

characters, when merely read over, were unintelligible to an illiterate native, unless properly explained in his native tongue; though the sounds were not entirely foreign to his ear. Thus two languages arose, one merely expressive of the sounds of the written characters, the other expressive of the ideas uttered.—For the latter, the natives of the respective countries, above-named, invented alphabets, strictly adapted to their own organs of speech.—These general remarks apply fully to the Corcan language.

“ Though the majority of the inhabitants know how to read the Chinese written language, they have nevertheless, for greater convenience, adopted an alphabet suited peculiarly to their own tongue, similar in theory to the Japanese syllabic system. The formation of the alphabetic characters is extremely simple, but at the same time very ingenious.

“ There are fifteen general sounds of consonants. These fifteen being joined, as initials, to the vowels and diphthongs, form a syllabary of one hundred and sixty-eight different combinations. The consonants appear often to change their pronunciation, considerably; and the vowels sometimes do the same, but more slightly. This is generally, if not at all times, for the sake of euphony.

“ The Corcan language, like all the languages of eastern Asia, has neither declension nor conjugation. It agrees exactly with the Chinese, so far as regards position, as a substitute for inflection. The pronunciation of the Chinese characters has been so completely mixed up with the original language of the country, that the present spoken language consists in great part of composite words, in which the words of both languages are united to express one single idea. Hence the language is extremely verbose. At first sight, it appears to differ widely from the Chinese, and to bear a greater resemblance to the Mantchou, but on nearer inspection, the reverse is found to be true. The Chinese has been so thoroughly interwoven with it, and so fully moulded according to the organs of the natives, that one may trace the meaning of the whole sentences, after having been