

Jack and the Giant in Korea

By William Elliot Griffis

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WE are all familiar with the fairy tales in which the ogres and giants have a hard time of it when they meet with nimble Jacks and witty princesses. Some of us, too, perhaps, have studied the mid-air battles between the crow and the king-bird. We have seen that bulk and mass do not always avail against brain and motion. In a word, "the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong." Yet should the battle close between the swift on the one hand and the strong on the other, who shall forecast the issue?

This is the picture in the far East of to-day, yet not the old Cathay and Zipango of mediæval and Marco Polo times. In fact, there is no Far East any more. Electric nerves on land and sea have annihilated distance. Steam and breech-loaders have changed the conditions of chronology and of marine geography; though, as of old, the mountains, the passes, the plains, the ports, and the strategic points remain the same. "Geography is" still "half of war," and we are now waiting to see which is the other half—whether wit, quick brains, and a hearty acceptance of modern conditions is that hemisphere; or, if the Japanese plans "gang alee," whether the enormous resources of China will in the end prevail. While all war is to be at first sight deprecated, there are some things to hope for against the many to grieve over. This struggle of Jack and the giant ought to settle one or two things. It is, perhaps, not well for an American to be partisan. It is not right, without good reason, to have actual sympathy either with nimble Jack or the great giant; and yet there is a question to settle. This question, in condensed form, is this: Shall the ideal of civilization represented by China prevail, or shall the Japanese purpose be vindicated and confirmed?

Let us look at the three countries on the superb map of Chinese Asia issued by the War Office in Tokio, and now lying before me. "China proper" appears as a vast teapot, in which the moth Korea and the silkworm Japan would scarcely fill more than an inch of the bottom. China claims to rule about one-fourth of the population of the globe, and a very large fraction of its area. Her wealth and resources—if she could move or utilize them—would be simply amazing.

We all know her claims and her history. She has for ages called herself the Middle Kingdom. All nations around her are but the fringes and tassels to her august robe. In a Chinese atlas, which I have before me, each of the nineteen provinces of China occupies a whole page. A page is also given to Tibet, to Mongolia, and to Manchuria, and one also to Formosa and to Annam. All the rest of the world is crowded together on *one* page, with China in the center.

Again and again has China been conquered by barbarians from the north—Huns, Tartars, Mongols, Manchus—

but these waves of irruption have been absorbed into the great sea of the Chinese people, land, language, and culture. Though China has had thirty-three dynasties, the one idea of her supremacy over all the world, and, until recently, her refusal to acknowledge any other nations as equal, or rulers as sovereign, have been her characteristics. She has given letters, almanacs—the far-Oriental symbols of suzerainty and of vassalage—to the surrounding nations, but her recognition of other civilizations, sovereigns, or religions has been obtained only through the media of powder and ball. She has been humiliated again and again by European nations. Chinese patriotism is almost *nil*, yet no individuals more than the Chinese feel personal loss.

Out in the ocean, away from the mainland, shaped like a long silkworm, from whose head is spun a long line of islands down to tropical Formosa, with her tail lost amid the fogs of the Kuro Shiwo, lies Japan. Her population is but forty millions, and her territory is but little more than that of the United Kingdom of the northern Atlantic. Brave, bold, enterprising, warlike, conceited, mercurial, the Japanese people are one, with a highly organized political body. A Jack compared to a giant, indeed, but its pick-ax is dangerous.

Geographically, between silkworm and teapot, hovers the headless moth of Korea. The tip of its northern wing touches Russia in Siberia, that of its southern wing lies where the Yellow Sea flows, and near to Japan's outlying isles. Eastward its head, if it has any head, points across the great, deep bowl of the Sea of Japan over toward the mainland of Nippon. Westward its one wing lies against China and the other against the Gulf of Pechili. It has a population of perhaps twelve millions. By natural configuration Korea is an independent country; by race traits and history the people should be, as they claim to be, a sovereign and a separate nation. Her literature is on the Chinese model, but her language is wonderfully like that of the Japanese. Physically, the Koreans are between the two rivals.

The story of Korea is both long and short. Chronologically, the men of horse-hair hats and white cotton clothes claim that their land, called Morning Radiance, boasts a civilization of four thousand years. Kicius (if we venture to Latinize the name of Ki-tsze as the Jesuits did that of Kung-fu-tze) was the founder of their social order. He was an ancestor of Confucius, and emigrated from China 1122 B.C. Not a few of the white-robed scholars of the Peninsula claim that Korean culture antedates that of their mighty neighbor. The better classes are very learned, but the chief ambition of the *yang-ban* or gentry seems to be to smoke amazingly long tobacco-pipes, to do no work, except pen-work, that could possibly soil their hands, and to gouge the people by means of their taxation and "squeezes" to the last degree of endurance.

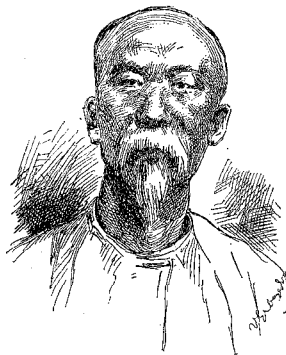
Korea has had her story of civil war, of feudalism,



Kuang Hsü,
Emperor of China.



Mutsu-Hito,
Mikado of Japan.



Li Hung Chang,
Viceroy of China.



Li-Hi,
King of Korea.

and of union. Yet even now, under what professes to be a monarchy, the two great groups of ex-feudal chiefs, represented respectively by the Queen and the Min clan, and the King and the Ni clan, devour the people. Little or no encouragement is given to industry, and Korea's story is one of chronic oppression and poverty.

Her geographical situation is most lamentable. The jealousy between Japanese and Chinese is age-old and age-enduring. The Japanese, making a claim which before the bar of history is little short of mythological, say that in the second century they, through their Amazonian Queen Jingo (a proper name curiously suggestive of our modern political slang), conquered the whole peninsula. Very probably one of the chieftainesses of a Japanese tribe in that misty era, when there were no clocks or almanacs in the little portion of Japan then known, did make a successful raid somewhere on the neighboring coasts. Certain it is, however, that during the Middle Ages Japanese armies fought often and valiantly in the land of tigers and ginseng, both against the natives and the Chinese. Japanese poetry, history, folk-lore, and common speech are full of reminiscences of these patent facts.

Furthermore, in 1592 Hidéyoshi sent over armies of veterans, which in eighteen days occupied the capital and all the fortresses between Seoul and the seacoast, and which in one month reached the northern frontier. Then came the shock of battle between the hosts from China and the little Japanese armies. Valor and science often won the day against brute force united to local knowledge and patriotism. There is little doubt that had Hidéyoshi properly sustained his army the Japanese could have held Korea. As it was, they won "peace with honor," and retired after having literally carried Korean industry, art, and skill bodily into Japan. The poor little country, devoured for seven years by friends that were worse than foes, and foes that ate up her organized industries as well as her food, remained a pitiable object, to be again, only thirty years later, overrun by the Manchu hosts. These Tartars allowed the Koreans to keep their hair, while imposing on the hundreds of millions of China the pigtail, which, from Emperor to laundryman, is still the badge of Tartar conquest and of Chinese submission.

For centuries "the little kingdom" paid tribute heavily to China and lightly to Japan, but over forty years ago the peaceful armada of Commodore Matthew Perry changed the whole situation, and, by opening Japan, rendered China's ancient system of diplomacy hopelessly obsolete. Feudal and disintegrated Japan, like three hundred old bits of shoe-iron heated by fires within and beaten by the hammers of foreign diplomacy into a single Masamuné blade, became a startling apparition before the eyes of China. Welding into one Japanese and Latin rhetorical allusion, we may say that the sword of Masamuné hung by a hair over China. It threatened to cut to pieces her claims of *Whang-Ti*, or universal supremacy. With an alacrity and a sincerity that aroused the wrath of China and drew forth almost incredible insults from Korea, Japan adopted modern civilization, tore up China's almanac and threw the lunar calendar to the winds, accepted frankly and fully international law. Then, organizing a national army and navy on the best modern principles, Dai Nippon stood forth a girded athlete. Intimating to Korea that all past Japanese claims of vassalage would be forgotten, and her insults forgiven, Japan, following the example of the United States, sent the Japanese Perry, Kuroda, with a fleet prepared like Perry to do the right thing but to stand no nonsense. A treaty was made in which Korea was recognized as a sovereign State. Since that time the course of love, true or otherwise, has not always flowed smoothly between the two nations, and blood has more than once been spilled; but, apart from Japan's conceit, pride, and bullying (if these there be), China still acts according to her old precedents. She claims Formosa, the Riu Kiu (Loo Choo) Islands, and, apparently, Korea as part of her territory, or at least appanage.

When, however, Formosa cannibals kill and eat shipwrecked Americans as well as Japanese, and the Mikado's statesmen attempt, after being told in Pekin that eastern

Formosa is not within Chinese jurisdiction, to chastise the cannibals, then the Japanese are warned off as "invaders" and "buccaneers." When Japan, acting on General Grant's suggestion, appoints Joint High Commissioners with full powers to settle the question of jurisdiction over the Riu Kiu Islands, at the last stage of the proceedings the Chinese Government, with a duplicity that would not be tolerated for a moment in Europe, burlesques diplomacy, and turns the matter over from Joint High Commissioners to the Tsung-li Yamen. When Japan acts according to treaty stipulations with China in Korean affairs, she is branded as "a neighbor-disturbing nation."

No wonder that now Japan stands on her dignity, and, believing herself clothed in the triple armor of justice, quails not even before the Giant that possibly is able, and possibly not, to grind Japanese bones to make Chinese bean-curd.

To sing the long song of recent events in short meter, the tune is like this: Japan has more subjects in Korea than have all other foreign nationalities; her commerce in bulk and importance is greater than that of all other foreign nations combined. It seems absolutely necessary for her national safety that Korea should not become a Chinese province. In the recent uprising of the peasantry of the fertile southern provinces against the intolerable exactions of the office-holders, China responded with suspicious alacrity and sent over her soldiers. According to the letter and spirit of the treaty, Japan was amply justified in dispatching the same number.

Japan represents civilization; China represents antiquity and ideas which no longer survive in modern life. Who will be the victor and what will be the outcome no human eye can foresee. It is not only the nations east and west of Korea that are fighting, those north and south of her may soon step in. The Bear and the Lion, as well as the Dragon and the Dragon-fly, will have their say. Meanwhile the true Korean patriots are hoping that the outcome will be the independence of their beloved land.



The Destruction of the Poor

By Arthur Reed Kimball

It has taken this boastful modern world a long time to appreciate in all its bearings the ancient wisdom of the author of the Book of Proverbs: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty." The destruction of the poor, through the increased cost of every necessity which must be bought, because of their poverty, in the smallest quantity and therefore at the highest price, and through their inability to secure credit in a pinch, because of their poverty, except at ridiculously ruinous rates of interest, has at last impressed itself upon the practical benevolence of the nineteenth century here in America. This much of compensation is to be found in the popular distress of these hard times.

The ingenuity of the money-sharks who prey upon the necessities of the poor, and who grow rich in proportion as others are driven to dire extremity in the search for some way to raise pitifully small sums, has perhaps never been set forth more clearly in all its repulsiveness than in a document bearing the somewhat cumbersome title: "Report of the Operations of the Citizens' Permanent Relief Committee of Philadelphia in Relieving Distress in the City during the Winter of 1893-94." The part of the report here referred to was the result of a special investigation by Mr. Rudolph Blankenburg. He found that among the worthy poor a cause of distress equal to the lack of employment was the necessity of satisfying the usurious money-lender—"who would have challenged the admiration and envy of Shylock himself"—into whose clutches they had fallen, largely through alluring advertisements.

One of the first cases to attract the attention of the Committee, and, by the publicity given to it in the press, to lead to the discovery of many similar cases, was that of an electrician who had always earned good wages until dis-