

a horse that the man who ran behind it and acted as my groom did not get his percentage of the hire. Such things are perfectly legitimate in Seoul. The man who keeps the gate of your house is given 10 per cent of the amount of all purchases made. This, of course, comes out of the landlord, who is charged an additional price. If the percentage is not paid, the seller will get no more business, and he will be boycotted by all the gatemens of the town.

The illegitimate squeezing is awful. You have to watch all the time for fear some one else is being cheated or oppressed through you. The servants of foreigners are not subject to the ordinary Korean laws, and our legation to Corea found not long ago that the kesos connected with the establishment had been selling certificates to men about Corea stating that they were employed by the legation, and they had received from one thousand to twenty thousand cash apiece for these. Each of the foreign legations has a number of these keso soldiers, which are detailed to it from the service of the king, and my soldiers are of this character. An outrageous instance of squeezing occurred not long ago in connection with the Russian legation, and it was carried on a long time before the Russian minister found it out. These kesos went out into the country and found men who were in debt to people in Seoul. They told them that the Russian minister had bought the claims against them, and that they must be paid with high interest. They put them in chains and brought them right to the legation and kept them in the out-houses, which are reserved for the kesos, and which surround every large Korean establishment. Here they whipped them from time to time with paddles.

They would strip them half naked, suspend them by their elbows, and torture them by touching their bare legs with red-hot pokers. Now and then they would let them out in the yard, and if the minister came in sight, would warn them that they had better be quiet, for he was a dangerous man, and was already inclined to cut their heads off for their non-payment of the money. Think of such a thing actually going on for weeks without the minister knowing it, and I am told that a somewhat similar state of affairs prevailed for a short time in connection with the quarters of one of the missionaries.

In another case, a teacher of one of the government schools found that his popularity was waning. The people did not seem to like him, and he could not tell what was the matter until he found that his servants had been borrowing money of the people of the neighborhood, and that under compulsion, in his name. He believes that one of the chief officers of the school had a hand in the scheme, and it was only stopped upon his threatening that the imposition would be reported to the king, unless a change was immediately made and the money returned. I did not buy anything in the Seoul shops unless I saw the money handed over for my purchases. Otherwise, my soldiers might say that I had just taken it, and inasmuch as I was a foreigner, and of presumably high rank, they would, to a certain extent, have to grin and bear it. The greatest squeezers in Corea are the Chinese, and the Chinese minister,

Yuan, is supposed to make a great deal of money in this way. The Chinese consul at Chemulpo made something like \$5,000 out of a squeeze, which he manipulated in some way, on the shipments of rice from Corea, just before the present trouble, and the whole of the social and governmental structure of this country and of China seems to me to be honeycombed with corruption and bribery.

MONEY OR BLOOD.

There is nowhere in the world that the almighty dollar is worth more to a man than it is in Corea. He can often save his skin by plating the palm of his enemy with silver, and persons sentenced to flogging can ransom their punishment with money. They have, in fact, a fixed rate for this in Corea. Ten blows of the bamboo will be omitted on the payment of about \$5; twenty blows for \$10, and so on upward. There are few men who would not give all they have rather than have their thighs reduced to a jelly, and the bamboo is a great persuader. At the same time, officials are sometimes punished for their cruelty, and those who cause the death of persons by torture, receive 100 blows and are dismissed from the public service. I am told that the present dynasty has much less terrible punishments than were common in the past, and that within the last 250 years knee-crushing and branding have been abolished, and there is no cutting off of the noses and feet of men, as was done in the middle ages.

STEAMED TO DEATH.

Still, the punishments are bad enough. I will devote my next letter to describing them. They are far worse than anything that is known outside of China, and the wives and families of rebels and criminals, even to the third and fourth generation, are included in the sentences of their husbands and fathers. Here is a curious method, which, I am told, prevails in Seoul of executing the fathers of rebels. It is almost necessary to understand the structure of a Korean house to appreciate it. The rooms are heated, you know, by fires which are built under the house, and the flames of which run through flues, covering every part of the floors of the rooms. These floors are of brick or mortar, and they are covered with a thick, white paper well oiled. With a good fire, they turn the rooms into ovens, and a small room soon becomes a furnace if a big fire is built under it. Among the lowest classes in Corea are the butchers, and it is in a butcher's house outside the west gate of the city that the fathers of rebels are sometimes poisoned. The poison is mixed with rice water, which has been left over night in order that its taste may be bitter. The officer of the law takes the man to this house. He wears wooden clogs, and thus keeps his feet from the red-hot floor, upon which he puts the man, and where he forces him to drink the poisoned water. In the back of this room there is a great jar of Korean pottery, which holds almost as much as a hogshead. This is filled with water. After the official has given the poison, he breaks this jar and the water flows out upon the floor. If the man does not die of the poison the steam and heat soon finish him, and the body is par-boiled before it is taken out. It is carried through one of the dishonorable gates and cast out of the city. It must be left there for a certain time,

and then if its relatives do not take it away, the birds grow fat over its cooked meat.

WHAT FOREIGNERS MAY EXPECT.

These punishments will give you some idea of the horrors which are bound to attend any protracted war in this part of the world. The Japanese will carry on their struggle on western methods, but the Koreans and the Chinese will do as they have done in the past, and woe be to the prisoners who fall into their hands. During the war between the Chinese and English about a generation ago the foreign prisoners were carried about in iron cages, and I met an English consul at Canton a few years since who had his whiskers pulled out one at a time while he was being shown as a curiosity to the people in an iron pen, the roof of which was so low that he could neither sit nor stand within it. This man said at the time that China should give up a life for every hair he lost from his beard, and his position, I am told, was such that he was able to carry out his threat. The father of the present king, who is now at the head of the government, murdered the French missionaries and the Korean Christians in the most barbarous of ways. The heads of some of them were cut off, and their top-knots being tied together, they were hung high on poles, like so many onions. The bodies of the dead were brought to Seoul in straw bags, and were cast on the ground outside the southeast gate. Such things are hardly possible today. The Koreans are afraid of the foreigners, and the officials have too much sense to allow the people to massacre them. Still, this was only a few years ago, and when war comes in at the door, common sense flies out at the window.

THE AMERICAN COLONY IN COREA.

And this brings me to the American colony in Corea. Some of the best men that the United States has ever produced are now laboring there. Dr. H. N. Allen, the secretary of the American legation, will go down into history as one of the greatest of our diplomats. He has done more for Corea than any man ever connected with the United States legation, and if our diplomatic service was organized on any other than a political basis he would today be the American minister to Corea. He has his wife and his children, two bright boys, with him, and his house is inside the legation compound. He comes from Ohio, and he is thoroughly an able man in every respect. He practically saved the life of one of the princes of the royal family, and his value to America and Europe is inestimable. The American minister, Mr. Sill, has been in Corea only a short time. I will write more concerning him in a future letter. He has been a professor and an educator all his life, and he is a cultured gentleman. He comes from Michigan and was appointed largely through the influence of Don Dickinson. He is a man of no experience in diplomatic life, but he is well liked and he is making a very good minister. There is only one American firm in Corea, and this is that of Morse & Townsend, which has its chief house at the port of Chemulpo. James R. Morse, the senior partner, lives in New York. He has spent some years in Corea and Japan and he is a very able man. W. D. Townsend, the other member of the firm, is a well educated Bostonian, who does a big business in ship-