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KOREA AT SCHOOL

By FRANK G. CARPENTER

HOW MODERN EDUCATION IS REVOLUTIONIZING THE HERMIT KINGDOM.

The Little Crown Prince and Prince Ito the Two Hopes of the Country—A Literary Awakening—Newspapers—The Dictionary and the Bible—Mission Work Done by Buddhists.

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Seoul, Korea.—The two great hopes of the Koreans are Prince Ito and the little crown prince. It is the grand old man of Japan. He is a confident, a man of action, and he had much to do with training the Crown Prince of Japan. The little crown prince I refer to is the crown prince of Korea. He is the brother of the present emperor, and he is now being educated in Tokyo after Prince Ito's directions. In him and Prince Ito lie the possibility of Korea's maintaining its natural existence and not being swallowed up in Japan. There is a strong Japanese party which would like to see this country under a military government appointed from Japan, and believe in exploiting it for all its worth. Prince Ito, backed by the mikado, is anxious that the Koreans should have a fair show and he has done all that he could to bring that about. He does not believe that the Koreans should govern themselves but he wants them to have a share of the offices and to maintain their individuality as a nation under the direction of Japan. In doing this he is opposed to the money-grabbers and land-grabbers. The lower classes of the Japanese are coming over here in crowds and they would swallow the country and oppress the people if their own officials did not prevent. Prince Ito has so far been the chief safety valve and he is training up the little crown prince in order that he may be the governor of the Koreans in the future.

The Crown Prince of Korea.
I have had little chance to study the present emperor, through my audience with him and talks with the officials who know him best. He is a weakling in the hands of the Japanese. He is comely, but his mind is so little that a wooden man, if he could be automatically worked, would have as much force, and he would, moreover, be cheaper to keep. The emperor is the son of the retired emperor by the late queen. His father is bright intellectually, but he has

no more backbone than a jelly-fish. He is incapable of ruling efficiently or honestly, and his long administration has been one cruelty and crime.

The little crown prince is the son of this retired emperor. He is the half-brother of the man on the throne, his mother being the notorious Lady Om, a favorite consort, but not the wife, of his majesty. After the emperor was assassinated this Lady Om, who had been brought into the palace as one of her attendants, became the favorite in retired emperor's harem. She has ousted all the other ladies of her class, and she holds the old emperor in the hollow of her hand. Her power was strengthened upon the birth of the little crown prince, about twelve years ago, and she is still at the head of the present emperor's establishment.

The crown prince has been going to school for the past five or six years, and he is being educated along western lines. He is learning Japanese, and all of his studies are carried on in that language. His chief work is being done at the Nobles School in Tokio, but he has also private tutors, and he will have a good education as any prince of Japan. It is whispered here that upon his graduation he will take one of the Japanese princesses to wife, and that when he comes back to Korea, at the age of twenty or so, there will be another shuffle of the imperial cards, and this boy will be put in the present emperor's place. Such a change would undoubtedly benefit both Korea and Japan. The people here will then have an emperor who can speak Japanese as well as Korean, and who will be abreast of the new civilization. He would have the good of his people at heart, and will be able to act for them, and at the same time be an efficient lieutenant for the mikado.

A Bright Young Prince.
Prince Ito tells me that the crown prince has extraordinary ability, and he predicts that he will make a good monarch. The little fellow is just the opposite of his half-brother, who is now on the throne. The latter had hardly been outside his own apartments until he was over thirty years of age, and to-day his only exercises are walking about his palace grounds with now and then a short horseback ride in them. He looks pale and enervated, and his flesh seems to be putty. This crown prince could hold his own with little Charlie Fatt or Quentin Roosevelt. He is fond of athletics and likes to shoot, fish and play ball. At the same time he stands high in

classes, and is not averse to study. The Korean papers are full of what he is doing in Japan, and the people of the palaces have been delighted with some biograph pictures which have just come showing the little prince on the hunt. The papers describe the palace which the Japanese have given him. They state that his little highness sleeps in a European bed in a room kept warm by an electric stove. His palace is furnished throughout in foreign style, and he has riding horses and all sorts of gymnastic appliances, from punching bags to parallel bars. His palace is guarded by eighteen foot soldiers and ten court policemen, and when he goes out he has an escort. His instructors are selected from high-class Japanese professors. The mikado himself is interested in him, and altogether the Japanese are trying to make of him a man as well as a monarch.

Korea's New Schools.
When the boy becomes Emperor of Korea he will have a new nation to govern. The people are just beginning to appreciate our civilization. Their almond eyes are opening to the needs of modern education, and schools are being started in all the cities. Those of the missions, which have been in existence for years, are overcrowded, and the new ones of the Japanese government have more than they can do. There are several thousand boys and as many girls now in attendance at the public schools of Seoul. They all wear uniforms, and night and morning the streets are filled with boys wearing caps and gowns, and bareheaded and bareheaded girls with books in their hands. Each boy has a little brass badge on his cap which marks the school to which he belongs. All the boys have their hair cut short, instead of wearing it long braids down their backs, as was the old Korean custom, and the girls wear no veils, which is quite contrary to the ideas of the older Koreans.

The government school buildings are much like those of Japan. They are equipped with furniture like ours, and each has its gymnasium. There is a Japanese academy where young men are taught Korean in order that they may act as advisors to the native officials. Our mission schools are scattered over Korea. There are, all told, four hundred and fifty primary graded schools, which are supported by the Koreans themselves, and eleven intermediate schools and academies. The primary schools had ten thousand pupils last year, and at that time there were nine high schools, four women with five hundred students. There are also industrial schools and schools for the blind.

The Y. M. C. A. is doing a great educational work here in Seoul and one of the finest of the new buildings which is now going up, is a Korean college being built by Korean money and backed by Koreans. The natives realize the value of education, and are brighter than they are, and they feel that their success comes from the new education. In the past the Chinese classics were the only standards of scholarship. Today our modern studies have taken the place of classics, and all Korea is studying the multiplication table.

Mission Schools vs. the Government.
Just how there is some excitement among the missionaries on account of an imperial edict which provides that all private schools shall be under government direction. The authorities require full information as to the names and character of the teachers, and also as to the receipts and expenditures. All books have to be passed upon by the educational department, and the teaching must be as the government

directs. This seems rather severe, and it causes unfavorable comment.

A Literary Awakening.
The Koreans have always been a literary people. Much of the old learning of Japan came from them, and they still hold scholarship in the highest respect. Indeed, the common word here for Mr. is "Schoolman." The Koreans call each other Schoolman Pak, Schoolman Ye or Schoolman Kim, instead of Mr. Pak, Mr. Ye or Mr. Kim. In the past the better classes of the people have been well up in Chinese, and have seen picnic parties of young Korean gentlemen engaged in writing Chinese poetry under the trees. They would take a text and try who could make the best rhymes. Such young men are now studying modern languages and sciences. They have laid aside Confucius and Mencius and are reading the New Testament, which has been translated by the missionaries, and also a number of other books which are being turned into Korean. A life of Garfield was recently published, and also the "Story of Madam Roland." A popular book is Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, which was translated by the late Mrs. Gale and a young Korean named Yank-Ki-Talk, who recently had some trouble with the Japanese government. This Pilgrim's Progress has had a large sale, and it is going into a new edition. I understand that several Korean novels have been issued, the two most popular now current being "Spirit Voices" and "Dead Tree Flowers."

The Korean Dictionary.
One of the greatest works performed by Americans in Korea was the making of the Korean-American dictionary. This was done by Dr. J. S. Gale, a Presbyterian missionary. He began it in 1892, after four years' residence in the country, and completed it within five years. Prior to that there was no record of inter-communication between the foreigners and the natives except through the Chinese language. The work of making the dictionary was enormous. The definitions were in Korean, Chinese and English, and every character had to be just so, for the variation of a stroke or a point might perhaps turn the word, "Lord" into "Devil." The original edition of the dictionary has long since been sold out and a new one is now being prepared. Dr. Gale tells me that this necessitated by the thousands of new words which have come into the language, caused by the changes in civilization and life of the people. Scientific words, such as telephones, telegraph, dynamite and radium, have had to be added. All of these have now been added to the dictionary and they must be defined. The new edition of the dictionary is being printed in Yokohama, and the proofs are sent here to Dr. Gale for correction. I have seen some of them. Four readers go over every sheet and the greatest care is taken that each character is right. This is done by Chinese and Korean scholars. After this Dr. Gale sends the proofs to the girls of the Presbyterian mission school. They have sharper eyes and quicker brains than the old scholars and they find mistakes which the latter have overlooked. At first Dr. Gale offered to pay 1 cent for every correction. After a number of sheets had come back he figured up the account and sent in the money. The girls returned it the same day with a letter saying:

"We girls think we are getting enough from our teachers, and we do not want any pay."

Translating the Bible.

Suppose the next Sunday morning every pastor in the United States should arise in his pulpit and say that a new book of the Bible had just been discovered and that it would be given to the people that week. What a sensation it would create and how all would be alive to learn of the message!

This is the condition today in Korea. Until very lately the people have had nothing but the New Testament in their own language. The 150,000 Christians here have been confined to that book, and it is only within a few years that they have had the Proverbs and Psalms. Today the Old Testament is being translated by Dr. Gale and Dr. Reynolds with one or two assistants. It comes book by book, each new volume making a sensation far greater than the first selling of the new novels in our country. Genesis, Isaiah and the Psalms have already been printed, and Exodus, Numbers, Job and I and II Samuel will soon be in the hands of the people. Dr. Gale says that the translation of the whole Bible will probably be finished this autumn, and that it will be in the hands of the Koreans soon after. The work is being published by the British and American Bible societies; and it will be sold all over the country both by agents and by the book sellers who are to be found in the larger places.

Korean Newspapers.
A few years ago the only paper published in Korea was a little court circular which gave the commands of the king. It was printed with a brush and its circulation numbered but a few hundred. Today there are Japanese papers in all the large centers, and in Seoul there are four dailies printed in Korean. The capital also has three Japanese dailies, and an English newspaper, the Seoul Press, owned and edited by Mr. Somoto, a very able Japanese journalist. The Press is looked upon as one of the organs of the government, and at present it is the only foreign newspaper

published in Korea. Not long ago there was an English edition of the Daily News, an anti-government organ but this has been discontinued for financial reasons.

The Korean Daily News, printed in Seoul, is the organ of the anti-Japanese party. It is a bright paper and well edited. It has the ablest of Korean writers and its circulation is large. Like all newspapers, it is subject to the government censorship, and may be suspended, without notice, at the will of the officials. For this reason its writers have to be careful as to their expressions, and many of its most severe articles are those which have to be read between the lines. This morning, for instance, I see several editorials under the head of Nature Notes. Here is one freely translated:

"I hear the cuckoo say: 'Pap-Gook! Pap-Gook!' 'Pap-Gook! Pap-Gook!' This is really the song of a song bird here, but the Chinese character which expresses it means also 'Restive King-dom'."

The next lines follow:
"And what does this voice mean but the souls of the dead patriots who are thus speaking to us through the birds."
The second verse reads: "On the summer air I hear the sound of Kun dai! Kun dai! Kun dai!" This character means army, and the line below adds: "What is this but the souls of our dead findix uttering their protest!"

"In the air I also hear sounds of robbery, murder and oppression, and what is all this but the ghosts of the thieves and robbers of the dead findix expiation?"
These articles are beautifully written, and the Koreans are delighted with them.
Another Korean daily is the Tai-Han-Silmpo or the Korean News. This is one of the organs of the government, and its circulation is largely

continued to the officials. A third daily is entitled the Imperial City. It started out as an anti-government journal, but is now controlled by the Japanese. A fourth, called the Empire, is purely Korean and is half independent. The Empire has a large circulation and is greatly read by the common people.

The Japanese papers are, of course, in favor of the government, but all must go to the censors before they are issued. Notwithstanding this, objectionable paragraphs, sometimes even in such cases the police are sent around to collect and destroy the papers, and if the offense is a grievous one the journal may be suspended.

Korean Surveyors.
I am surprised at the number of Korean surveyors I see about Seoul. Both in the wide streets of the cities and in the country, yellow-robed young men clad in high black hats and long white gowns may be seen setting up compasses and carrying chains from place to place. According to the new laws, all the lands of the empire have to be surveyed, and this made for record. This is one thing that the Korean can do without losing his dignity, and as a result the young men are studying mathematics and practicing it in order to make surveys of their profession. The stores which sell surveying instruments in Chung-Go-Kai are crowded with customers. It is surprising where the men get their money to buy the instruments.

The Buddhists in Seoul, Korea, are speaking of the translation of the Bible and the work of the missionaries, the religious Japanese are not idle. The native Christians of Japan have a mission here, and the Buddhists have built a large temple under the shadow of the headquarters of the resident general. They have a mission situated on one of the main streets of the Japanese section, and they are doing what they can to revive Buddhism among the Koreans. This is strange, inasmuch as Buddhism came to Japan from Korea. Today the Koreans despise their religion. They call upon them in times of trouble, but otherwise treat them with contempt. There are three classes of language used among the Koreans. One is for official use, another for equals, and a third for the poor and beggars. The priests are always addressed in the lowest language, and that even by children. Upon the Japanese came, priests and monks were driven to the mountains, and the law to enforce the casting out of this has been the case for five hundred years. The Buddhists elsewhere today are recruited largely from the lowest classes and from those of that class who are doing nothing else. This movement largely takes the place of orphan asylums, fatherless children being made over to the monks for education and protection. I give this on the authority of the Rev. Mr. Brown, a well known Presbyterian missionary in Tokio in Southern Korea. Said he:

"I have spent much time in the mountains and have asked many priests how they came here. One told me that when he was small his father died, and as his mother wished to marry again, she made him a priest. Another said he was the youngest of eight children, and that as his parents were too poor to support such a large family they had given him over to the Buddhists. These Korean priests are ignorant. They have their heads and go about with begging bowls in their hands. They are full of superstition and have practically no hold on the people at large. The missions which were established by the Japanese Buddhists who are of a far different character and who are carrying out missionary work in modern church work."

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