

## Japan and Korea

When Japan drove Russia out of Korea she became virtually the mistress of that country although the nominal sovereignty of the Korean emperor was not interfered with. Recently the Korean Emperor abdicated and the Japanese moved for more thorough control. Newspaper cablegrams say that a number of anti-Japanese intrigues have been discovered and that the former emperor is responsible for some of these.

The first conspiracy consisted in ordering the imperial guard to rush the palace on the night of July 19, the second is found in the defiance of the minister of war by the Korean army, the third was the attack on the police at the great bell, which the Japanese have proof to show was led by an army officer, and the fourth consisted in his indirect manipulation of the functions of the present emperor.

In one of his letters from abroad, Mr. Bryan, writing of "Korea—the hermit nation," said:

"Poor little Korea! One hardly knows whether to be amused or grieved so strangely have comedy and tragedy been blended in her history.

"Mr. Griffiths in his very comprehensive book bearing that title, calls Korea the 'Hermit Nation,' and the appellation was a fitting one until within a generation. Since that time she might be described as a bone of contention, for she has been the cause of several bloody quarrels.

"The position of Korea on the map of Asia very much resembles Florida's position on the map of North America, and Japan's relative position is something like that which Cuba bears to Florida. Separated on the south from Japan by about a hundred miles of water and joining both China and Russia on the north, it is not strange that all three of these nations have looked upon her with covetous eyes and begrudged each other any advantage obtained. The surface of Korea is quite mountainous, the ranges and valleys extending for the most part from the northeast to the southwest. Until recently the country was inaccessible and few of the white race have penetrated the interior. A few years ago a railroad was built from Seoul thirty-five miles west to Chemulpo, the nearest seaport. Since then the Japanese have built a road from Seoul north to Peng Yang, and southeast to Fusan. The last line, which has been finished less than a year, is two hundred and seventy-five miles long and connects the Korean capital with the nearest seaport to Japan. This railroad is of such great military importance to Japan that she aided the building to the extent of guaranteeing six per cent interest on the investment for fifteen years with the provision that the cost of the road should not exceed twenty-five million yen. The Korean government gave the right of way for the road and the free admission of material imported for its construction and equipment. The engines and cars are of American style and make and the road is standard gauge. \* \* \*

"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 crowd-

ed 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 adviser 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 Japan desires to have it, for neither Korea nor Russia nor China is in a position to question her decision. Besides building railroads through Korea, the Japanese have established banks and issued a currency for Korea in place of the copper cash generally used. The government recognizing the inconvenience of a currency which had to be kept in huge boxes and paid out at the rate of a thousand or more to the dollar, had farmed out the right to coin nickles and

these were soon counterfeited. The counterfeit nickles have been classified as, first, better than the originals, second, good imitations, third, poor imitations and fourth, those that can only be passed on a dark night.

"Japanese soldiers are to be seen everywhere and Japanese settlements are to be found in all the larger cities. The Koreans as a rule regard the new Japanese invasion with silent distrust and are in doubt whether the purpose of Japan is simply to protect herself from future danger at the hands of China and Russia, or whether she is expecting to colonize Korea with her own people. If Japan purifies the government and makes it honest; if she establishes schools and raises the intellectual standard of the people; if she revives the industries now fallen into decay and introduces new ones; if, in other words, she exercises her power for the upbuilding of Korea and for the advancement of the Korean people, she may in time overcome the prejudice which centuries of hostility have created. But what nation has ever exercised power in this way? And how can Japan do it without developing an educated class which will finally challenge her authority? If she keeps the Koreans in ignorance and poverty, they will be sullen subjects; if she leads them to higher levels they will the more quickly demand their independence and be the better prepared to secure it. Which course will she pursue?"



## Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., July 29.—And the evidence still accumulates to prove that the Sixtieth congress might just as well as not convene for all it will be allowed to accomplish in a legislative way. Yesterday the papers announced that tariff revision had been postponed until 1909. "It would be suit-<sup>1</sup>" for the republican party to attempt it." The papers announce that practically everything in a legislative line will be postponed in the next congress. Take, for example, the republican New York Press, the organ of the Roosevelt wing of the party in New York City. I quote from a special article on its first page which bears the significant head lines:

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 \* ROOSEVELT READY TO PUT ON \*  
 \* BRAKES, RAILROADS WILL GET A \*  
 \* REST FROM LEGISLATION. BREATH- \*  
 \* ING TIME FOR ALL. \*  
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"Several men who have visited President Roosevelt in the last ten days have said on their return to Washington, that there would not be any radical legislation in the next session of congress, which will begin on the first Monday of next December. The president is represented as believing that the railroads have had as much legislation as they will stand for a year or so, and he regards it as proper to let investors know that there will not be any serious legislation until the presidential election is out of the way. Senator Hopkins, of Illinois, who saw the president yesterday, was here tonight, and confirmed the news that has come from Oyster Bay. He says that there will be no legislation next session aiming to control the over-capitalization of railroads. The subject may be kept alive, but no amendments to the statute will follow."

In other words the Sixtieth congress is going to indulge in considerable talk about reform but it is going to do very little for reform. This policy is to be pursued for partisan purposes, probably in order to induce the big corporations to again lavishly contribute the people's money to a big campaign fund, some inactivity along legislative lines is necessary to reassure them that the party in power asking the donations does not intend "to run amuck." Comment on such a plan is unnecessary. It carries its own condemnation. It will receive its proper rebuke at the hands of the people in 1908.

If present indications are any criterion the plan of legislative inactivity will be carried as far as possible into the other departments of the national government. As an example, the present attitude of the interstate commerce commission and the department of justice toward the prosecution of Mr. Harriman is significant. Chairman Knapp's semi-official defense of the Harriman whitewash by the interstate commerce commission is not reassuring for those who hope to see our criminal laws enforced against big as well as little offenders. Mr.