

war went on, the Japanese being usually successful in the field, but gradually forced back from want of supplies, as the country was devastated and their own land distant. In the end Hideyoshi, the shogun, died, and the army was withdrawn, Japan holding the port of Fusan as the sole result of its costly effort. This Korean port it still retains.

And now three hundred years passed away in which Korea remained free and isolated from the world. It wanted no more intercourse with foreigners. Once a year a fair was held in the neutral zone between China and Korea, but any Chinaman found on Korean soil after the fair ended was liable to be put to death. The Japanese were kept out by laws as severe. In fact, the doors of the kingdom were closed against all of foreign birth, the coasts carefully patrolled, and beacon-fires kindled on the hill-tops to warn the capital whenever any strange vessel came within sight. All foreigners wrecked on the coast were to be held as prisoners until death. Such was the threatened fate of some Dutch sailors wrecked there during the seventeenth century, who escaped after fourteen years' confinement. Dread of China and Japan induced the king to send envoys with tribute to Peking and Yedo, but the tribute was small, and the isolation was maintained, Korea winning for itself the names of the Hermit Nation and the Forbidden Land.

It was not until within recent years that this policy of isolation was overthrown and Korea opened to the world. How this was done may be briefly told. In spite of the Korean watchfulness, some