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Corea and the Coreans.

THE physical structure of Corea is very rugged, and, broadly speaking, consists of two unequal slopes. The southern one facing towards China, is very fertile, and produces wheat, cotton, rice, millet, and hemp. The northern part drops steeply to the Pacific from a lofty range of mountains, but in this section the only grain grown is barley. Its population is estimated at about ten millions, and its area at 85,000 square miles. Its commerce is small, and has been mainly in the hands of the Japanese. Gold, lead, iron and coal are worked in the mountain range which forms the physical backbone of the country. The manufactures of Corea include hemp, cotton and grass tissues, silk, pottery and porcelain, and paper of excellent quality. Its exports comprise beans, etc., also ginseng root, to which the Chinese attach almost miraculous curative properties. The prevailing religion is Buddhism.

SEOUL AND THE COUNTRY ROUND ABOUT.

Kiang-Kei, the smallest of the eight Corean provinces, is, politically, the royal or court province, and, physically, the basin of the largest river inside the peninsula. The tremendous force of this river's current and the volume of its water bring down immense masses of silt annually. Beginning at a point near the capital, wide sand banks are formed, which are bare at low water, but are flooded in time of rain or at the melting of the spring snows. This river is named the Han, and is navigable certainly as far as the capital, for large vessels.

The city of Han-Yang, or Seoul, where the Coreans attacked the Japanese garrison recently, is situated on the north side of the Han River, which, singularly enough, is called the Salt River, or the River Salce, on our charts. The name Han-Yang means "the Fortress on the Han River." The common term applied to the royal city is Seoul, which means "the capital," just as the Japanese call the capital of their country "Miako" or "Kio," instead of saying "Kioto." Seoul is very often spoken of as the "King's Residence," or palace, and on foreign maps is generally marked as "King-Ki Toa," which is the name of the province. The city proper lies distant nearly a league from the river bank, but has suburbs extending down to the sand flats. It has a population estimated at about 200,000 souls.

The natural surroundings of Seoul are fine. On the north a range of the Ho Mountains rises as a wall. To the east towers the ridge of barriers; the mighty flood of the Han rolls to the south. The scenery from the capital is magnificent, and those walking along the city walls as they rise over the hill crests and then dip into the valleys, can feast their eyes on the luxurious verdure and glorious mountain views for which the country is noted. The walls of the city are of crenellated masonry of varying height, averaging about twenty feet, with arched stone bridges spanning the water courses. The streets of Seoul are narrow and tortuous. The king's castle is in the northern part of the city. High roads to the

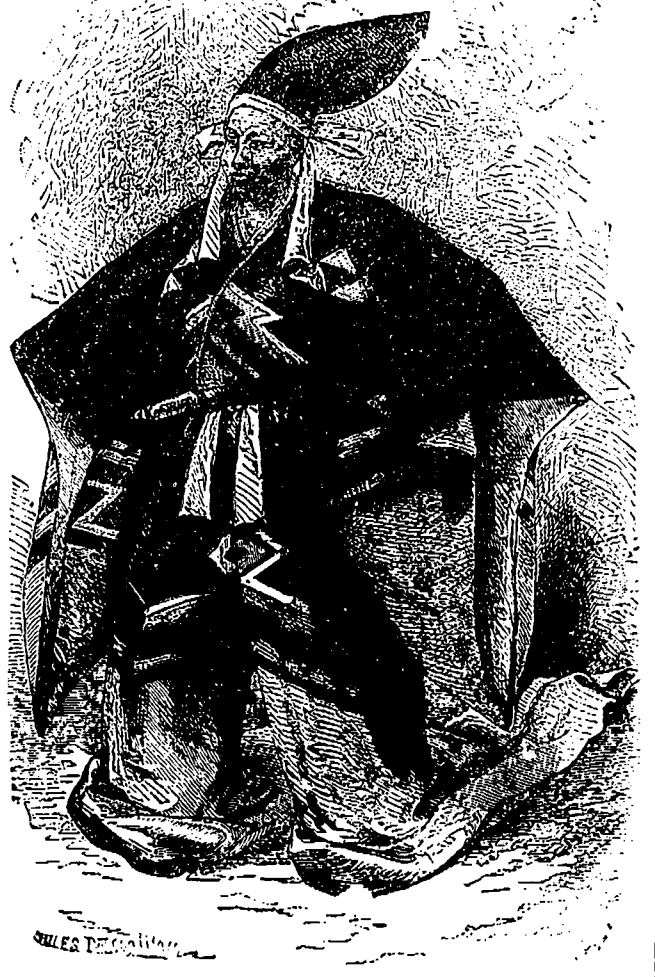
eight points of the compass start from the palace through the city gates.

Naturally the military geography of the country around Seoul has been well studied by the Coreans, and its strategic points have been strongly defended. Four great fortresses guard the approaches to the royal city. These are Suwen to the south, Kwang-Chiu to the southeast, Sunto, or Kai-Seng, to the north and Kang-Wa to the west. All these fortresses have been the scene of siege and battle in times past. On the walls of the first three the rival banners of the hosts of Ming from China, and of Taiko from Japan were set in alternate succession by the victors who held them during the Japanese occupation of the country between the years 1592 and 1597. The Manchiu standards of 1687 and the French Eagles in 1876 were planted on the ramparts of Kang-Wa. Besides these castle cities, there are forts and redoubts along the river banks, crowning most of the headlands or points of vantage.

For political purposes the capital province was divided into the right and left divisions. The Kam-Sa, or Governor, lives at the capital, but outside of the walls, as he has little or no authority in the city proper.



COREAN OFFICER.



COREAN MAGNATE OF THE OLDEN TIME.