

present case, play into Chinese hands. Russia has long coveted Korean harbors, and Britain would naturally frustrate any movement which would advance Russia's naval prestige in the Orient. The port of Wonsan is open all winter, and is especially desirable from its geographical as well as maritime position. It is too early to forecast the future, and while these paragraphs are getting into print the conditions may essentially change.

Meanwhile, let us remember that not until ten years ago did the first Protestant missionary seek this lone land. The first tidings of Christianity reached the hermit nation in 1777 through a batch of books sent from Peking to a number of Korean literati who were studying under a Confucianist. Among these books were some treatises on philosophy, mathematics and religion by Jesuits in Peking. These books awakened interest and led Peiki, one of these literati, to journey to Peking with a message to the bishop; he was baptized and returned to Korea, where others were led to adopt the new faith. Persecution relaxed, and a curious history followed, which Bishop Scott, of North China, outlines as follows:

"A hierarchy was formed after the model which the original one of their number had seen in Peking. Francis Xavier—the name taken by one of the converts—was made bishop, and others were chosen as priests. Separating to their various posts, they baptized, confessed, confirmed, and distributed sacred elements in communion, robing themselves in Chinese silk, and erecting platform confessionals. After two years doubts arose in their minds as to the propriety and validity of these proceedings, and at the risk of wounding weak consciences, they resigned each his ministry, and again sent to Peking for instructions. The envoy was baptized and confirmed, and he returned to Korea with a chalice, missal, ornaments, and everything necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in case a priest should be able to visit them.

"Dismay and trouble were caused by the Episcopal decision against the worship of ancestors. The faithful Christians who did not fall away were more severely persecuted than ever, and in December, 1791, the two first martyrs laid down their lives for the faith. In ten years' time from the baptism of the first Korean in Peking, it is estimated that there were 4000 Roman Catholic converts in the country.

"The first priest who entered the country was a Chinese, who, after four years' work, paid for his fidelity and courage with his life.

"In 1835 the first French priest entered the country, and he was shortly followed by a second, and at an interval of a year by a French bishop. All were of course disguised, and remained in hiding; but the work went on rapidly, and in 1838 there were 9000 Christians.

"Again persecution broke out, and these three men were put to trial, tortured, and beheaded with circumstances of great cruelty. It was six years before another foreign priest crossed the border into Korea, and then, after a period of success, the same result ensued: more edicts, more cruel persecutions, more martyrdoms, alike of Frenchmen and Koreans.

"Every approach of a European or American ship roused the rulers to a state of panic, and endangered afresh the lives of the intrepid workers, who, however, held to their posts till, in 1882, the first political treaty was made with Korea by the United States. Others quickly followed, and we may hope that the period of danger for Christian missionaries is past,