

KOREAN AFFAIRS.

An article written by the Hon. George N. Curzon, M.P., on Korean affairs, and published in the London Chamber of Commerce *Journal*, may prove of interest to our readers:

The present situation in Korea, in which Japanese and Chinese troops are confronting each other, and in which foreign powers are offering advice or mediation with the view of preventing conflict, has really been brewing for some time. It has arisen out of disturbances in Korea itself; disturbances which hardly deserve the name of revolution, but which are really only a more violent and formidable outburst of the popular discontent that is always simmering below the surface. This is due, in the main, to the utter impotence of the Korean Government to supply the people with any of the essentials of fair or orderly administration and the oppression which the poorer classes have long suffered at the hands of the aristocracy, who have a monopoly of all the higher official positions, and who treat the people with great severity and injustice. These feelings against the Government are to some extent inflamed by the agitation which it is always so easy to get up in an Oriental country against any sort of intrusion or predominance of foreign interest. In Korea there is no particular hostility to foreigners as such, and certainly no hostility to Europeans; but, on the other hand, it is always easy for so-called patriots to represent the troubles of their country as due to its opening up to foreign nations, and, in Korea itself, the particular foreign influence which is most potent and also most aggressive in its direct effects upon the lives of the people is that of Japan. The Japanese have, moreover, 8,000 subjects in Korea, almost entirely engaged in trade of the export branch, of which they practically have a monopoly. Their manners towards the people and their attitude towards the Government are not of a character to excite any popularity. There is a traditional and unexhausted antagonism between the two nations which has more than once found vent in war, and at any time a popular commotion—whatever, indeed, of anti-foreign feeling may be slumbering below the surface—is easily fanned into a flame by those who point to the ever-increasing ambitions and ascendancy of Japan.

It was the outbreak of some such commotion as this, and alleged necessity of protecting her representatives and her subjects from outrage, that provided Japan with an excuse for interference upon the present occasion, and for sending a large body of troops to Korea. She is said to have, at the present moment, 10,000 men in the peninsula. They are in armed occupation of Chemulpo, the port of the capital—from which it is distant about twenty-five miles—and of the capital itself. And, although the independence of the king's person cannot be said to have been actually compromised, yet, in view of the armed strength at the disposal of the Japanese, the palace may be said to be at their mercy.

China, for her part, although she was caught napping in the preliminary stages by the more rapid diplomacy of Japan, has retorted in a similar fashion. She has also sent, by land and by sea, a considerable body of troops, who are separated by but a slight distance from their Japanese rivals.

Japan absolutely declines to retire unless she receives guarantees of certain reforms in Korean administration, which are, of course, intended to emphasize and increase her own influence. China would be willing to withdraw her troops, but is naturally prevented from doing so by a feeling of pride, by her position as suzerain, and her legitimate suspicions of the intentions of Japan.

This is the point at which matters now stand, and at which it is announced that foreign powers have intervened, with the view of promoting a peaceful settlement. As regards the rights of the case, there can be little doubt that, of the two parties, Japan has the less good excuses to offer for her conduct.

Nine years ago, after the last revolt in Seoul, when both Chinese and Japanese troops were landed for the protection of their respective peoples, Count Ito, the present Japanese Prime Minister, concluded a convention at Tien-tsin with the Chinese Viceroy Li-Hung-Chang, by which both parties undertook to withdraw their troops at that moment in Korea, and only to send them again, in the event of future disturbances, upon the one party giving prior notice to the other. But it certainly was

not contemplated at that time that any such local disorder as has recently taken place should be made the excuse for armed intervention on a large scale by either party, and certainly not by Japan, who, not being suzerain of Korea, has not the immediate excuse for interference which China's undoubted position entitles her to claim. Japan has therefore stolen a march upon China on the present occasion, and has acted in a manner which it would be difficult to justify upon the strictest principles of international law.

At the same time Japan has excuses to offer which it would be unfair to overlook. Though, for some hundreds of years, China has been the nominal, and during the past fifty years in particular the practical, suzerain of Korea, Japan can never forget that she has also historical claims to the same position, which was formerly acknowledged by the kings of Korea alternately, if not simultaneously, with the acknowledgment of similar relations on their part to the court of Japan. Then again, there is in Japan at the present moment a very powerful jingo party, who have for long been agitating for a more forward policy in Korea, and who are burning for some opportunity of winning laurels for the army and navy of resuscitated Japan. This movement has, on the whole, been treated with considerable discretion by the present Japanese Government; but, placed as the latter is, in a very difficult, if not impossible situation by the attitude of the Diet of Japan, which renders its parliamentary existence not merely a nightmare, but an impossibility, it may have felt some desire to conciliate the opposition of which it is the victim, and to rally round itself the various antagonistic elements by whom, in domestic policy, it has so far been opposed, by embarking upon a more forward national policy which would satisfy the patriots of every school of thought.

The astonishing weakness and vacillation which have been shown by China in her previous relations with Korea, and more particularly in her encouragement of that State to conclude treaties on an independent basis with various powers, have further given Japan a technical opening, of which it is not surprising that she should have taken advantage.

Finally, Japan, who is burning to distinguish herself in the path of civilization and reform, can point with perfect justice to the utter rottenness of the Korean Government and to its inability to discharge the elementary functions for which governments are constituted. Japan can also say with some truth that while she is anxious and willing to wield the new broom, it is China who declines either to take hold of it herself or to allow anyone else to do so instead; and that this dog in the manger policy is causing the ruin of the peninsula.

British interests are undoubtedly concerned in maintaining the semi-independence of Korea under Chinese suzerainty, both because of our considerable trade with Korean ports, and because no events could be regarded by us with equanimity which would be likely to place Russia in possession of the open ports of the Korean coast. The Siberian railway, when completed, will revolutionize the destinies of the northern half of the Asian continent; the possession by Russia of Korea in addition, would seriously affect and might ultimately revolutionize the balance of power in the Pacific.

If it be true that the mediation of the British Government has been either invited or proffered, this would seem to be a wise solution of the difficulty; since Great Britain, for the reasons I have already enumerated, has no interest in promoting the ambitions of any one of the three powers more immediately affected in opposition to the others, but is really concerned, so far as may prove feasible, in preserving the balance of interest and in maintaining peace.

WHAT RETAILERS ARE SHOWING IN NEW YORK.

As the majority of them are busy taking stock, we see many marked down goods, this being a real bargain time in the cities.

The clerks are taking their vacations and every one is apparently loafing, though in reality the bright merchant and buyer are busy preparing for the fall trade, which is expected to be an improvement on the spring. Lay plans now, and, what is more to the point, do not be frightened off from carrying them out.

Gaiterettes of white pique.

Blouse waists of Roman striped moiré.

White and colored duck suits as low as \$1.98.

White chip hats trimmed with black tulle and wings.

White canvas ties trimmed in tan colored leather.

Millinery passementeries showing iridescent green effects.

Small bonnet tops of gold-colored wax beads and cloth of gold.

Stick pins with a little enamelled turtle, frog or lizard for the head.

Dressy costumes of check silk trimmed with lace and satin ribbon.

Small bonnet shapes made entirely of jet spangles on bobbinet.

Changeable silk having an effect resembling frost for blouse waists.

High-back Spanish combs of tortoise' shell having two short teeth.

Gilt frames consisting of a wreath of oak leaves for photographs.

Silk and canvas belts with immense oxidized and bright silver buckles.

Folding fans of natural gray ostrich plumes, having "real" shell sticks.

White dotted Swiss suits trimmed with white satin ribbon and Bréton lace.

Blouse waists of accordion plaited chiffon over silk, made with elbow sleeves.

Louisine silks in small checks and also irregularly shot patterns for blouses.

Black kid slippers, having perforated toe and open-work straps heavily jetted.

Sets of snake-skin, including chatelaine bag and belt, cardcase and change purse.

Yokes of alternate rows of satin ribbon and insertion finished with a chiffon ruffle.

Boys' suits of white pique trimmed with a binding, collar and cuffs of blue drill.

Chatelaine bags and belts of white canvas, trimmed with tan-colored or black leather.

Outlined checks of black and white in Louisine and taffeta, for both costumes and blouses.

Plain white surah, gros grain and moire parasols of a large size with celluloid ball handles.

Chatelaine bags of lizard, crocodile and seal kid of a square shape, having the envelope flat.

Rough-and-ready sailor and "Vigilant" hats trimmed with a band and lining, for 25 cents and 48 cents.

Black moiré sashes to be worn as a loose belt knotted on the left side with two long ends and one loop.

Jetted quills of the natural feather covered with jet powder; also, of lace covered with jet spangles.

Lace boas of black and white lace resembling an immense jabot, which hangs to the bottom of the dress.

Long hatpins having violets, cornflowers and such small blossoms in the natural colors of enamel for a head.

Silk parasols showing alternate rows of lace insertion and puffs of chiffon, with a ruffle of chiffon on the edge.

Pale-green kid gloves with white or black stitching to match, with the seaside costumes of white and pale-green.

Velvet bodices, in any color, trimmed with cream guipure, to be worn with skirts of any material for demi-toilettes.

Gowns for second mourning made of Liberty satin, trimmed with two deep flouncings of Grecque net edged with jet.

Sets of white pearl imitating buttons, even to showing the thread supposed to sew them on, for sleeve links and shirt studs.

Ladies' shirt waists of solid pink or blue trimmed with a row of white embroidery down the centre and white shirt studs.

Blouse bodices of chiné taffeta in light colorings, having the sleeves and corselets of satin covered with flounces of chiffon.

Shot silk petticoats trimmed with flounces of accordion-plaited chiffon, which are edged with three rows of narrow satin ribbon.

Many costumes decorated with rosettes or bows of ribbon on the side of the corsage, with long ends which extend nearly to the bottom of the skirt.

—A *Star* reporter says that twelve wealthy Japanese merchants arrived from Vancouver, last week, over the Canadian Pacific, passing on immediately to New York, where they will live in future. They all could speak English, several having been in business in Ceylon and India. It is also stated that a large number will follow, and that at least six out of one party will settle in Montreal. The Japs are bright people, and will be welcomed in Canada as their future home.