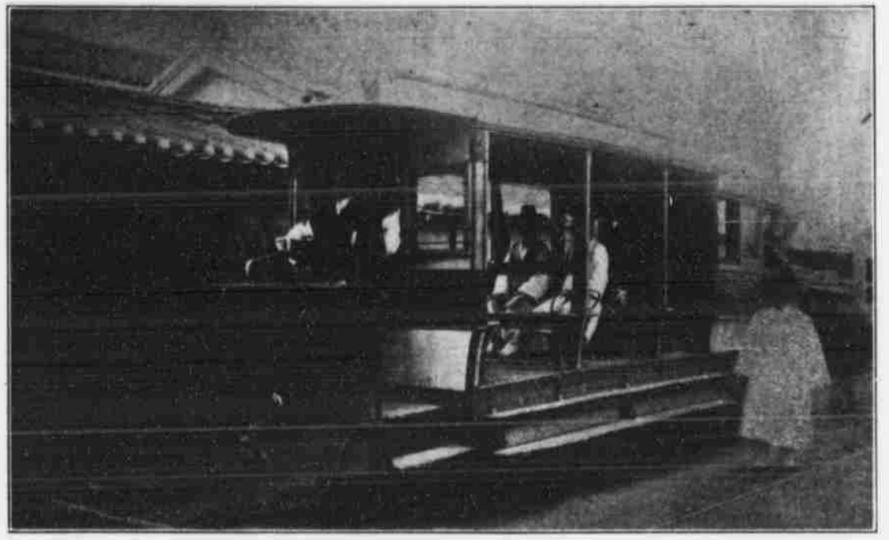


# Hermit Land to Be Covered with Railroads



AMERICAN RAILROAD CARS IN COREA.



TROLLEY LINE IN SEOUL, EQUIPPED AND MANAGED BY AMERICANS.

(Copyright 1902, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
**N**AGASAKI, Japan, Feb. 9.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—The little country of Corea is having an industrial and mining boom. Its gold regions are opening up, its coal deposits are being prospected and railroads are planned to cover every part of the peninsula. At Shanghai I met Leigh Hunt of Seattle, who, in connection with J. Sicut Fassett of New York, has one of the most valuable mining concessions of this part of the world. He has the absolute right to a country about as big as Rhode Island some distance from the Korean capital, which is rich in gold.

This territory has been worked for ages, but in the crudest manner. The Coreans had no machinery. They washed off the top of the placer mines, but were not able to reach the bed rock. They did a little quartz mining by chipping out the ore with their soft iron tools. They would make holes in the rock and fill them with fuel. This being ignited, made the rock red hot, when they would pour in water, and thus crack the surface, so that they could chip it off. The ore thus obtained they crushed by rolling huge stones over it.

They had no pumps and could not go deep on account of the water. The shafts were emptied by balling them out with gourds, which were passed from man to man to the surface. Wherever a stream or permanent water was struck the shaft was abandoned.

#### How Americans Mine Gold in Corea.

Fassett and Hunt have introduced the best of modern mining machinery. They are now operating three mills, or in all about eighty stamps, and they will soon have another mill, which will give them altogether 120 stamps. They expect to put in an electric plant of sufficient capacity to operate all their mining machinery, and for this water will furnish the power.

I understand that the property is being worked very cheaply and at a great profit. There are about sixty American and European experts among the employees and about 4,000 Coreans. The Coreans receive 25 cents a day and do not kick on long hours. The concession gives the company the standing trees on the land at 30 cents gold per cord; this is said to be sufficient to timber the mines. Until lately all the hauling has been done with the bullock carts of the country, but American wagons are now used and other kinds of our machinery will be imported.

Corea promises to be a second California. When I first visited it fourteen years ago I was shown quills filled with gold dust

and pin-head nuggets. The coolies brought them in and traded them to the merchants. At that time the country was producing about \$3,000,000 worth of gold a year from its placer mines. The yield was even greater when I visited Corea in 1894, just before the war between China and Japan, although no modern machinery had yet been used.

General Greathouse of California was then adviser to the king. He told me the mountains were full of gold and Thomas W. Power, the young American electrician who put the lights into the king's palace, described to me how the king's ministers once brought him a box filled with gold dust and nuggets in payment of a bill against the king for electrical machinery. Mr. Power said that one of the nuggets was as big as the palm of his hand and about an inch thick. His bill was for \$47,000 and the gold realized more than that amount when he sold it at the mint in Osaka, Japan.

So far the Americans are doing the only mining of much importance. Other concessions have been granted to the Pritchard-Morgan syndicate, an English company, and to E. Meyer & Co., representing German capitalists. The German concession is small and it adjoins that held by Hunt and Fassett. The English concession is about half the size of the American and it is situated to the south of the latter. Both English and Germans are doing some work. The success of the American company is known throughout the far east. It has brought numerous miners and capitalists to Corea, who have so annoyed the government that for the time no further mining concessions are being granted.

#### Japan's New Korean Trunk Line.

The work of the railroads, however, is still going on. The Japanese have surveyed a railroad from the capital, Seoul, to Fusan, the southernmost port of Corea. Fusan has an excellent harbor, only a short distance from Nagasaki, and this road will probably form the end of a Korean connection with the Trans-Siberian road, so that one can take the cars in any part of the European continent and go to Japan with only a night's ride or so by water. The distance from Seoul to Fusan is about 300 miles. It is estimated that the road will cost 25,000,000 yen, or \$12,500,000 in gold. This is more than \$40,000 a mile and it is doubted whether the traffic of the road will pay interest on the cost of construction. The road would be of great value to the Japanese in case of war and it will form the chief highway of Japanese trade to Corea.

Fusan has a large Japanese settlement

and its foreign residents, most of whom are Japanese, now number about 6,000. The Korean town of Fusan is apart from the foreign settlement. It is surrounded by walls within which live about 23,000 people. The port has a trade approximating \$5,000,000 a year. Seoul, the capital, at the other end of the line, has a population of about 300,000, and it is the center of all things Korean.

The Japanese are very anxious to control the railways of Corea. They already own the road which the Americans have built from the port of Chemulpo over the mountains to Seoul. That concession was first granted to James R. Morse of New York, one of the best known Americans in the far east, and its building was begun by the American firm of Messrs. Collbran and Bostwick. The road is twenty-five miles long. It is of the standard American gauge and its construction offered no great engineering difficulties. The price agreed upon was \$1,500,000 in gold, including the bridge over the Han river, which was to cost \$190,000. Messrs. Collbran and Bostwick completed a large part of the road. They ordered all their materials from the United States, including timber from Washington and Oregon. They had the materials on the ground when Morse sold out the whole to a Japanese syndicate, which has finished the construction and is now operating the property. The rolling stock is American and up-to-date, but the engines are little yard engines instead of the camel-backs used on our roads. The Japanese insisted on small engines and they are laboring under great disadvantages on this account.

I am told that the Coreans patronize the cars. They are the laziest mortals on the face of the globe and the richer among them think it beneath their dignity to walk. A noble usually has two servants with him during every pedestrian trip. One servant walks along on each side and holds him up by passing one hand under his armpit.

Another Korean road which promises well is being surveyed by Frenchmen. This will unite Seoul with the northwestern boundary of the country, ending at the town of Weichu. French capitalists are interested in it and it is to be built by French engineers with French material. It will form the northern extension of the road from Seoul to Fusan, and from its terminus a branch will probably be built through Manchuria to connect with the great Russian line. The Korean government wants the road built and it is expected that it will give about \$50,000 per annum to it.

#### Biggest Electric Plant in Asia.

It seems odd that the largest electric

plant in Asia should be found in the hermit land of Corea, but this is the case. Messrs. Collbran and Bostwick have the management of it and they are operating it successfully. It includes electric lights for Seoul, which, as I have said, has 300,000 people, and it also includes an electric railroad, embracing the principal streets of that city and running a long distance outside. The street railroad is an overhead trolley and its rails and rolling stock are of the most improved American pattern. Each car has two divisions, one open and the other closed. The open part is for the second-class passengers, who pay lower fares than those who ride in the closed part. The cars are run by Korean motormen, who are rather careless, but who, so far, have killed only one of the people they have knocked down or run over.

The company which furnished the capital is entirely Korean, with Yee Cha Yun, who was formerly Korean minister at Washington, as president. It has issued about \$300,000 worth of stock and Mr. Collbran received a payment of \$100,000 at the beginning of his contract.

The road was originally planned to have but six miles of track. It already has ten miles and eighteen miles more are to be put down. It now runs out through the city, passing the palace, the chief business houses and the foreign quarters and goes on to the tomb of the empress.

Collbran and Bostwick have also secured a bank concession and they are now putting up a handsome building in the center of the city at a cost of 75,000 yen. They have a contract for waterworks in Seoul and another for a short interior railroad. They are enterprising men and promise to make fortunes in this part of the far east. Mr. Collbran comes from Denver, where he is well known in railroad circles, and Mr. Bostwick is from San Francisco.

#### Yankees Are Prominent in Corea.

Indeed, the Americans are among the most prominent of the foreigners in Corea. This has been so since the country was opened. It was an American, Admiral Shufeldt, who made the first treaty with the king and American missionaries have been the chief educators of the people. An American, Dr. Horace N. Allen of Ohio,

saved the life of one of the royal family when he was almost cut to pieces in a revolution in Seoul about sixteen years ago, and since then he has of all the foreigners been the closest to the high officials of the court. He was a friend of the late queen and now that his majesty is an emperor he holds equally close relations to him. It has been largely through Dr. Allen that the Americans have been awarded the best of the concessions and that they have a fair chance at everything. He was for some years secretary of our legation at Seoul, but when McKinley became president he appointed him minister, which position he now holds. He is, indeed, a valuable man.

Another American acts as adviser to the Korean government, an American is employed as its civil engineer and Americans will probably supply the materials for the emperor's new palace, which is already planned. David W. Deahler, the stepson of Governor Nash of Ohio, is treasurer of the

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

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