

Pen Picture OF THE Interesting Hermit Kingdom Of Korea.

Inhabitants Resemble Japanese More Than Chinese, but are Larger Than Either.

DRESS IN WHITE COTTON.

In Upper and Lettered Classes and in Government Documents Chinese Is Used.

THE ARISTOCRATS ARE POLITE.

Humble Koreans Are Social Among Themselves, Vivacious and Talkative—Glimpse at the Trades.

COREA is a peninsula projecting from the eastern coast of Asia in a southeasterly direction. Its boundaries are all natural, consisting of the Japan sea on the east, the Yellow sea on the west, and the Tumen river on the north, which empties into the Sea of Japan. The northern boundary divides Korea from Russia in Asia on the northeast, and from the Chinese provinces of Manchuria and Shing King on the northwest. Korea extends from north latitude 34 degrees to north latitude 41 degrees, a distance of 500 miles. As compared with our Atlantic coast line, it would extend from Portland, Me., to Wilmington, N. C., says the American Educational Bulletin.

The average breadth of the peninsula is about 100 miles, and the full coast line extends about 1,700 miles. It is, therefore, more than one-third larger than all the New England states, or about the same as Minnesota or Great Britain. Its area is about 34,000 square miles and the population some 11,000,000.

PRONUNCIATION OF NAMES.

In the map the system established by Dr. E. Satow should be followed in the pronunciation of names. The vowels are pronounced as in Italian, the consonants as in English, however, with the following exceptions:—a; equals the English a in hat, hare; e; the French acute e; u; is a sound similar to the English "neutral" vowel; o; equals the French ou, as in monsieur, but frequently much shorter.

The Koreans make in writing no distinction between long or short vowels, and there exists a great difference in the pronunciation of vowels with different persons as well as one and the same person. Thus many often sounds like men; kung like ken; pyon, pen; seung, sing; kang, kang; shi, shi; shwa, shwa; hwa, hwa; ai, ai; sh, ph, th, etc. are to be pronounced separately, as k-sh, p-sh, t-sh, ch-sh, as in the English words, speech, heavy, soldier, master, watchhouse, etc. So too with k, p, sh, each consonant is to be pronounced separately, as in sound; h; before i; often comes near sh.

Physical Features.—There is a marked difference between the eastern and western coast. The eastern coast is bordered by a long mountain ridge, presenting a high and unbroken wall with but few indentations or harbors. The western coast, which is washed by the Yellow sea of China, is shielded by an archipelago of islands between which are shallow and tortuous inlets, either filled or drained by a tidal rise from 25 to 40 feet, and which are frequently frozen over in winter.

The more northern of the islands are low and flat, while the southern ones are high and precipitous. The cliffs of many of these southern islands are both weird and fantastic in shape. One of them resembles in form the towers of Windsor Castle, another the crumbling ruins of a monastery.

The more prominent physical feature of Korea is the mountain range, which constitutes the backbone of the peninsula, and extends through its whole length from the Tumen river to the Yellow sea. The large islands on the southeast being but emerging fragments of the same range. From these Korean Apennines numerous ridges or spurs extend in every direction, enclosing many pleasant valleys.

COMPLETE ISOLATION OF COREA.

Another great mountain chain runs transversely across the peninsula along the northern frontier, thus, by a natural wall, completing the isolation of Korea. The rivers of Korea, while numerous, are comparatively unimportant. Five only are navigable, viz. the Yalu in the north, the Ta-tung or Pyong-Yang, the Han and its tributary, the Im-jin-kang and the Nak-tong.

The longest river within the peninsula is the Nakdong, which flows southward between mountain ranges and empties into a bay opening into the Korean strait. The great rivers, and commercially the most important, is the Han, which, draining nearly the whole breadth of the peninsula into the Yellow sea, receives, besides these, eight other broad streams, after entering the valleys of western Korea emptying into the same sea.

Climate.—The general climate of Korea closely resembles that of the North Atlantic coast of the United States, the extremes, however, being more marked and summer months, the temperature ranging from 60 degrees to 80 degrees in the shade, often below zero. The Tumen river, of the months of the year, while in winter deep snow covers the mountains.

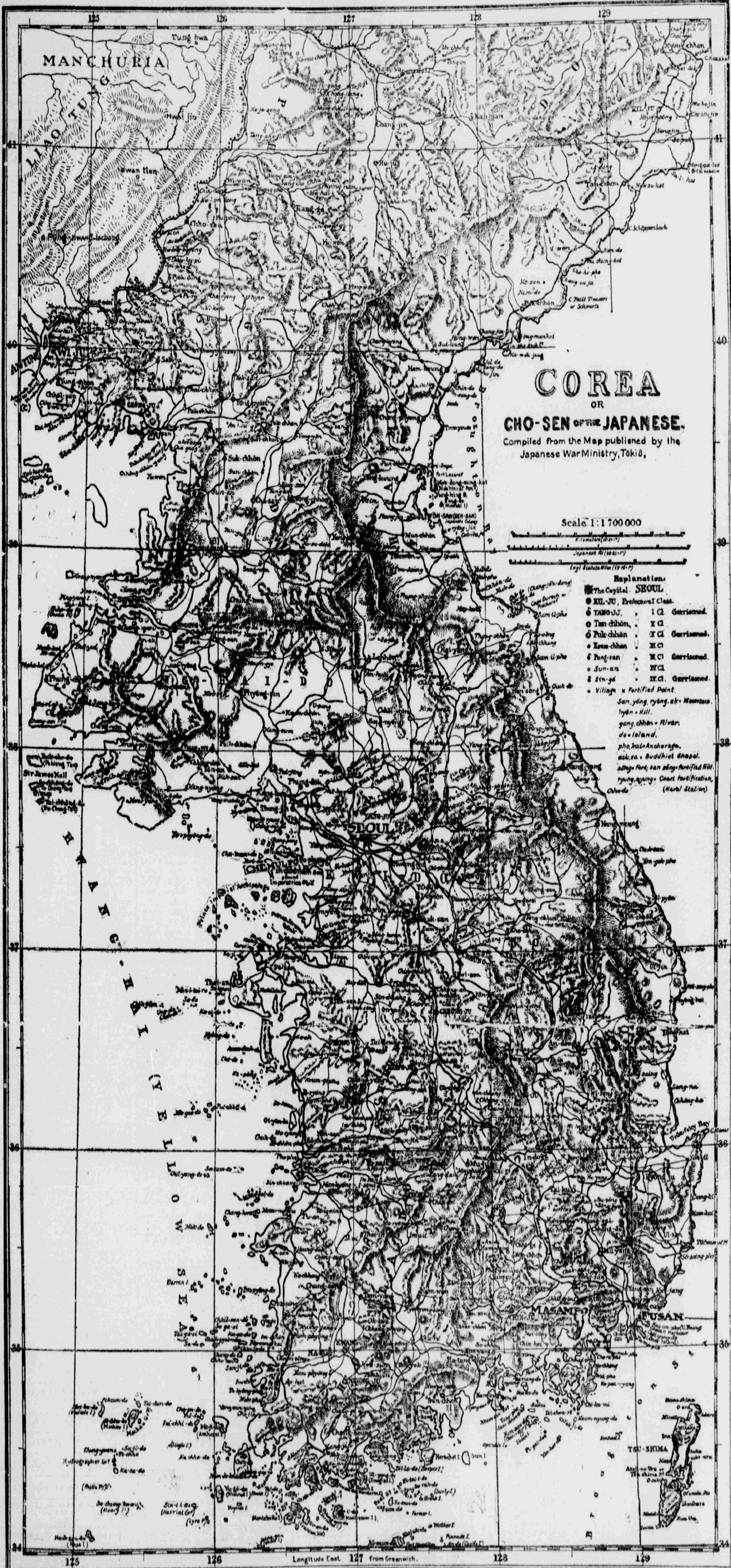
From the end of January until June it is spring. During the summer months there are heavy rainfalls. By the end of November winter begins. In the summer months dense fogs prevail, and in spring and autumn there is much mirage.

Inhabitants.—The Koreans undoubtedly are an intermediate stage between the Mongolians and the Japanese. They are plainly distinguishable from either the Chinese or the Japanese. Their language is of the Korean family, with the addition of many Chinese and some Japanese words.

From this arise the different names applicable to the same locality or physical feature, one being in Japanese, another in Chinese and still another in the Korean language. The Chinese language is used by the upper and lettered classes and also by the government in all official communications.

RESEMBLE THE JAPANESE.

In physical appearance the Koreans resemble the Japanese more than the Chinese, though, on the average, taller and slimmer than either. Their dress is almost uniformly of white cotton cloth, which is well padded. The outer jacket of working amplitude is the hat, which is of Korean and usually red, thatched, mud-plastered by flues running beneath the eaves. The women's apartments are distinctive individuals they possess many characteristics: the upper classes are polite, cultivated and priding themselves on correct deportment, while the lower classes are very social among themselves, vivacious and talkative. In their dress and manners they are not dissimilar to the Japanese, though surrounded by numerous natural resources, live in a depth of social unknown in civilized lands.



Japanese Campaign in Korea During Recent War with China Conducted with Great Difficulty.

ROADS WERE VERY BAD.

Average Daily March on Way to Ping-Yang Was Not More Than Six Miles.

CAPTURE OF THE STRONGHOLD.

Considering the Nature of Country and Unfriendliness of Inhabitants, Japanese Campaign Was Not Slow.

Political Subdivisions and Cities.—For administrative purposes, Korea is divided into eight provinces, viz., Hamgyong, Kangwan, Kyongsang, Pingan, Hwanghai, Kiangkwai, Ching-chong and Cholla. The first three provinces named are situated on the east coast fronting the Japan sea, while all the others are situated on the western slope and border on the Yellow sea. In the central province of Kiangkwai is located the Seoul or capital of the kingdom. It is situated about 24 miles inland from the west coast, and about three miles from the Han river. The city is located in a picturesque valley, between the high hills.

On the south is a notable height called Namsan, on the summit of which are four beacon towers, from which, by means of burning signals, messages are transmitted to other similar towers on high mountain peaks, and thus to the most distant provinces of the kingdom. Like all other large cities of Korea, it is walled, and the gates, eight in number, are opened at sunrise and closed at sunset.

POPULATION OF THE CAPITAL.

Within the walls of the city is a population of about 250,000. The houses are generally made of mud, thatched with straw, and are so crowded together as to form a continuous wall of business purposes. These are so crowded together as to form narrow thoroughfares into mere lanes or alleys, there being but three streets in the city deserving the name.

The public buildings are few and insignificant, but as usual in eastern capitals, there are a large number of royal palaces and temples, which are surrounded by extensive, park-like grounds. The buildings and grounds of the foreign legations are conspicuous features in the center of the city.

Industries and Productions.—Notwithstanding Korea has vast tracts of virgin land, with a soil of more than ordinary fertility, and an invigorating climate, it is a poor agricultural country, though rich in minerals. Rice, beans and barley are the principal cereals grown. Korean rice is highly esteemed in Japan, and when its export is prohibited the Japanese are much incensed.

Glue is one of the principal products of Korea, and is exported in large quantities to China. Korea also supplies great quantities of deer and fish to Japan. Paper is the most important native manufacture.

It is used instead of carpets on the floors, instead of paint on the walls, instead of glass in the windows, and instead of whitewash on the ceilings. Clothes, hats, shoes, umbrellas, lanterns, fans and kites are made of it.

Korean Campaign in China.

Japan War.

In the war between China and Japan hostilities opened on July 25, 1894, with the sinking of the Chinese transport by the Japanese cruiser, the *Mikasa*, near Chemulpo.

That same day a force of 5,000 Japanese troops set out from Seoul to attack the Chinese entrenched position at Asan. The distance was 6 miles, and the Japanese troops were captured, and on Aug. 1 the conquerors re-entered Seoul. Three days later the via of a column destined to drive the Chinese from their stronghold at Ping-Yang, 140 miles distant, marched out of Seoul.

Korea was wholly without railways and almost without roads. It is broken everywhere by mountains and intersected by streams, the passage of which presents great obstacles to an army. The Japanese force, some 15,000 strong, found that its average daily rate of progress northward did not exceed six miles.

This being the rate of advance, the van had been pushed some 20 miles from Seoul when it was decided that a change of military plan must be made. The Chinese, assembling in great force at Ping-Yang, threatened Gensan on the opposite coast. At Gensan there is an important Japanese colony, and from Gensan a trunk road leads southward to Seoul.

A force of 10,000 men was accordingly transported thence by sea, with instructions to move westward against Ping-Yang, synchronizing its advance and attack with those of the army from Seoul.

The dispositions made by the Chinese for the defense of Ping-Yang were of a much more skillful character than those at Asan. Every commanding situation outside the walls of the town was strongly entrenched, and batteries were placed wherever guns could be used with effect. These positions were stormed, one after another, by the various Japanese columns, and at 2 p. m. on Sept. 3 the Chinese on every face had been driven with heavy loss into the city. The best stand seems to have been made by the troops under Gen. Yeh, to whom was entrusted the duty of guarding the southern front.

At no other point, however, did the Japanese experience any serious defeat.

Next came the great naval battle of the Yalu river, in which Japan's fleet of cruisers vanquished the ponderous ironclads of the Chinese empire. The whole world was forced to applaud.

Japan's northward march into Manchuria now continued. Town after town fell into its hands, until at last the many successive victories were crowned by the capture of Port Arthur.

Here, for the first time in history, a navy and army acted in perfect concert and worked together with the precision and regularity of clockwork. Japan also proved the insuperable service that could be obtained from her swift little torpedo boats. These little vessels dashed in and out, right under the gaping mouths of the great cannon of the Chinese forts, and did untold damage to the enemy. Port Arthur fell, and the event was scarcely realized by the world before Japan had taken possession of the forts and double-drawn up some of her ships for repair, and was appearing as much at home in this late stronghold of China as though it had been her home for years.

The Yellow sea was now practically ruled by Japan, with the exception of one important point the great fortified naval station of Wei-Hai-Wei.