

having an opportunity to see both the country and the people. The road crosses three rivers and the water sheds which separate them, making the construction of the road extremely difficult. The mountains are bare, and we were informed that they had been denuded by the natives and the wood used for fuel. The Koreans sometimes blame the Japanese for the appearance of the country and attribute it to the invasion three hundred years ago; an intelligent son of Japan replied that as his country recovered from earthquake shocks within a few years, the Koreans should have been able to remove the traces of an invasion in less than three centuries.

The valleys are fertile but in tillage and in evidences of industry they do not approach the valleys of Japan. One misses the orchards, the trees, the vines and the flowers which are ever present in "The Land of the Rising Sun."

Rice is the principal crop in the south, while barley and wheat are more cultivated in the north. Beans and peas are also raised in large quantities and last year constituted the chief article of export. Rice, while often the largest export, fell below beans and peas that year and was closely followed by hides and ginseng. There are some gold mines, and the export of this ore amounted to nearly fifty thousand dollars last year, but the country has been so isolated that its mineral wealth has not been exhaustively explored.

The population of Korea is variously estimated at from eight to fifteen million. The men are larger than the Japanese and somewhat lighter in color but not so alert. Like the Japanese they have rather a scanty beard, but it seems to be more fashionable for the older men to allow their chin whiskers to grow. In dress the Korean man is unique. He wears a long white coat of thin cotton reaching to the knees, with trousers generally of white, very full in the seat and tied around the ankles. The vest is of red, blue or green if he is not in mourning, but mourning seems to be a permanent occupation in Korea. It was explained to us that white is the color used for mourning and that the mourning period lasts three years. When one of the royal family dies, all of the people wear mourning for the full period, and as they have sometimes had three royal funerals within a decade, white came into general use as a matter of economy.

The hat ordinarily worn is made of wire and gauze, and being only about a third as large as our hats, they sit upon the top of the head without covering it. They have a narrow brim of the same material and are tied on with strings under the chin. These hats are generally black although different colors may be seen upon the street; sometimes an enormous straw hat is used for mourning.

The unmarried men wear the hair in one long braid like a Chinese pigtail, but when one marries he combs his hair to the top of his head and ties it in a stiff top knot which is visible through the gauze hat. The foot is encased in a sock, padded with cotton, and a canoe shaped shoe of grass, cloth, leather or wood.

The women, except those of the coolie class, are seldom seen on the street in the daytime, and the men are not allowed on the street at night, or were not until western ways began to invade the island. Even when going out the women wear over their heads a green cape with scarlet sleeves and draw it across the face in such a way that little more than the eyes can be seen. The streets of Seoul and of the towns through which we passed were full of men, many of them walking about in a leisurely way or standing in groups smoking long pipes. Mingled with them were coolies carrying immense packs on their backs or leading ponies, oxen or cows laden with hay, wood or fagots. We saw more idle men in two days in Korea than we saw in Japan in a month. While the coolies seem to be quite industrious and carry astonishing weights, there seems to be a deep-rooted contempt for labor even among the middle classes, and a contractor told us that in the employing of the coolies it was necessary to pay them every day because a week's compensation would have to be spent before they would return to work. An incident will serve to illustrate the feeling in regard to labor of any kind. In making a purchase we wanted two things tied together with a string. We called the guide's attention to it; he handed the things to his attendant and the attendant handed them to the shopkeeper, who did the tying. We were also informed that the Koreans lack the power of organized co-operation. Each one works by himself and carries his burden on forked sticks strapped to his back. In walking he uses what seems like a staff, but its real pur-

pose is that of a prop for his load when he stops to rest.

The shopkeepers of Korea have the oriental taste for bargaining to a marked degree and always ask a great deal more than they expect to receive, finding, apparently, intellectual recreation in haggling over the price. In making a few small purchases we were very much amused at the spirited discussions which took place between our guide and the merchants. Followed by a crowd of interested spectators, numbering from twenty to fifty, we moved from shop to shop. The vendor would announce a price as if his were a one price store. The guide would receive the announcement with absolute contempt and the wordy war would begin. The bystanders took sides and joined in the fray; the clerks and members of the storekeeper's family flocked to his aid, while the crowd elbowed each other to get near the scene of action. Usually the guide would start toward another store before an agreement could be reached; sometimes less than half of the original price was settled upon, and in the calm which followed the storm, everyone seemed satisfied. We heard of instances where one-eighth of the price asked was finally accepted, but either the merchants with whom we dealt were more reasonable or our guide yielded too soon.

The Korean houses are entirely different from those of Japan; they are not so high, nor so large but are more warmly built. They are usually constructed of stone set in mud and have poorly thatched roofs of straw; occasionally tile is used. Often the earth supplies a floor except for the little sleeping rooms, which have floors of stone covered with oiled paper. These rooms are heated by flues under the floors which conduct the flame and smoke to a chimney which opens on the side of the house. Leaves, fagots, coarse grass and all sorts of trash are used for fuel and these stone floors, heated twice a day, keep the small rooms quite comfortable.

The people sit on the floor as in Japan except that they sit cross-legged instead of sitting on the feet, and sleep on mats spread on the floor at night and stowed away during the day.

While in Seoul we were, through the courtesy of Rev. S. F. Moore, one of the missionaries, invited to the wedding of two Korean Christians and after the ceremony had a chance to inspect the house of the groom's father. It was quite neat and clean, but the houses generally as seen from the narrow streets are dirty and uninviting. One wonders where the men keep the long white coats of which they seem so proud until he is informed that the wives wash and iron them at night while the lord of the household sleeps.

Speaking of the marriage, I must as a truthful chronicler record that the young man whom we saw married (they marry young in Korea and the marriages are arranged by the parents) had a pleasant face and that the bride was modest and comely. He wore a dark red, loose-fitting coat, a wide belt and a black gauze hat of indescribable shape. The girl wore a green silk waist which just below the armpits joined a very full skirt of red. Her head was ornamented with two very large rolls of hair which, according to custom, were borrowed for the occasion. We were informed that the wedding clothes are often rented and that even the goose which in the native ceremony the wife presents to the husband as a symbol of constancy is obtained in the same way. As in this case the Christian ceremony was used, the couple did not pledge themselves according to the native practice by saying "Black is the hair that now crowns our heads, yet when it has become as white as the fibers of the onion root, we shall still be found faithful to each other," but as among the non-Christian Koreans the man is allowed to take a concubine into his home whenever he is able to support one, the pledge would seem to be a mere formality on his part.

Seoul, the capital and largest city, is surrounded by a substantial wall and entered by gates which until recently were shut at night even though the city long ago outgrew the walls. These gates remind one of the gates described in the Bible, and they are not lacking in the beggar who finds the gate a convenient place to make his plea to the passerby. Aside from two or three broad thoroughfares, the streets are narrow, crooked and filthy. The open sewers on either side are filled with refuse matter and reek with foul odors.

There is no general educational system in Korea, and the percentage of illiteracy is naturally large. The missionary schools are doing an excellent work and a few of the young men have been sent to China, Japan and America. During recent years there has been quite an awakening among the young men, and they are

showing an increased desire to learn about western civilization. So great is this interest that a newly organized branch of the Young Men's Christian association at Seoul has a membership of over five hundred, four-fifths of whom are not professing Christians but are drawn to the institution because it gives them a chance to study western problems and methods. Mr. Wanmaker, the merchant prince of Philadelphia, has just offered to supply the money necessary for a permanent Y. M. C. A. building in Seoul, and having attended a meeting in the present crowded quarters, I can testify that a new hall is badly needed.

The Chinese characters are used in writing, but the Koreans have a spoken language which is quite different. There is no extensive literature that can be called Korean, although Dr. Allen, for many years American minister at Seoul, has published, in a volume entitled "Korea: Facts and Fancies," a number of delightful folklore stories, which show an appreciation of the love story and a very clear recognition of the personal virtues as illustrated in daily life. Dr. Allen's book also contains an interesting chronology of the principal events, but it is significant of the change wrought by foreign influence that it only requires twelve pages to record the things worth mentioning from the beginning of the Christian era down to 1876, while eighty pages are devoted to the things that have transpired since.

In examining the pages devoted to the last century one is struck with the disinclination of the Korean government to accept the offers of intercourse made by the various nations of Europe since 1875 and with the number of missionaries who suffered for religion's sake prior to that date. Persecution, however, seems to have increased rather than diminished the zeal of the various denominations, and today Korea is regarded as one of the most promising of the missionary fields. While Confucianism has influenced Korea, Buddhism never gained such a foothold in this country as in China and Japan. There are no gorgeous temples here, and for five hundred years (and until recently) Buddhist priests were not allowed within the walls of Seoul. There are missionary stations throughout the country, and at Peng Yang there is a native congregation of fifteen hundred. At Seoul a modern hospital, built with money given by Mr. Severance of Cleveland, Ohio, has been opened by Dr. Avison, where besides care to the sick, medical training is furnished to natives who desire to fit themselves for this profession. I was assured by Dr. Avison and by missionaries residing here that young Koreans, both men and women, learn quickly and are faithful assistants. The medical missionary, being in an excellent position to show his Christian spirit by helpful service, is doing much to aid in the propagation of our religion in the Orient. In this connection I might add that Dr. Allen went to Korea as a medical missionary and became the emperor's physician. This intimate relation gave our country a good standing here, when the doctor afterwards became the American minister. These friendly relations are still maintained through present Minister Morgan.

The government of Korea is an absolute monarchy and has a reigning family which has held the throne for about five hundred years. All authority emanates from the emperor and is exercised through ministers, governors and subordinate officials, appointed by him. If one can trust the stories afloat, the government is as corrupt an organization as can be found on earth. Just who is responsible is not clearly known, but that offices are sold and all sorts of extortion practiced there can scarcely be doubted. There is no spirit of patriotism, such as is to be found in Japan, and why should there be when the government gives so little in return for the burdens which it imposes? Changes in the cabinet are of frequent occurrence, there having been something like sixty within a year.

For a long time Chinese influence was paramount and the Chinese government had a resident minister in Seoul who was the confidential advisor of the royal family. But Chinese influence ended with Japan's victory in 1894; soon afterward Queen Min, the wife of the present emperor was put to death and, the murder being charged to the Japanese, the emperor took refuge at the Russian legation. Now that Japan has driven Russia out, she is virtually in control of the country, although the nominal sovereignty of the emperor has not been interfered with. Just what form the Japanese protectorate will take has not yet been decided, or at least has not yet been announced. Marquis Ito is in Seoul now as the representative of his government conferring with the emperor and his ministry.

In the end the protectorate will be whatever