.

THESE is now in progress in the Far East a social and political experiment which, in point of interest and importance, is not surpassed, I think, by anything of the kind recorded in history. For the first time in the annals of the East, one Asiatic nation is making a serious and determined effort to transform and civilize another. Asiatic peoples, in centuries past, have exchanged ideas, arts, or products, and the higher has sometimes handed down its knowledge and such civilization as it had to the lower; but no Oriental nationality ever made a conscious and intelligent attempt to uplift and regenerate a neighbor until Japan, a few months ago, took hold of Korea. The interest and importance of this experiment are not wholly due to its unique and unprecedented character. An experiment may be new and yet have little or no bearing on human progress and welfare. The Korean experiment, however, is not one of this kind, inasmuch as its results are likely to affect vitally the interests and happiness of millions of people, and may completely transform social and political conditions not only in Korea but throughout the vast empire of China. The present war has made Japan the predominant Power in eastern Asia, and there can be little doubt, I think, that she is about to assume the leadership of the so-called Yellow Race. In the Korean experiment we may see what capacity for leadership she has, and what are likely to be the results of the exercise of her newly acquired influence and strength in the wide field thrown open to her by her recent victories. She has successfully transformed and regenerated herself, but has she the

disposition and the ability to uplift and civilize the degenerate nation on the other side of the Tsushima Strait, or to guide wisely and unselfishly the greater and more promising people on the other side of the Yellow Sea? It is my purpose, in this and subsequent articles, to state the Korean problem and to show under what conditions and in what way Japan is trying to solve it.

The first thing that strikes a traveler in going from Japan to Korea is the extraordinary contrast between the cleanness, good order, industry, and general prosperity of one country, and the filthiness, demoralization, laziness, and general rack and ruin of the other. The inhabitants of the two empires seem to be ethnologically related, and they resemble each other somewhat in color and in physical type; but in moral and intellectual characteristics they are as far apart as the Dutch and the Venezuelans. The Japanese are clean, enterprising, intelligent, brave, well educated, and strenuously industrious, while the Koreans strike a newcomer as dirty in person and habits, apathetic, slow-witted, lacking in spirit, densely ignorant, and constitutionally lazy. So far as history enables one to judge, the two peoples had a fair and equal start, and there is reason to believe that at first the Koreans took the lead; but, as a result of the feudal system, and of other causes not fully and clearly ascertainable, Japan advanced, improved, and eventually developed a high type of individual and national character, while Korea gradually declined, lost what character and culture she had, and finally sank to a level little above that of Hayti and San Domingo.

The impression prevails in America

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that Korea has a real civilization, but that it has been arrested in process of development, and has come to a state of stagnation like that which we observe in China. It seems to me, however, that Korea presents a case, not of arrested development, but of disintegration and decay. Its civilization has not become stagnant, it has rotted. China may fairly be regarded as an imprisoned and cramped organism which would grow if it were set free and stimulated. Korea is an organism that has become so diseased as to lose its power of growth; and it can be restored to a normal condition only by a long course of remedial treatment. With these few words of preface to indicate the nature and difficulty of the Korean problem, I shall proceed first to a consideration of the conditions and limitations under which Japan is forced to work in her attempt to solve it. These conditions and limitations may conveniently be grouped under three heads: (1) The Emperor; (2) The Government; and (3) The People.

1. The Emperor. In February of last year the Governments of Japan and Korea entered into a formal agreement by virtue of which Japan undertook to "insure the safety and repose of the Imperial House of Korea," and to "guarantee the independence and integrity of the Korean Empire," while Korea promised to "place full confidence in the Imperial Government of Japan," and to "adopt the advice of the latter with regard to improvement in administration." As a result of this agreement Japan is now bound to work for the regeneration of Korea through and by means of the existing Korean Government, or at least through and by means of the Korean Emperor and his subordinates. Her limitations, therefore, are such as ours would be if we were compelled to govern and civilize the Philippines through a Filipino Emperor, aided by a Filipino Cabinet and supported by a full set of Filipino officials in all positions of responsibility and trust. The parallel is not a perfect one, but, for the purpose of my argument, it errs on the right side, inasmuch as the Tagalogs and Visayans probably

stand higher in character, education, and ability than the great mass of the Koreans. Japan's task, therefore, is more difficult than ours would be under the conditions assumed. The proof of this statement seems to me abundant and conclusive. Take first, for example, the Korean Emperor. An American gentleman of impartiality and sound judgment, who has lived many years in Korea and has had an opportunity to know him well, describes him as follows:

"The Emperor of Korea is a gentle little man, who has sinned away his day of grace, and now sits unconscious of the crack of doom impending. He has a pleasant face and a gracious smile. Of late years his teeth have turned yellow, and he is getting puffy under the eyes; but he is still handsome—as Koreans go. He has none of the marks of a savage, either in his face or in his voice, but seems admirably suited to a drawing-room of the time of Moab and Edom, could he have lived then. He is an abstemious man in his meat and drink, and quiet in all his ways. He smokes little, and chews nothing but an amber bead. He is a head shorter than the Crown Prince, but wiser, on the whole.¹ He likes dress, and to play with the stars and garters of his Order of the Indian Empire and the other decorations that have been brought to him from over the sea. He is unconscious as a child, stubborn as a Boer, ignorant as a Chinaman, and vain as a Hottentot. He has read nothing, and has heard only flattery for forty years. The atmosphere that surrounds him is one of dense ignorance, and consequently he is as timid as a fallow deer. He is extremely superstitious, and makes up for his lack of book-learning by séances with spirit-rappers and consultants of the eternal shades. He loves his sorceresses, witches, wise-women, and ground-doctors, and consults them constantly on the affairs of State. Not a day passes but messages come to him from the spirits of the dead. He is kindly disposed, and only the other day sent a special gift to help a poor old coolie whose tumble-down hut and poverty he happened to see when he was on

¹ The Crown Prince has partially lost his mind as the result of spinal disease.—G. K.

his way from his burned Chongdong palace. He does not like his people, because they scare him with their Independence Clubs and Societies for the Propagation of Peace. He will have the head off his best friend if that friend gives him cause for alarm. He and his older brother are not on speaking terms—in fact, he would be very glad indeed to have his older brother depart this life. He is afraid of his nephew, Prince Chung-Yong in Japan, and would like to have him quietly and quickly put out of the way. His own son, Prince Eui-Wha, now in America, keeps at a safe distance, for he has failed on more than one occasion to obey his father, and knows full well that if he returned, unprotected, his life would be but a shadow that passes away. This gentle little man, who consults his horoscope through the medium of soft-handed women, can order the execution of a friend without a tear, and then go on playing with his stars and trinkets. He has never advanced one step in the way of true reform, and yet he takes a deep interest in the drawing-room touches of Western life. He knows the exact difference between the uniforms of the representatives who appear before him, and just how many gold strings there are to each country's epaulets. He has studied clocks, watches, and barometers, not as articles for use, but as ornaments. He likes machine guns, not to fire off, but to make believe with. He is, indeed, a spoiled child, who regards his little country as something created for his special delectation, and all the people as flocks and herds intended for his slaughter. He is as incapable of grasping the meaning of the age he lives in as a ten-year-old youngster would be of taking Port Arthur."

Although this character sketch is admirably accurate so far as it goes, it does not by any means complete the portrait of the Emperor as a ruler and a man. He is absolutely incapable of forming a correct judgment with regard to men and events, and in consequence of this mental disability he is deceived by his courtiers and robbed and cheated by all who have business dealings with him. If a soothsayer, a fortune-teller, or a fictitious spirit tells him that the

Russians will shortly drive the Japanese out of Korea—a thing that he ardently hopes for—he gives full credence to the prediction, and tries to shape his conduct or his policy in accordance with it. If a sorcerer declares that a certain palace or a certain banqueting hall is an inauspicious place of entertainment for a distinguished foreign guest or visitor, he will order the removal, at the last moment, of a luncheon or dinner that is all ready to be served. Foreigners whom he has entertained tell me that, by direction of fortune-tellers or spirit mediums, he has had such changes made two or three times in succession in the course of a single hour.

But these are, comparatively, trifles. Under the influence of personal fear, the pressure of stronger characters in his Cabinet, or the misleading and often malevolent counsel of sorcerers and soothsayers, he is ready to sanction or permit the most diabolical treachery and cruelty. Only five years ago he lured back from the safe refuge of Japan, under promise of a fair trial, two obnoxious Korean reformers named An-Kyung-Su and Kwan-Yung-Jin, who are described by a well-known American resident of Seoul as two of the best men that Korea in late years has produced. Having got them into his power, by means of a promise that he apparently did not intend to keep, he had them secretly put to death in prison. During the greater part of his long reign, and even up to a time that is still recent, bodily torture has been a recognized and essential feature of what is known in Korea as judicial procedure; and the Government, with his Majesty's sanction or permission, has burned men with hot irons, imprisoned them in cangues, broken their bones with levers, or torn them asunder by driving apart four bullocks harnessed to their ankles and wrists. While the Emperor was a refugee in the Russian Legation at Seoul, in 1896, Mr. Waeber, the Russian Minister, persuaded him to put a stop to these inhuman practices; but the prohibition was enforced for a period of only six months. When the royal fugitive went back to his palace, the torture of prisoners and witnessings began again.

To what extent the Emperor himself was responsible for the barbarous custom of hanging or impaling the heads of decapitated "traitors" on spikes over the Little West Gate of the capital, and distributing bloody fragments of their dismembered bodies throughout the provinces as a warning to the disaffected, I do not know; but certain it is that men who had been guilty of these atrocities were often advanced and rewarded. The assassin of the Korean reformer Kim-Okkyun, for example, was given an important position in his Majesty's service, while another murderer, who had attempted to take the life of the liberal Pak-Yong-Hyo, was made Minister of Justice. Thieves, extortioners, counterfeiters, torturers, and assassins have again and again held positions in the Emperor's Cabinet, and even now—in this year 1905—the Korean Minister of War, Yi-Yong-Ik, is an uneducated coolie who is so unclean personally as to be offensive to the senses, and who is described by foreign residents of Seoul as a low-born, illiterate, and unscrupulous adventurer, who has accumulated an immense fortune through extortion and fraud, and who manages to retain his position by supplying money to the Emperor when the latter is financially in need.

Most bad and vicious rulers have had at least the redeeming virtue of personal courage; but the Emperor of Korea is not only bad, but weak and cowardly. Shortly after the murder of the Queen he moved into a palace in the Chongdong quarter of Seoul, where he was surrounded with foreign legations, and where he thought he would have the latter's protection. In this new place of residence he has changed all his habits of life in the hope of escaping danger. Fearing assassination in the hours of darkness, he sits up all night, talking with courtiers, eunuchs, and sorcerers, and goes to bed only when returning daylight gives him a feeling of personal security. He eats his breakfast just before sunset, takes dinner at one o'clock in the morning, and sups when the other residents of the capital are beginning to get up—and this practice he has followed for years. For some weeks after the assassination of the Queen he was

so afraid of being poisoned that he would eat no food except that which had been brought in a locked chest from the kitchen of an American missionary. He never ventures outside the walled and strongly guarded inclosure of the palace, and spends most of his time in a room eight or ten feet square, which is situated in the midst of other rooms, and which is so close and damp that, in spite of its floor-covering of oiled paper, it often has to be dried out by artificial heat, even in the sultry dog-days of mid-summer. In this hot, damp cubby-hole the Emperor, surrounded by his attendants, feels comparatively safe; and there he virtually lives from one year's end to another.

Such, in general outline, is the character of the ruler whose "safety and repose" the Japanese Government has promised to "insure," whose "independence" it has "guaranteed," and whose methods it has undertaken to reform by means of benevolent "advice." Reforming such a country, by advising such a ruler, strikes an observer as a more hopeless task than attempting to empty an overflowing cistern with a sieve!

2. The Government. Under this head are comprised (*a*) the Emperor's Cabinet, consisting of nine ministers; (*b*) the sorcerers, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and mudangs or spirit mediums, who influence and often control legislation; (*c*) the governors of the thirteen provinces; and (*d*) the magistrates or prefects of the three hundred and forty-four prefectures into which the provinces are divided. All of the official positions in classes (*c*) and (*d*) are nominally filled by Imperial appointment, but the selection of appointees is subject to court influence, "pull," or intrigue, and, as a rule, the offices are sold to the highest bidders. Provincial governors pay from ten thousand to forty thousand Korean dollars¹ for their places, and then not only recoup themselves but amass fortunes by robbing the defenseless people whom they are sent to govern. As there are no independent law courts, and as every governor or prefect is a judge as well as an administrator, a Korean who

¹ The Korean nickel dollar has about one-fourth the intrinsic value of an American gold dollar.

is robbed must seek redress from the robber. If he be a man of resolute character and some means, he may carry his grievance to the Supreme Court in Seoul, but as that court is a component part of the palace ring which appointed the robber, the victim of the injustice is merely appealing from brigand No. 2 to brigand No. 1, and may regard himself as fortunate if No. 1 does not take away from him all that No. 2 has left.

The methods of robbery in the provinces and prefectures are illegal and excessive taxation, "squeezes" on all official business, imprisonment on trumped-up charges, seizure of property without warrant or excuse of any kind, and barefaced extortion on pretexts that are often so fantastic and preposterous as to be almost incredible. In one case that was reported to me, an ingenious extortioner bribed one of the Emperor's ministers to bestow a decoration upon a well-to-do Korean in a northern province. Taking the decoration in his hand, he went to the prospective victim of the plot and said to him: "I am delighted to be the bearer of good news and a reward of merit. His Majesty the Emperor has graciously deigned to bestow upon you the decoration of the second class of the Order of the Plum Blossom, and to send it to you by my unworthy hand." Then, taking the glittering star out of his pocket and delivering it to the astonished Korean, he added: "The expenses connected with the bestowal of this high honor will be five thousand dollars."

"But," objected the Korean, in dismay, "I have done nothing to deserve such a decoration, and I can't afford to pay for it. Five thousand dollars would cover all the property I have."

"Then you scorn the Imperial gift and insult his Majesty by refusing to accept it, do you?" cried the extortioner, in pretended anger. "We'll see about that!" And, going to the governor of the province, he bribed the latter to throw the recalcitrant Korean into prison on a charge of lese-majesty. There he lay until he was forced at last to spend all that he had in purchasing the second-class cross of the Imperial Order of the Plum Blossom—a decoration that was nominally bestowed upon him as a mark

of distinction and a reward of merit. This, perhaps, is an extreme case, so far as the grotesque absurdity of the pretext for extortion is concerned, but, regarded merely as a case of injustice, it is far less flagrant than scores of others that might be cited. Many Korean governors and prefects do not take the trouble to invent a pretext, but simply seize the property of a man who has failed to pay for immunity, and throw him into prison. While I was in Seoul, seventy Korean farmers from Pingyang were there, making a united effort to recover property to the value of 1,500,000 Korean dollars, which had been forcibly taken from them by the late provincial governor, Min-Yong-Ju. This was a plain case of robbery with violence, and the remonstrances of the victims had been temporarily silenced by means of imprisonment and the lash. The "News Calendar" of the "Korea Review" contains references to dozens, if not scores, of such cases, and of course there are hundreds that never come to the light of publicity.

It must be remembered, moreover, that the Korean people have been accustomed to "squeezes" and illegal exactions for centuries, and that they protest or resist only when robbery passes the extreme limit of endurance. If a governor or a prefect "squeezes" moderately and with discretion, he may do so with impunity—the people will not "kick"—but if he resorts to general violence, or attempts to "squeeze" for his own use ten times or twenty times as much as he collects in legal taxes, there is apt to be trouble. You may rob some of the Koreans all of the time, or all of them some of the time; but if you rob all of them all of the time and without limit, you are finally dragged out of your house and beaten or kicked to death in the streets. This happened, in September last, to Pak-U-Yang, the magistrate of a prefecture only ten miles south of Seoul. In several other recent cases prefects have been mobbed or driven away from their posts, and I presume that this happens in some part of Korea almost every week, inasmuch as lynch law is the only law that affords Korean peasants any protection or redress.

The natural and inevitable result of

such a state of affairs is impoverishment and demoralization. When all that a man can earn over and above the bare means of subsistence is taken away from him by corrupt and unscrupulous officials, he loses the incentive to work and sinks almost to the level of an indolent pauper. The financial burden of the people ought not to be heavy. The revenue of the central government last year was only fourteen million Korean dollars, and this sum, divided among twelve million people, would amount to a tax of less than \$1.25 per capita. If the Koreans, in proportion to their number, paid as much in taxes as the Japanese pay without difficulty, the revenue of the central government would be fifty-five or sixty million Korean dollars instead of fourteen million. Mr. Homer B. Hulbert, a close student of Korean affairs, estimates that three Japanese yen per annum, or one dollar and fifty cents in American gold, will cover all legal taxes on the average Korean farmer's house and land. Inasmuch as the average farmer probably earns twenty times that amount, and might earn fifty times as much, he ought to be fairly prosperous, and he undoubtedly would be if he were not "squeezed" by a horde of hungry officials and were not compelled to support another horde of "yangbans" and idlers.

The central government at Seoul regards the "squeezing" of the population with indifference, so long as it does not lead to violence and disorder. For this there are two reasons. In the first place, the ministers, sorcerers, and high-placed officials who sell the provincial offices expect, as a matter of course, that the governors and prefects will get back from the people the money that they have paid for their positions; and, in the second place, the palace ring of eunuchs, fortune-tellers, and courtiers is engaged in robbery on its own account. When the Emperor wishes to buy a house—and he has a mania for purchases of that kind—one of his ministers attends to the business for him; and by paying the owner of the property \$20,000 and charging the Emperor \$60,000, the ministerial agent is able to put \$40,000 into his own pocket without

trouble or risk. When \$650,000 is appropriated for the burial of the Queen Dowager, or \$1,000,000 for the funeral expenses of the Crown Princess, every inhabitant of the palace gets a slice of the plum-cake, from the Emperor himself down to the fourth-class eunuchs.

In almost everything connected with the palace there is a "squeeze," a bribe, or a steal.¹ If this were not conclusively proved by the testimony of all who have had opportunities to know, it might be inferred from some of the items that appear in the latest annual budget of the Minister of Finance. Take, for example, the appropriation for the central bureau of police at Seoul. It provides \$27,000 for an office, \$10,725 for rations, \$44,242 for uniforms, and \$212,194 for salaries and miscellaneous expenses. The Pension Bureau is maintained at a cost of \$27,552, and it grants pensions to the amount of \$1,956. The Mining Bureau has no mines to superintend, and submits no report of work done, but it costs \$10,453, and spends \$5,289 in "traveling"—presumably in search of work. The Korean navy, which consists of one old gunboat, is charged with an annual expenditure of \$450,604. The Bureau of Decorations costs \$19,560, and the Bureau of Ceremony and the Bureau of Propriety together consume \$21,508. I have been unable to ascertain the nature of the services rendered to the State by the Bureau of Propriety; but I suppose something of that kind is needed to fix the proper limits of official "squeezes." There would be an obvious impropriety in squeezing only one hundred dollars out of a Korean farmer when he could pay two hundred without any immediate danger of starving to death.

Underlying each of the items above specified there is doubtless a substratum

¹ An exception must be made in the case of the new palace now in course of construction under the vigilant supervision of Mr. J. McLeavy Brown, chief of customs, and also in the case of the three foreigners—Miss Sontag, Miss Cook, and Mr. Cohen—who are employed respectively to superintend Imperial entertainments, attend to the education of the young prince, and manage the electric light plant. Dr. Morrison, Far Eastern correspondent of the London "Times," has described the three employees last named as "foreign parasites;" but no metaphor could be more unfair or unjust. They perform faithfully certain duties, and receive a certain reasonable compensation, and, from my point of view, they earn double the amounts that they receive. One of them, to my certain knowledge, saves the Emperor about \$60,000 a year.

of legitimate cost; but when the current expenses of a single inactive gunboat amount annually to \$450,000, and when sums of \$16,000, \$20,000, \$23,000, and \$27,000 are appropriated every year for "offices," in such a city as Seoul, the items themselves are sufficient evidence of "graft."

It is interesting and instructive to compare the sums spent in securing the comfort and safety of the Emperor with the sums appropriated for such objects as education, public works, and the security of the people. The former are set forth in the budget as follows:

Imperial privy purse.....	\$1,103,359
Imperial "sacrifices".....	186,041
Palace construction.....	300,000
Palace guard.....	170,256
Special palace guard.....	81,978
Total.....	\$1,751,634

Some of the items of expenditure for the benefit of the Korean people are as follows:

All public schools outside of the capital—schools for the education of ten or twelve millions of people.....	\$27,718
Public works.....	424
"Suppressing robbers".....	500
Total.....	\$28,642

One million seven hundred thousand dollars for the comfort and safety of the ruler, and twenty-eight thousand for education, public works, and the suppression of robbers in provinces inhabited by ten or twelve millions of the ruled, would seem to be glaringly disproportionate even in the Orient; but under the head of "incidentals" the budget provides an "emergency fund" of \$1,158,000 which might possibly be used for the benefit of the people if they should suddenly begin to die off in a general epidemic of acute cerebral anæmia, or if common, everyday robbers should threaten to strip them so bare as to leave no plunder whatever for the official robbers.

The largest single appropriation in the budget is \$5,180,614 for the army; and the usefulness of that organization, and the state of discipline existing therein, may be inferred from the fact that when the Pingyang regiment was ordered north to the Yalu, last year, its colonel called the men together and asked all

those who wished to go to hold up their hands. Six hundred of them decided to make the march, but two hundred even of this resolute fraction deserted before the regiment reached its destination.

Stealing from the treasury by means of "cooked" accounts, however, is not sufficient in itself to meet the requirements of the ministers, courtiers, sorcerers, soothsayers, geomancers, spirit mediums, concubines, eunuchs, and multitudinous attendants who surround the throne; and it often becomes necessary, therefore, to resort to counterfeiting, double sales of the same tract of public land, and the private sale of Government concessions. Counterfeiting is practiced by almost everybody. High officials of the Court take up that avocation "on the side," and Cabinet Ministers are allowed to borrow the dies from the Imperial mint and coin nickels for their own use to an indefinite amount.¹ As the genuine nickel five-cent piece contains only two cents' worth of valuable metal, this irregular and unrecorded issue of coin by favored Ministers is a money-making avocation in more senses than one. Even when the five-cent pieces are kept up to the prescribed standard of fineness, there is a quasi-legitimate profit of sixty per cent. But why should a ministerial coiner put two cents' worth of nickel into his product when half a cent's worth will do just as well? It would be foolish, and the Bureau of Propriety would condemn it instantly! So he lowers the standard of fineness to ten per cent., and coins money which has little more value than the brass cash.

In this summary review of the methods practiced by Korean officials in robbing the Emperor, the people, and one another, I have failed, perhaps, to cover the whole ground; but I must leave some space for a brief reference, at least, to another aspect of Korean administration. Nothing strikes an investigator more forcibly or impresses him more

¹ The five-cent nickel is the principal coin of Korea, and has taken the place, to a great extent, of the old brass baggage-checks known as "cash." As Mr. Hulbert has justly remarked, "It is the ideal coin to counterfeit." A silver piece may easily be tested, but spurious nickels not only pass from hand to hand in paper-wrapped rolls, but are difficult of detection even when examined singly.

strangely than the extraordinary contrasts and incongruities presented by modern Korean life, particularly in the sphere of government. Sometimes the same chapter of history contains an account of a ghastly tragedy sandwiched between two scenes from a comic opera; and sometimes the incongruity appears in the shape of an apparently impossible sequence of events, or the bringing together of ideas that would never be naturally associated in any sane mind. After reading the historical record of two thousand years of Korean misrule, bloodshed, treachery, and torture, one is not surprised at the murder of reformers, the public exposure of their heads, and the distribution of fragments of their dismembered bodies throughout the provinces; but when the official murderers get together in the palace, on a pleasant afternoon, and establish a Bureau of Propriety, the contrast between the primitive savagery on one hand and the suggestion of polite conventionality on the other gives one's mental processes a sudden jolt. Modern Korean history is full of such contrasts and incongruities, but I have room for only a few illustrations, taken almost at random, from recent numbers of the "Korea Review."

In January of last year the police of Pingyang and the soldiers stationed in that city suddenly took up burglary as an avocation, and began plundering the houses of the inhabitants. When the governor ventured to remonstrate, they became very indignant and threatened to disband and leave the city without police and military protection! ("Korea Review," January, 1904, p. 30). Korean soldiers are strictly forbidden to sell or pawn their uniforms; but they are allowed to hold a mass-meeting and vote on the question whether or not they shall go to a place to which they have been ordered ("Korea Review," January, 1904, p. 176, and May, 1904, p. 221). A Korean official may be a robber, a torturer, or a murderer, and still hold his position, but if he goes into mourning for a dead relative he must resign ("Korea Review," April, 1905, p. 156). A Korean peasant in Kongju happened to accuse the wrong man of theft, and the prefectural authori-

ties gouged out both of his eyes as a warning to be more careful in identification ("Korea Review," April, 1905, p. 167). About the same time the local officials in another prefecture prohibited riding in silk-upholstered chairs and the wearing of silken clothes, and directed that no women except professional dancing-girls should be allowed to ride in jinrikishas ("Korea Review," July, 1905, p. 317). The Emperor issued a proclamation inculcating virtue and urging officials to be more diligent in the performance of their duties; and a little later the Vice-Premier asked his Majesty to punish the Chief of Police and two Vice-Ministers for gambling in the palace ("Korea Review," January, 1905, p. 38). Some of the facts set forth in this article might seem to justify the conclusion that the Korean people generally have a hard time; but among the inscriptions in Chinese ideographs over the shops of Korean merchants in Seoul I observed and copied the following: "The People Enjoy Peace and Pleasure," "We are Successors to the Work of Shinno and Save the People," "Heaven and Earth are Comprised in this Residence," "The Spring Light is Clear and Beautiful," "Thousands of Treasures Gather Together in the Morning," "Ten Thousand Pounds of Pure Gold," "Distribute Liberally and Save the Populace," "The House of Happiness and Virtue," "Benevolence, Righteousness, Courtesy, Wisdom, Fidelity, and Filial Obedience." These inscriptions certainly would lead a newcomer to suppose that in Korea he had found at last a land of virtue, prosperity, and happiness; but the mental jolt that he would get when he came to investigate the palace would probably dislocate all his faculties and reduce him to a state of imbecility!

The activities and operations of the existing Korean Government may briefly be summed up as follows: It takes from the people, directly and indirectly, everything that they earn over and above a bare subsistence, and gives them in return practically nothing. It affords no adequate protection to life or property; it provides no educational facilities that deserve notice; it builds no roads; it

does not improve its harbors; it does not light its coasts; it pays no attention whatever to street-cleaning or sanitation; it takes no measures to prevent or check epidemics; it does not attempt to foster national trade or industry; it encourages the lowest forms of primitive superstition; and it corrupts and demoralizes its subjects by setting them examples of untruthfulness, dishonesty, treachery, cruelty, and a cynical brutality in dealing with human rights that is almost without a parallel in modern times.

It may be thought that, in painting this picture of Korean administration, I have used colors that are too dark; but Americans, Englishmen, and Germans

who are far better acquainted with Korea than I can pretend to be use black more freely than I do. In speaking of the Emperor and his officials, the Rev. Dr. James S. Gale, who is an accomplished Korean scholar, and who has spent a large part of his life on the peninsula, says emphatically: "No government ever existed that was more infected with rottenness to the bones." And it is this government through which Japan must work in her attempt to regenerate the Korean people.

My third division of the general subject, the Korean people, will be treated in a separate article.

Seoul, Korea.

The Rising Spirit of China

From a Special Correspondent in Shanghai

AN American lawyer and the secretary to a Chinese nobleman happened into my office in Shanghai almost simultaneously. The salutations were soon over, and, fans having been distributed to alleviate the hottest weather for thirty summers, I opened the conversation by a leading question. This was quite non-Oriental, but the Chinese friend did not expect Orientalisms from me.

I. "I wish you would tell us the distinct demands of the boycott leaders."

The Secretary. "They are very simple; the Chinese newspapers give them clearly."

I. "Yes, and they print a great deal of diatribe also, which I can't believe you indorse."

A pause.

I. "For instance, to-day they accuse us Americans of butchery, kidnapping, and indecent assault upon Chinese women in America."

Secretary. "All that is unauthorized, of course; we are not circulating such absurd statements. Here are our demands."

I (interrupting). "Recall the Confucian doctrine of choosing the middle course, and give us the minimum demands that the United Guilds Committee will accept."

Secretary. "Yes, the Doctrine of the Mean. Of course our demands can be modified, for you always ask for more than you expect to get. But, first, as to the 'exempt classes.' Merchants, students, travelers, officials, are exempt, are they not? Yes. Well, do you know that Chinese professors, clergymen, bankers, buyers for mercantile houses, manufacturers, storekeepers, compradores, doctors, literary men, editors, and publishers have been and are excluded, along with coolies, from entry into America? They are not 'exempt classes;' hundreds of Chinese gentlemen have found this out to their sorrow."

The Lawyer. "Now, Mr. Secretary, do you mean to tell me that a comprador or a banker is refused admission?"

Secretary. "Certainly. No banker would claim to be a merchant, and if he did they would throw him out at San Francisco as a fraud. The Immigration Bureau interprets 'merchant' to mean 'merchant' in the strict English sense—not a retailer but a wholesaler. The business must be in his name, and he must show the volume of this business. His silent partner, his buyer, or his selling agent cannot land. The door is slammed in their faces. So we demand that the list of 'exempt classes' shall be