

ished in Corea. The truth about such matters is kept, as far as possible, from the foreigners, and you will find little information about prisons and punishments in any of the books on Corea. There is, in fact, but little published on the country, and the information which I give you was only accessible to me on account of the letters of introduction which I carried and the risks which I took in going right in among the people and persisting in my questions and investigations, notwithstanding the objections of the officials. I am, I believe, the first American who has ever visited the Korean prisons. They are as bad almost as the hells into which I looked in some of the interior cities of China. I can't reconcile the cruelties which I find among the Koreans. They are in some ways the most polite and most refined people. They are lovers of poetry and flowers. They are particular as to etiquette, and their souls in most ways are as refined as ours. Still, these punishments are such that they would be a disgrace to the most ignorant and savage nations of the African wilds, and I wonder if after all our humanity is not civilization veneer, and whether we would not be quite as bad had we not for generations been studying how to do better. We are the same Christian people who burned witches at the stake only a generation or so ago, and our great-great grandfathers punished the least stealing with death. What was common in feudalism would be disgraceful now. Corea is practically a feudal nation today, and it is in fact in the same state that China was about four hundred years back. Korean thieves are decapitated for their crimes. They are only cut into two pieces, however, and the law provides that their bodies need not lie on the execution grounds longer than two days before their relatives can take them away and bury them. The thief, when he is first taken, is flogged by the officers. He is then asked as to his crime, and after this is taken to the house of the judge. The judge demands what he has done with the property, and if the thief replies that it has been sold and gives the name of the party who has it, it is confiscated. He is then taken to jail and kept there for 100 days. At the end of this time the police give him the option of life or death. If he accepts life he becomes a servant of the jail for the rest of his existence; if death, he is strangled.

QUEER METHODS OF STRANGLING.

This strangling is done in a curious way. There is a hole in the door in the cell just large enough for a piece of rope about the size of a clothes line to pass through. A noose is made at the end of the rope, and this noose is placed around the criminal's neck. The other end of the rope is put through the hole in the door or the wall, and the police pull at the rope until they bring the man's chest and neck above and below the hole and until the neck breaks and the man is dead. The question as to whether a thief be strangled or decapitated depends upon the nature of the offense. Strangling is much the more respectable way of dying. Sometimes this is brought about by hanging. The thief's neck and hands are tied to a post, so that his feet are some distance above the ground. About his ankles a stout rope is then fastened, and to the end of this a stone, several times as

heavy as his body, is hung. Of course, the man dies.

KILLED BY A SHEET OF PAPER.

Another method of execution is by suffocation, and this, strange to say, is done with paper. The man is laid flat upon his back, and a sheet of Korean paper is spread over his face. This has been soaked in water, and fits over the man's face, being pressed down so that it makes a veritable death mask, shutting out every bit of air, and the man dies. Any one who has seen the paper of Corea will appreciate how easily this form of execution could be carried out. It is made by hand. It is as thick as a sheet of blotting paper and almost as strong as leather. When moisture is applied to it it becomes exceedingly soft, but does not lose its strength, and it would make an excellent molding material.

THE TORTURE OF UNFAITHFUL POLICEMEN.

I was told of a curious custom as to policemen who make false arrests. They are terribly punished, and if something similar was adopted as to our American sheriffs there would be fewer mistakes made. The Korean policeman who arrests a man as a thief when he knows him to be innocent is liable to be caught by the man's family, and his eyes maybe burned out by them with red-hot pokers, or iron chop-sticks which have been heated in the coals. His eyes have not been truly in arresting the wrong man, and it is thought to be just that they be put out. Another way of performing this punishment is by laying the policeman on the ground with his face upward. A tube of bamboo, just about one inch in thickness and as long as a lead pencil, is fitted over the eye, and the other end of it is pounded with a mallet until the eyes are squeezed up into the bamboo tubes. Such cases are not common, but a policeman who intentionally arrests an innocent man is liable to this treatment.

A FAMILY BURIED ALIVE.

Among the most terrible of Korean crimes are those against your parents or ancestors. There is a prison in Seoul that is devoted entirely to prisoners who commit crimes against their parents. If a rich son refuses to support his father he can be sent to jail, and the boy who strikes his father can be whipped to death. The parricide is burned to death, and it is in Corea much the same as in China, where the killing of one's parents subjects the child to be sliced into thirty-odd pieces or carved up by inches. I heard of a curious case which happened this spring in Corea, which shows the power of the officials and the terrible vengeance which they sometimes visit upon those whom they hate. A certain magistrate had his ancestral tablets stolen, an offense somewhat similar to the stealing of a man's grandfather's gravestone in America, but a really terrible thing in this superstitious land of Corea. Shortly after the theft was committed he received a notice that if he would go at a certain time and leave a certain amount of money at a certain place the tablets would be returned to him. He followed the directions in the note, but instead of carrying a load of copper cash, he filled his bags with stones and had men in ambush to watch the thieves when the came to get the money. As the robbers came forth these men sprang from their hiding

places and attempted to catch them. They did not succeed in either recognizing them or capturing them, but one of the thieves dropped his pipe as he ran. This pipe was shown about to the people, until finally one man said that it looked like that of a prominent noble. The magistrate at once arrested the suspected man and charged him with robbery. He replied that he had nothing to do with it. He was put to torture. His hands were tied behind him, and he was hung up by his elbows, while his feet were whipped. He refused to confess. The magistrate became angry, and he had the man's whole family brought out and stoned. The man still refused to confess, and he actually buried the man and his family alive. This was such a horrible outrage that the people complained of the matter to the government. The magistrate, however, had a friend at court, and through the influence of the prime minister nothing was done to him.

TORTURE AND THE STOCKS.

The torture of prisoners to make them confess is common in Corea, and it is wonderful what inventions of torture are sometimes in use. Think of tying a man's bare feet to a stake in the ground and burning his toes with powder. Think of all sorts of flogging and pinching and cutting, and you can get some idea of the powers of a Korean magistrate. In the prisons you will find iron chains, stocks, and all sorts of manacles. These Koreans know how to whip so that the flesh is raveled off of the bones, and I have a photograph of a man tied in a chair, with his knees bare, and a jailer whipping his bare shins. In one of the prisons which I visited I saw three men fastened in stocks. The stocks consisted of a log of wood about fifteen feet long and at least a foot in diameter. This had been split in two, and holes had been bored through it just large enough to hold the bare ankle of a man. The three criminals each had one foot fastened in this log, and the jailers, when I appeared with my soldiers and photographer, tried to move them out into the sun so that I might get a good photograph of them. As they pulled them along I heard one of them utter a cry of pain, and I saw that the features of all were contorted with agony. It made me sick, and I desisted. I told the jailers to let the men be, and that I would not take their pictures. I took a photograph, however, of one of the prisoners, who was wearing the Korean cangue. This is different from the articles used in China, and I have never heard it described, nor read of it anywhere. You will find no description of it in the books of travel. I do not suppose that many know of its existence. The Chinese cangue consists of a square framework or board, in the center of which a man's head is fixed, and which rests upon his shoulders, jutting about two feet out from his neck on every side. The Korean cangue is a plank, often longer than the man himself, with a hole in one end of it, in which the neck can be locked. If the man wishes to move about he must hold up this plank with his hands, and when he sits down its heavy weight rests upon his neck. I found it in the jails of many of the magistrates which I visited in the country districts, and it is by no means a mild instrument of torture.

HORRORS OF PADDLING AND SPANKING.

Paddling and flogging are the most