

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

INTERIOR COREA.

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THE COREAN magistrates are in reality the cause of the great war between China and Japan. They are a sort of petty kings, and they rule the villages of the hermit kingdom. They pay the high officials of Seoul for their offices, and these put a portion of the amounts they receive into the royal treasury and keep the balance. The magistrates collect the money from the farmers in the shape of taxes, and they do this in the most arbitrary way. They are the judges and the courts, as well as the tax-gathers, and the man who does not obey them can be called up on all sorts of charges and tortured and fined. There is a system of laws as to taxes, but this is evaded in every possible way, and the people are at the mercy of these potentates. The law is that every man must work a certain time during the year for the king, and the magistrates decide as to the time he must labor. Many of them own slaves and they all have what in Corea are considered very swell establishments, with scores of scribes, each of whom has his own rank, and who is a sort of a political striker. These scribes have a dress of their own. They wear long white gowns, which fall from their necks to their feet, and little plug hats of black horse hair, which they tie on to their crowns, and which fit on to the head much like a woman's bonnet. These hats are fastened by black ribbons secured under the chin, and the gowns are tied by silk cords, which run around the waist. Their sleeves are tight, and in Corea only the high officials and gentlemen can wear full sleeves. General Pak, my interpreter during my trip through Corea, had sleeves of about the size of a two-bushel bag, and he considered himself much above these government clerks.

HOW "PRINCE" CARPENTER WAS TREATED.

I despair of being able to describe my experiences with these government clerks and the magistrates in the trip which I took right across Corea from the capital to the east coast. The letter of introduction which I had from the king was in a great blue envelope, and it described me as a mighty American traveling for pleasure. I would not wish to say that General Pak was a most accomplished liar, but I fear that he stretched matters in presenting me to the magistrates. I do not know what he told them. He may have said I was the son of the king of America, or the

nephew of the President of the United States, but at any rate the officials almost went down on their knees to me, and my treatment was that of a prince. General Pak told them how I had visited the king at the capital, and had had the honor of going through the king's gate of the palace, and I could see that he enforced their respect when they did not voluntarily tender it. The magistrates' establishments are usually at one end of the village, and he rode with our retinue right into the government courtyards and turned out the government clerks from the best apartments. Each establishment consists of half a dozen or more one-story buildings with heavy tiled roofs. There was the big house in which the magistrate lived, and near this, surrounded by a wall, another set of houses where he kept his wives and his concubines. There were also other houses for the government clerks, and a lot of dwellings, which looked more like pig-pens or cow-sheds than the homes of human beings, which were filled with slaves and servants. There were scores of pot-bellied, half-naked children squalling about. There were babies by the scores tied in the backs of their sisters or servants, and government clerks were everywhere. Each magistrate has a number of large rooms which are devoted to the clerks. In these they do their writing, using paint brushes and India ink, and the rafters of the roof were all covered with lists of names and accounts. General Pak always rode to the best of these establishments and cleared out the clerks. He put on all sorts of airs and strutted about as he talked in the most grandiloquent way, all the time pointing to me. The clerks made up beds of rice bags for me to sleep on, and the servants cleaned up the rooms for us. Under each floor there were flues, and these were filled with straw and lighted, so the the houses soon became comfortably warm.

GEN. PAK AND THE CLERKS.

It was queer to see Pak swell about with these officers. He had bought a new suit of clothes for the occasion, and he always put on these before he went to call on the magistrates. He would first send my Chinese visiting card and the letter from the king, and then would go on with his toilet. There were usually about twenty clerks looking on, and forty almond eyes were watching his every motion with interest. Still, he got out of one suit into another without loss of dignity. First he would take off his gown and then his jacket, leaving himself bare to the waist. He had a fine silk vest which took the place of the jacket, and his gown of the most delicate sky-blue went on above this. The next was the change of the pantaloons. These were so large that they would have made a suit of underclothes for Barnum's rat woman, and Pak ties them so they hung down in zouave style at the ankles. Next he had wadded stockings and kid shoes of light color. Now putting on his hat he would take a pipe as long as himself and squat on the floor and smoke as he talked to the clerks. He moved backward and forward as he talked, never taking the pipe out of his

mouth, but letting the bowl rest on the floor and propping the stem against his lower front tooth. He was a regular Corean dude for the time, and I could see that the scribes were greatly impressed. The chief trouble was with the cooking. He thought it beneath him to do any labor if there were any nobles about, and my servant was of no earthly good. The result was I had to do the cooking myself.

COREAN GASTRONOMY.

I found it hard to get enough to eat during this trip over the country. The chickens which were furnished us were of an uncertain age, and the same was true of the eggs. I boiled one chicken for two hours without making any impression on its toughness, and I afterward found that the people do not like to sell to the magistrates, for the reason that they seldom pay for anything they get. They will seize what they can find and take it as a right. I was a distinguished traveler, and they thought, of course, I would not pay. We found very poor rice at most of the inns, and I was more than half-starved during much of the trip. My birthday occurred on the journey, and my birthday dinner consisted of toast, rice, a five-year-old chicken and a bit of currant jelly which I had brought with me from Seoul. My dessert was a little tablet of chocolate, and this formed one of the best meals I got on the trip. The sleeping accommodations were poor in the extreme. At the country inns we had to sleep on the stone floor, and were half-baked by the straw fires beneath us. As soon as the stones were warmed, all sorts of creeping things came out, and I finally compromised matters by taking out the sliding walls of the room and propping them up on logs in the center of the apartment, so that I was to a certain extent away from the walls and the floor. There was no privacy whatever, and children by scores watched me make my toilet, and the government clerks fingered my wardrobe.

DRINKING WITH THE MAGISTRATES.

I found the magistrates well disposed, and, aside from their pompous airs and queer customs, they are gentlemanly and refined. I remember one old fellow who gave me a dinner, and who furnished me with his trumpeters, who had musical instruments as long as themselves to toot me out of the town. He fell in love with my bottle of whiskey, and mixed it with a pony or so of Chartreuse. He treated me to some hot Corean wine, and between the drinks, offered me pickles and candy. He lived about a quarter of a mile from the guest house, and he came down to call upon me in his own royal chair, which had a leopard skin covering its back, and he swayed to and fro and licked his chops as he talked with me about America. I told him about our great railroads, our big houses and the wonders of steam. I could see that he thought I was lying, though he was much too polite to say so. At the close of his talk with me "General" Pak gave him a present of an empty apollinaris bottle, and this he considered a really great gift, as there is no glass in Corea. I had some hairpins with me and a little looking-glass, and I gave these to him for the ladies of his family. This had to be managed very adroitly, for it is not polite in Corea to ask after the wives of your friends, and the French legation in