



UNITED STATES LEGATION AT SEOUL, KOREA.

## The United States in Korea.

AMERICA'S interest in Korea is both political and sentimental. The unique position of the United States—a strong, independent power free from foreign alliances—in the midst of the political and commercial rivalries of England, Russia, France and Germany in the Far East, makes America the natural friend of Asiatic countries; for the Orientals are sagacious enough to see that nothing which affects the Pacific can be without interest to our people and that the commerce of the future must be on that great ocean, bringing for us in its train responsibilities now unmeasured.

Our diplomatic relations with those far-off countries have been in the main tempered by justice rather than selfishness, by kindness rather than bullying. Oppression by treaty has not been our policy. As it was in Japan for the first two decades after the country was opened, so it is now in Korea; the foreign employees of the latter Government are Americans and our influence is greater than that of any other nation.

The vice-president of the Foreign Office is General Le Gendre, an American. Clarence R. Greathouse, of California, at one time managing editor of the San Francisco *Examiner* and later United States Consul-General at Yokohama, Japan, is the legal adviser of the Government. His predecessor, Judge O. N. Denny, of Oregon, was Consul-General of the United States at Shanghai. The head of the army is Gen. W. McE. Dye and his next in command is Colonel Nieusted, who was for some years before entering the Korean service, United States Vice-Consul at Kobe, Japan. The physician to the King and the most influential foreigner in Korea is Dr. H. N. Allen, of Ohio, who is attached to the Presbyterian mission.

The American missionaries, Presbyterian and Methodist, have established churches, schools and hospitals and have done much active and valuable work.

The trade of Korea with Japan amounts to about four million dollars annually. There is no direct trade with the United States. Our goods enter the country through the Japanese ports and Shanghai, China. It is nearly a century and a half since we first met Korea as a competitor in supplying China with the precious ginseng. Large quantities of this root have been for hundreds of years, and are to this day, sent from Korean to Chinese ports. Our Yankee traders soon learned its value and when a kindred weed, known commercially as American ginseng, was found on the hills of Massachusetts, it was gathered by the Indians, sent to Albany, thence to Amsterdam and from there was shipped to China, where it was sold for its weight in gold and so broke the Korean monopoly.

In one of his later essays Sir Charles Dilke speaks of the Americans as, next to the Russians, the most patriotic people in the world. We are not accustomed to so look at ourselves, but when business, travel or duty takes us to a foreign land, the point of view changes and the real dignity of the place our country holds among the nations of the earth becomes more plain. This realization is accompanied by a sensitiveness to alien criticism which makes the American residing abroad more aggressively patriotic. In no part of the world is this so true as in the Far East, where, under the extra-territorial clauses of the treaties, foreigners live under their own laws, under the jurisdiction of their own consuls. This condition creates a peculiar little aggregation of a dozen or more differ-



NATIVE QUARTER OF CHEMULPO.





\* Lieut. Bernadou, Dr. G. W. Woods, Mrs. Foote, Gen'l Foote, Sect'y Scudder.  
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ent governments intermingling with each other. The closeness of the contact aggravates their national differences, intensifies their national antipathies, peculiarities and feelings. This state of affairs exists in all the treaty ports of China and Japan and to a less degree in Seoul, Korea's capital, where the little community, less numerous than in the foreign settlements of the two other countries, is bound together for mutual amusement and, in times of danger, for mutual defense.

The majority of the houses in Seoul are flimsy buildings thatched with straw. The residences of the better classes are of wood or tile and plaster and roofed with heavy tiling, and occupy one portion of the city to themselves.

In the centre of this division is the United States Legation, with the compounds (enclosures) of the American missionaries and teachers grouped around it. The lives of these homes are as far as possible American, and the fittings and furniture approach as closely as circumstances will permit to those of the houses of our own land. Whatever is useful or beautiful of the native productions is added. The amusements are few and are confined to dinners and picnics, varied by an occasional musicale and frequent visiting.

Japan and the United States are the only nations which maintain regular Legations in Korea. The other countries are represented by consuls. Among the American representatives have been some notable men. The first Minister was Gen. Lucius H. Foote, of California, who arrived in Korea in May, 1883, a year after the treaty was signed. A gallant soldier of the Civil War, he had rendered efficient service as our Consul at Valparaiso, Chili. He was a man of education and culture, and published in 1882 a dainty little volume of poems. He was accompanied to Korea by his wife, a woman of rare refinement and intelligence. In June, 1884, the United States steamship *Trenton*, whose timbers are now rotting on the cruel reefs of Apia, Samoa, arrived from America having on board the first Korean Embassy to the United States. It was accompanied by two American naval officers, Ensigns George C. Foulk and J. B. Bernadou.

The former was in many respects a remarkable man. Born in and appointed from Brooklyn, N. Y., his first cruise, after graduating from the Naval Academy, was made on the Asiatic station. In 1883, with two companions, he returned to the United States through Siberia. Nature endowed him with an unusual gift for languages, and he learned in an astonishingly short time to write and speak Japanese, and later in his career acquired an almost equal fluency in Chinese and Korean.

His natural tastes and feelings drew him sympathetically to those Eastern peoples and he instinctively understood them, gaining a remarkable power with them and an accurate knowledge of their characters. After General Foote's departure from Korea, early in 1885, Ensign Foulk was for nearly two years Chargé d'affaires. His influence was very great and his intimate acquaintance with the subtleties of Eastern methods enabled him to do what no representative before or since has ever been able to accomplish: to divine and in a measure to checkmate the designs of the Chinese. In 1888 he resigned from the navy, married a Japanese and settled in Kioto, Japan. Last summer he failed to return to his hotel at Miyano-shita, a watering place near Yokohama. A search party found him dead (as was afterwards shown, from heart disease) on a mountain trail.

Capt. W. H. Parker, of Maryland, formerly of the navy and author of a most interesting book, "The Recollections of a Naval Officer," went out as Minister in 1886, but remained but a short time, being succeeded in January, 1887, by the Hon. Hugh A. Dinsmore, now representing the Fifth District of Arkansas in Congress. His Secretary of Legation was Chaillé Long, of Maryland.

In May, 1890, Mr. Augustine Heard relieved Mr. Dinsmore at Seoul. The present Minister is Mr. J. M. B. Till, who according to the Congressional directory published in May last, had not then proceeded to his post. Dr. H. N. Allen, already mentioned, was Chargé d'affaires and Secretary of Legation.

In December, 1884, there were stirring times in Seoul. Kim Ok Kiun thought to revolutionize hoary old Korea in a day, and the outbreak he led against the Conservative or Pro-Chinese party soon lost its original character and developed into a general attack on foreigners, but was especially directed against the Japanese. Ensign Foulk was in the interior and the narrative of his escape is a thrilling one. Ensign Bernadou soon changed the United States Legation into an extemporized fortification. All the white foreigners in Seoul, nine in number, and three of them women, fled to it for refuge, and twenty-two Japanese sought its protection. During those awful three days the Stars and Stripes waved bravely, the only foreign flag in Seoul that was not lowered.

For ten years past a United States man-of-war has been constantly kept on the coast, and several times in that interval it has been necessary to send armed men to Seoul for the safety of our Legation.

EUSTACE B. ROGERS,  
U. S. Navy.



SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR HOKE SMITH AT HIS DESK.