

The following letter has been received by the University College Y. M. C. A. from J. S. Gale, B. A., their missionary, who has arrived in Korea:—

YELLOW SEA, Dec. 14th, 1888.

MY DEAR FELLOWS,—We are now coasting the west of Korea, almost at our journey's end, and arriving to-morrow, as we hope, at Chimulpo. I send this to tell you of our safe arrival and to give you some little idea of Korean life as I have already seen it.

On Wednesday last, about eleven o'clock in the morning, we rounded the north end of Isushima—the last of the Japanese island,—when the captain, who is an Englishman, though it is a Japanese boat, said, "Yonder is the Land of Morning Calm," pointing to the smoky hills in the distance. The sea was rolling heavily, but the interest I felt in those smoky hills kept me on deck. About three o'clock we entered Fusan Bay, the southern port of Korea.

All round about were brown, bleak-looking mountains. At the head of the bay, and sheltered by a few trees, was a collection of houses known as the Japanese settlement. As we had here some twenty-eight hours to wait, I went ashore both days to see what I could of the Koreans. There were crowds of them dressed in white, wearing loose bagged trousers tied round the feet; there were some with coats of light blue and white, others again with long robes. I rather like the dress when it is moderately clean.

The people themselves are taller than the Japanese,—fine-looking, intelligent fellows, fit to be away above what they are. They have an air of independence about them which gives them more dignity than most of these Easterners have. One thing I noticed right at the start: they all smoke, every man carrying a pipe; sometimes it is sticking through their belt, sometimes hanging down their back,—just a bowl showing behind their ear, but the pipe is always somewhere about their clothing if it is not in their mouth.

Fusan I found to be principally Japanese, and that to see a Korean city I should have to go back into the country about three miles.

Harkness, Gifford (a young American missionary) and myself started off the following morning (yesterday) across the mountain, directing our course by the white objects moving in the distance. We followed a rough, unkept roadway, the sharp stones making it difficult walking. About half-way along we passed the Chinese Consulate and numerous Korean hovels. Crowds of people carrying bundles on their back were going down towards the port; a number of women were to be seen as well washing clothes in a creek. Perhaps I might tell how they wash them,—they dip the clothes in the running water then lay them on a stone and pound them with a stick; almost as hard on them as a Toronto steam laundry. We had to jump the creek or get across on stepping-stones, as they have no bridges or public conveniences of any kind.

We met several chairs carried by two men at a brisk trot; by the robes of one of the occupants we judged that he was something higher than the coolie class. After an hour or so we sighted the walls of the town. These were built of rough stones held together in some way by means of mud. The houses, which are, on an average, about three feet and a half high (from the eaves to the ground), are thatched with straw and built of mud. The occupants crawl in through a hole in the sides, and, of course, are obliged to keep seated or lie down. Another opening, through which the smoke curled, showed that a fire was kindled underneath to keep up the temperature.

The streets are some ten or twelve feet wide, and so crooked that you cannot see farther than a few yards before you. The refuse and the filth of the place, which is something terrible, lies stagnant or winds its way by a sort of ditch along the middle of the road. The stench made us almost run at times, not being as yet acclimatized to this sort of thing. Many gazed in wonder at us, and beside the people themselves, wolfish-looking dogs would congregate at the holes in the wall and gateways, and, while paying no attention to the Koreans passing, they made the whole town hideous by their uproar about us, I saw several people grinning at the reception the dogs gave us.

There are no stores, as we understand stores. On some of the mud window-sills we saw a row of straw boots or a few leaves of tobacco. Now and then we passed a lonely-looking

fellow sitting by a basket of sweet potatoes. The people themselves are terribly noisy,—different from the Japanese in this respect, shouting and rushing about as though their lives were at stake.

After thus taking in the town we turned back to Fusan (Japanese), a paradise to what we had just seen. We are all sad at the sight of such darkness and misery, but rejoicing that the Lord has sent us to a place needing the Light so much.

I have tried, as I always shall, to give you as near as I can a correct idea of the place, and yet there is much left out that makes the reality worse than you can have any idea of from this letter. But dark as it is the Lord will answer our prayers as he has answered those for a safe voyage and blessings by the way.

I shall send you word every three weeks as boats leave for Japan.

In Tôkyô the gentleman who had been American Consul in Seoul up till last year, hearing that the Y. M. C. A. were sending workers to Korea, asked that we should call at his house. He received us very kindly and said he was glad we were going as missionaries and that we were British subjects. He says we are the first of Her Majesty's subjects to enter Korea as missionaries. He told us that at present the prospects for work were dark, but he says freedom must come. I have with me a letter that he gave us to Her Majesty's Vice-Consul, Mr. Scott. This Lieutenant Foulk is a Christian and is deeply interested in mission work in Korea; he knows the country better than any other foreigner, having been all through it. So his kindness will, I know, be appreciated by you all.

Let us all be united in prayer that the word of God may not be bound in that land. As long as our eyes are on the Lord we shall not be downcast. I found this true the other day in reading the eighty-eighth Psalm. Here the singer's eyes are on himself and his song is one of death, ending with "darkness."

In the eighty-ninth there is a change. He has turned his eyes upon the Lord and the first thing he says is "I will sing of the Lord forever." The whole psalm is one of light and life. So, when I feel down-hearted or far away from my friends, I look in the direction of the eighty-ninth Psalm and the shadows flee away.

I know as time goes by and vacation comes you will not forget Korea.

The sun shining so warmly and everything looking so bright almost made me forget to wish you a Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

J. S. GALE.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

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CONTENTS OF THE PRESENT NUMBER.

LITERATURE.

TO THEE	MENDORE.
A WINTER EVENING WALK	T. W. S.
WORDSWORTHIANA	B.
SONNET STANZAS	FREDERICK DAVIDSON.
THOREAU	PELHAM EDGAR.

EDITORIALS.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.	NON-HAZING UNION.
CONVERSAZIONE.	

COMMUNICATIONS.

BASE-BALL TOUR	SHORT-STOP.
COLLEGE SOCIETIES	W. C. H.

ROUND THE TABLE.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE NEWS.