

STRATEGIC POINTS IN KOREA. (*With Map.*)

BY REV. JAMES G. GALE, SEOUL, KOREA.

I have divided Korea into four districts, according to the points already partially occupied. Whatever the changes of the future may be, these four—Seoul, Fusan, Onesan, and Weechoo—will remain the basis of missionary work, and from these even at this early day we are safe in drawing plans.

Seoul, the centre of the kingdom, is also the centre of the first section. With its official record of 568,680 houses it ranks second in population. It is four days' journey from Hachoo, the capital of Whang Ha, and also four days from Kong Choo, the capital of Choung-Cheng. The roads through each of these, though nothing to boast of, are the best in the kingdom. We may say that it is within five days of any part of the district.

The climate of the capital, given to extremes somewhat more than the seaports, is yet suitable in every way to a western constitution. During the two summer months the neighboring mountains are sufficient for any number of people who may wish to escape the heat and carry on their work there.

The natives of the capital have more selfish ambition than those of the country, which makes them a harder class to reach. Their worship of "rank" excludes all other thoughts of time and eternity, while their limp, aimless lives forbid expectation of vigor in either the natural or spiritual world. Korea as a nation is asphyxiated with tobacco smoke, has been inactive for centuries, is dead, long since dead, and Seoul the deadest and most putrid of it all. The nation as a whole is thus; viewed individually the people have hearts like our own, they know of joy and pain, of hope and fear, are kind and lovable, poor, lost mortals who need the prayers and sympathies of every one of us!

Seoul is the best place to learn the language. Those in the country or open ports should have Seoul men as teachers if they would escape provincialisms.

The Seoul district has been the centre of mission work now for seven years. The people are beginning to know the name Yesow (Jesus), and to recover somewhat from their first shock in seeing mortal man in any but white habiliments. There are three other points in the district where foreigners may, perhaps, expect to live in future—Hachoo, Kong Choo, and Song-to.

Fusan is the sad-looking settlement at the far south of Kyeng Sang. Notwithstanding its uninviting prospect, it is the gateway to the two largest provinces, Kyeng Sang and Chulla. The Japanese have a town here of some three thousand inhabitants. A grove or two of pines somewhat relieves the barrenness of it all. To this shipping port come wayfarers from all parts of the south, through whom the missionaries hope to reach many of the inland cities.