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THE JAPANESE INVASION OF KOREA.—1592.

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To a man of the versatility of Hideyoshi the opportunity was not long wanting to begin the execution of his plan.

Soon after the founding of the present Korean dynasty a treaty had been negotiated between Japan and Korea under the provisions of which an occasional exchange of Envoys had taken place. This treaty, however, was never popular among the Koreans, and after remaining in force for about one hundred years, an agitation was raised by the statesman Sin Siuk Chu which led the Koreans to disavow and ignore it. This was a comparatively easy task for this bigoted noble, for the Koreans had not ceased to consider their island neighbours as savages.

From that period until the time of the invasion ambassadorial visits, with one exception, entirely ceased; this exception was nothing more than an attempt, for the nobles comprising it went no further than Tsushima, where they remained until the friendly islanders found an opportunity to ship them back to the peninsula.

This failure to accredit envoys and to send what Korea called a present, but which was received by Japan as tribute, could not but offend Japanese pride. Hideyoshi saw in it the pretext he needed, and an Embassy was determined upon to enquire into the matter and Tashuhiro, a Tsushima man, was appointed its chief.

An interesting picture presents itself to us in the nation to which he was accredited. Two hundred years had passed since the Wang dynasty of Songdo, corrupt and effete, had been overthrown, and the conqueror, a man of a shrewd and masterful mind, seizing the reins of government ascended the Dragon Table, and restoring to the land its ancient name of Chosun removed the capital to Hanyang The reigning monarch Sunjo, had been on the throne twenty years, and was destined to occupy it forty-one years, his reign being the third longest in the twenty-six which comprise the Yi dynasty. A profound peace reigned throughout the land; for several generations no war had called the people from a peaceful life to the activity of the camp. The main spice of Korean life was the disputatious character of the scholars whose quarrels were many, frequent, and

(20) The present dynasty was founded in A.D. 1392.
(21) Sin Siuk Chu, A.D. 1480—?

(22) Tai Chosun was the legal and proper name of the country until 1897 when the name was changed to Tai Han.
(22a) The Soul of foreign literature; Soul means simply capital.
bitter, because they were often purely political; these quarrels culminated soon after the invasion in the dispute which gave the nation the Noron and Soron sects in politics, and which with their minor branches, the Namin and Pusan form the main political parties of the country for many years.

It was a time of great national wealth. The years of peace and prosperity had given the nation an opportunity to recover from the convulsions which attended the overthrow of the Wang dynasty at Songdo. Populous cities were numerous and arts and manufactures were in a high state of development.

Wealth and peace however had dissipated the vigor and energy of less prosperous times; the people had sunk into a lethargic state of existence, and moral ruin had taken the place of moral character. The nobles gave themselves up to riotous living; the rich dissipated great fortunes in pleasure and extravagance, and the lower classes, as far as possible, faithfully copied the pernicious example thus set them. The chronicles of the time abound in descriptions of feasts and merry-makings; theatrical and acrobatic exhibitions, in which, as in declining Rome, the actors were often of noblest blood; wine, excess and debauchery.

Martial vigor had disappeared and an impotent effeminacy marked all classes. Upon the military rolls of the nation were borne the names of a million of men, now famous among native historians as the 'Army on Paper.' A report of all 'inspection,' had at an important point, states that the mass of the troops were an undisciplined mob of boys and old men, clad in homespun and the 'wash tub' hats of the country; some had extemporized spears, a few had swords, none wore armour, and hardly an able-bodied soldier was to be found among them. This description enables us to understand the terror and dread which seized all hearts when the news of that terrible host at Fusan was made known, and they fled before its outward march like the withering of autumn leaves before November blasts. Neither in palace nor in hovel was there the manhood which could stand before a determined foe, while of all men, those who defended the royal Court at Seoul were the last to cross swords with the veterans of the Paiko.

Yoshibiro, Hideyoshi's envoy known in Korean Annals as Kiiil Kang Kuxang(23) reached Korea in 1587. He brought with him a letter from the Taiko and was instructed to demand a restoration of the exchange of Envoys. And whatever may have been the Taiko's plans, it appears from the conduct of his envoys and the extended diplomatic negotiations that he sincerely hoped to induce Korea, either by persuasion or threats, to join him against China. His choice of his first Ambassador was not a wise one. Yoshibiro was a rough warrior of a fierce type, and the last man to undertake a delicate diplomatic mission. He knew more of the sword than of the polite arts; he was better acquainted with the etiquette of the Camp than with that of a Court. He could have carved his way into the palace at the head of his clansmen, but win his way in by his wit as a diplomat—never. A Korean diary of the day, describes him as a man over fifty, grizzled and weather-beaten and with an unattractive face. Familiar with the stirring scenes of life under Hideyoshi's guards, accustomed to strike friendship with men who wore iron instead of cotton and silk, he could not but view with the air of a disgusted superior the effeminate Koreans; while they on their part could not understand this rough harsh man who cared nothing for feasting, wine and pleasure, and who exactly answered their ideas of a barbarian. He was received at Fusan with an escort of honor, but all along the way up the peninsula, and with his hosts at Seoul his conduct was both undignified and unbecoming. Many were the difficulties which beset the situation, the Koreans being decidedly unfavorable from the very first; tact and skill however might have obviated
them. By boorishness and culpable discourtesy, however, he not only succeeded in defeating his own Mission, but also in badly ensnaring the whole matter. He was debarred the presence of the Korean Monarch, and after a weary delay dismissed by the Court, with the sneer that 'Chosun being ignorant of Sea roads, no Ambassadors would be sent.' A sneer which Korean historians never fail to re-echo.

Returning to Japan he was there met with displeasure and condemnation by the Taiko. He was charged with having betrayed Japan to the Peninsular authorities and ordered to be executed with all his family. The sentence was carried out and thus ended in a tragedy the first of the diplomatic negotiations.

Hideyoshi was far from discouraged by this big first attempt to persuade Korea to join him against China and a second Embassy was determined upon. This consisted of Yoshitoshi (24), another Tsushima man, Gensho (25), a Buddhist priest, and Tairano Tsuginobu (26). They reached Korea some time in May 1589 and were received with great ceremony and the lavish hospitality for which Korea has ever been famous. By prudence and tact this Embassy secured and maintained the good-will and favor of the Koreans from the very first. As a whole the Embassy was a popular one in the nation to which it was accredited.

It is true Yoshitoshi is described as an imperious and hot-headed young man, but this censure may be due to his relationship with Konishi, a name sufficient to terrify any Korean of fifty or a hundred years ago. For the two older members of the Mission genuine respect was entertained; in the native histories Gensho is called 'a man of much wisdom,' and Tairano Tsuginobu 'a general courageous and great.'

The task of the envoys was a difficult one; outwardly the Koreans were all friendliness receiving them as national guests and quartering them in the Nam Piu Kung (27), a palace reserved for the envoys of the Suze-rain, and still standing, being last occupied by the Chinese Embassy of Condolence (1898); inwardly the Koreans, however, were all suspicion and aversion. Yoshitoshi's greeting was 'I am a pilot of the Seas and have come to guide your Embassy to Japan.' The Koreans were in a quandary, for evidently no such answer would avail with the 'hot-headed, young Envoy.' The discussion in the Royal Council was animated and long and at last the following answer was returned, 'Let Japan manifest her friendship if she is friendly, by returning all Korean rebels who have found a refuge in her islands, and we will think of an Embassy.' The object of this was twofold; first, to tempt Japan into a refusal, or secondly, to secure possession of a certain Sa Wha Doug (28) who had done serious mischief to the Government and was especially feared, as he was reported to be raising an army of Japanese mercenaries for a descent on Korea.

An hour after it was announced to Yoshitoshi, the King had his answer 'it shall be done,' and Tairano had received his commission to proceed immediately to Japan to secure the men. So thoroughly did they scour Japan for fugitive Koreans that when Tairano came back he brought one hundred and sixty men, among them being four Japanese convicted of piracy on Korean coasts. The effect upon the Koreans was magical. Even the doors of the royal palace opened as to an 'open sesame,' and the King received from the Embassy in person this their gift, at once a bribe and an evidence of Japan's 'sincere' friendship.

The Koreans kept their word. His Majesty, to show his favor, presented Yoshitoshi

(24) 平義智 The Pung Eui Chi of the Koreans.
(25) 玄蘇 The Hy6n So of the Koreans.
(26) 平調信 The Pung Cho Sin of the Koreans.
(27) 參別宮 (28) 沙火同
with a horse from his private stables, and also gave a royal banquet to the Embassy. Advice favorable to Japan prevailed in the Royal Council, and soon the Envoys heard that an Embassy would be appointed and they prepared to return. Before going Yoshitoshi presented His Majesty with a brace of peafowl and some matchlock guns. This was the introduction of fire-arms into Korea and from the guns thus presented the Koreans made their first fire-arms, which they have continued to use as a pattern until the present time, in their manufacture of weapons.

The Korean Embassy was appointed in April 1590 and departed immediately for Kioto. It consisted of Whan Youn Gil (29), Kim Syong(30) and Ho Syong(31), a most unfortunate group of Envoys, mutually jealous and suspicious, hopelessly divided among themselves, and quarreling most of the way to Japan and all of the way back. For various reasons they were long delayed obtaining an audience with the Taiko, and when it did occur they were so angry at the treatment they had met, and so weary over the delays and vexations they had endured, that they were too much soured to do anything but find fault. Their report of their treatment is a mixture of doleful wail and savage remonstrance. At last Gensho gave them the famous letter in which Hideyoshi demanded Korea's alliance against China. Dr. Griffiths states that the objectionable feature of this letter was the use of the imperial 'we' by Hideyoshi, in speaking of himself. This is a mistake, as the letter used the ordinary Chinese pronoun in the first person, which is held to be devoid of number by the Koreans. The Envoys did object to one of the pronouns in the letter, but it was a designation applied to His Majesty of Korea. (34) This however was only a minor objection and was quite readily altered by Gensho when the Envoys demanded it. Their main objection was to the demand for Korea's alliance against China, and they contended stoutly for the erasing of this, though vainly, and at last they were compelled to start for the peninsula with the document which in their eyes was a foul insult. They brought it to Seoul and it threw the Palace into consternation. Hideyoshi followed it up with a third Embassy which reached Korea in the Leap month of 1591. This Embassy was composed of Tairano Teuginobu and Gensho, and though there was no lack of friendly demonstration in its reception, the Korean mind was determined. But the perplexity remained none the less vexatious. Long, weary and undecided were the discussions held in the Royal Cabinet. Only a very few of the more sagacious of the nobles had the courage to acknowledge and face the situation; to the majority the ship of State lay between Sollia and Charybdis; if they befriended China, Japanese vengeance would surely involve them in war; a contingency from which they shrank, even though the Taiko's veterans were 'weak, sickly and undisciplined, a mere unorganized mob,' as Envoy Kim assured His Majesty in his report; while if they remained silent China would just as certainly call Korea to account after she had put Japan down. And to complicate the matter with China, they had entered upon negotiations without her (China's) knowledge, which had placed them in a position to receive a proposition of an alliance against the Middle Kingdom. The King was clear-headed enough to discern where they were drifting, and stood up alone in counseling immediate and full communication with China; but against his wish a policy of

(29) 黃允吉
(30) 金誠一
(31) 許箴
(33) 子
(34) The letter used "殿下" The Envoys demanded 殿下.
inactivity was determined upon to ‘await developments.’ Gensho and Tairano had means which put them in possession of all that transpired in the palace, and they were all ready to depart when the royal reply to Hideyoshi came. It was a letter of polite but firm rebuke, and in due time it reached the Taiko. He returned an insolent reply which was brought by Yoshitoshi; he only came as far as Fusan, where he turned his letter over to the local authorities there; in due time it was forwarded to Seoul, but the authorities there took no notice of it on the ground that the Ambassador failed to deliver it in person. Yoshitoshi after ordering all Japanese to return to Japan departed himself, ‘and soon’ says the native chronicles ‘no Japanese were to be found on the peninsula.’

There remains but one other phase of the diplomatic negotiations to notice,—those with China. The relations between these two nations were well defined by His Majesty of Korea in his letter of rebuke to Hideyoshi. He said:

‘China ever welcomes Chosun as though they were but one nation, and whenever difficulties have arisen, mutual assistance has brought their settlement. We are as the family of one house esteeming the other as father and son. And this must be known in Japan, for it is known throughout the world.’ And though the royal cabinet had concluded to await developments, in deference to the King’s wishes the tribute bearer was commanded to suggest to the powers in Peking that Japan was plotting something. The Tribute Bearer Han was a man of great good judgment, but it was well he received such liberal and ambiguous instructions, for as soon as he crossed into Chinese territory he found himself in a most unpleasant position. Through an Embassy from Liu Kiu the Mings had heard of Hideyoshi’s plans, and Korea failing to send any word, they had already begun to mistrust the Peninsula. This was what Han met when he found himself among Chinese officials across the Chinese borders; but quick to grasp the situation he announced everywhere that he was specially empowered to inform the Peking authorities, which served to allay the suspicious excited. What he did tell the Chinese Government we do not know; we next hear of him in October 1691 as Ambassador to the Court of Peking to announce that Japan was plotting to invade China and had invited Korean co-operation. On arrival in Peking he became the object of special consideration, and so great was the interest felt in his message that he was invited into the Imperial presence to deliver it in person to the Son of Heaven. This is reported as the first instance of such an honor to a Korean Envoy, and so highly was it appreciated by the Koreans, that when Han returned and reported it, another Embassy was despatched to Peking to express Korea’s gratitude and to report in detail the Japanese matter from its inception until the then present time. ‘Thus was established’ say the native historians ‘the custom of receiving Korean Envoys in Imperial Audience at Peking.’

The message of Hideyoshi brought by Yoshitoshi to Fusan, was more than an insolent reply to Korea; like the Pequot’s snake skin of arrows, it was the announcement of a serious purpose. Upon the return of his final Envoy Hideyoshi pushed with vigor the preparations for the invasion. Everything necessary to the success of the project was provided in lavish abundance. In December 1591 maps of the eight provinces of Korea were distributed among the various commanders to study, and in this is the source, probably, of the Korean tradition which declares that eight high officers of the Taiko’s Army were sent to Korea to spy out the land. They are said to have spent two years in their work, during which they travelled the length and breath of the land in the disguise of Buddhist priests, visiting every city and hamlet on the peninsula.

The efforts of Hideyoshi resulted in the
assembling at Nagoya, of an army of Conquest, which was one of the most magnificent ever assembled on Asiatic shores. In prowess, in courage, in fame it was unsurpassed. It consisted of eight divisions, commanded as follows:

Fist Division ..Kato Kiomasu(35).
Second ..Konishi Yukinaga(36).
Third ..Otomo Kiken(37).
Fourth ..Shimadsu Yashihira(38).
Fifth ..Fukushima Masanori(39).
Sixth ..Hashiuha Iyematsu(40).
Seventh ..Kobaya Kawa Takakage(41).
Eighth ..Mori Terumoto(42).

In addition to these, there was a fleet composed of innumerable transports and war junks, and divided into four divisions, or more properly speaking fleets. The total strength of these forces as given by the Kwei Shi was:

The Eight Divisions and the Naval Contingent .........150,000
The Reserve Corps ............... 60,000
'The Old Guard' the Taiko's personal Command .............. 100,000

A Total of .............310,000

Thus the war-cloud gathered, and Korea, hardly awake to the terrible danger, yet conscious of a strange dread heretofore unknown, thought it well to look to her defences. Generals Shiu Ip and Yi Iri were commissioned upon a tour of inspection, but how little the Koreans appreciated the possibilities of the invasion is evidenced by

the conclusions of the Board of Coast Defences, that 'as the Japanese are great fighters on the sea, but indifferent on land, let the cities of the South be strengthened and the fight forced off the sea, on to the land.' The result proved the exact reverse; the Japanese swept the land until they were met by the troops of the Mingo.

The plan of Hideyoshi was to command in person, and if he had it is possible the map of Asia might read differently to-day. But from this he was dissuaded by a friend, who feared the consequences when another than his strong hand held the Japanese Ship of State.

The Advance was placed under the joint command of Kato and Konishi and they were ordered to make all haste in reaching the mainland.

Kato and Konishi are names which will live in the Korean mind as long as a memory of the invasion remains. The former they hated for his cruelty and ferocity, the latter they admired for his youth, his humanity and his contempt for Kato. These two men however enjoyed, the one the honor, the other the love of the old Taiko. And when they departed Kato became the happy recipient of the banner which Nabunaga had presented to Hideyoshi when he despatched him on his first campaign. Exulting over this mark of favor Kato told Konishi it was to be his banner during the war, and demanded of him what would be his ensign, 'An Apothecary's bag,' was the young man's contemptuous reply. With widely divergent tastes and characters, the dislike of these two men was intensified into a jealousy and hate, by the complications of their joint responsibility and to this rivalry must be attributed the failure of the Japanese to get north of Pyong Yong, for, from the time they landed in Korea, instead of fighting together and for common success, they fought independently and for personal glory.

After being reviewed by Hideyoshi the mighty host embarked and set sail for Korea, the great majority to leave their bones in
foreign soil. They took the old route for Fusan intending to land in the south end and make a clean sweep up the peninsula; they were opposed by adverse winds however, and compelled to seek the shelter of some islands. Here they were detained ten days, when the wind changing, the order came to set sail once more on the morrow. Konishi however determined to outwit Kato, and instructing his subordinates, managed to start that night without alarming his senior. In the morning his absence was discovered, and immediate pursuit ordered; but it was too late. The wind had changed again and Kato was obliged to remain in the shelter of islands with the consciousness that his rival would carry off the honors of landing first.

Konishi made the most of his opportunity, and managed to reach the mainland. His approach however was discovered by the local Mandarin at Fusan, who was out hunting at the time; returning quickly he sunk all the shipping in the harbour, and retired within the walls of the little town which may still be seen to the right of the Japanese town. Konishi under the cover of a fog reached the land and in spite of sunken junks effected a landing at midnight on the 13th of the Fourth Moon 1592. At daybreak the town was attacked and after a short resistance it was captured and its inhabitants were put to the sword.

Spurred on by the thought that Kato was just behind him Konishi determined to push on immediately, and despatching forces to the west against the large towns of Kim Hai and Saw Sang he himself took the main road up the peninsula capturing in rapid succession Tongnai, Yongsan and Miriang. Small forces were also sent in different directions to capture various places, and this measure followed by both Kato and Konishi, seems to have been the rock upon which the main purpose of the invasion was wrecked. The magnificent armies which landed at Fusan, and which united might have cut their way to the very gates of Peking, spread out in fan shape as they marched north dissipating their strength in a mere effort to destroy.

Four days after Konishi’s landing Kato arrived and great was his chagrin to find that ‘the boy’ was already away to the north on the road to Soul. Angrily disliking to follow, and possibly hoping to leave Konishi without support, he took the road up the east coast. Fortune favored Konishi however, for on the landing of the main army, a large force under Kuroda Nogimasu started to reinforce him; they found him besieging in person the city of Kim Hai, which he soon reduced.

In spite of the unconscious suspense with which the Koreans had awaited the invasion, the blow when it did fall came like a thunder-bolt from a clear sky. The news spread like wild fire; on the 17th, three days after the fall of Fusan, His Majesty had full particulars in Soul, and from that time news of disaster reached the Palace almost daily. Some measures were taken to oppose the oncoming host, but they were spiritless and almost farcical. After a fatal delay a force of 4,000 men under General Yi Iri started South. These were soon followed by another force of equal paucity in numbers, under General Shiu Ip. In the invaded Province itself, that of Kyong Sang, the Governor Kim promptly issued a Call to Arms, while His Majesty at Soul published a proclamation on the 19th, abolishing the laws of precedence and calling up all classes without distinction to take up arms against the invader.

Konishi, however, came up the peninsula at double quick speed; Chung Do, Paku Indong, Sunsan and Song Chu fell in rapid succession before him. His sudden and rapid successes so demoralized the people that they had no time to collect their wits, let alone rally to resist. Whenever they did make a stand it was due to being caught without the possibility of flight and then they fought as any people would fight who knew that their leaders were in craven flight, and their enemies bent on their destruction. The
cowardice and want of patriotism of the official classes during the first few months of the invasion were disgraceful in the extreme. The examples of bravery and patriotism among them were conspicuous, because of their infrequency. The demoralization of the ruling classes is evidenced by Governor Kim of the Kyongsang Province who quickly followed his “call to arms” by a proclamation telling the people to take care of themselves, and advising all who could do so to flee to the mountains.

On the 26th Konishi met the forces under Yi Iri at Sangchu; he routed them easily and Yi was compelled to flee to the north unaccompanied. By mountain paths and by-roads he reached the famous Bird’s Flight Pass, the mighty Choriong, and here he found the forces under Shin Ip. In the meantime the news of his defeat had reached Seoul, and caused a general exodus from the place. As early as the 21st, one week after the landing, the Court had entertained the thought of flight but contented itself with making preparations. On the 28th the Kwanghai Prince Huni was declared Crown Prince in order to insure a legal succession to the Throne; only a handful of nobles were present in Seoul, however, to witness and take part in the ceremonies of his elevation.

The measures for the royal flight, however, were viewed with strong disfavor by the Minister President of Civil Affairs, who openly alleged their demoralizing effect on the populace, and advocated a more courageous front. He even went so far as to advocate the employment of ten scholars, who offered themselves to the Government, for the purpose of assassinating the higher officers of the Japanese Army. To the credit of the Royal Council this proposition was promptly rejected.

Favorable as the defiles of the great Choriong were for a stand against the foe, Shin Ip and Yi Iri determined to mass their troops at the city of Choung Chu, instead of occupying the almost impregnable position the Pass afforded them. Accordingly Shin Ip marched across into the province of Choung Chung(43), westerly; he took up a position with a river at his back, a piece of generalship that is hard to match even among the examples of stupidity afforded by the records of this invasion. The Japanese approached in two columns and closing in on the Koreans, had them in a trap. At the first onslaught they were thrown into a rout and then forced into the river at their backs, which was soon covered with the floating bodies of dead Koreans. The slaughter among the Koreans was frightful, the force being almost entirely annihilated, Shin Ip paying for his stupid generalship with his life. Yi Iri, however, escaped with his life, and after many adventures managed to acquaint Seoul with news of the disaster and the circumstances of the death of General Shin Ip. The Koreans report their losses in this battle as over ten thousand slain; no prisoners were made by either party.

All this time Kato had been sweeping up the east coast like a besom of destruction. Everywhere the people were put to the sword. At the old city of Kyongschin(44), once capital of the proud little Kingdom of Shilla, an attempt was made to oppose him; as a result he not only put the people to the sword but commanded the old city to be set on fire. From here he turned to the northwest, marching rapidly for the great Choriong, and marking his way with smoking towns and slaughtered thousands left to be devoured by the kites, the eagles, the carrion of every species.

Reaching the beautiful little Magistracy of Choung Chu, situated on the northern slopes of the mighty Choriong, he there met Konishi flushed with his successes at Sangchu and Choung Chu, and together they went into council. This portion of the country is at once one of the wildest, yet
one of the most beautiful spots on the peninsula. The traveller who approaches it from the south descends into it from the towering almost impassable heights of the great defile, as into a garden of Eden.

In the council their mutual jealousy and hatred soon crept out. Kato demanded the exclusive honor of capturing Seoul, to which Konishi would not consent. And so bitter did the quarrel become that they were only prevented from coming to blows by the interference of their colleagues. Their final agreement was that as there were two roads leading to Seoul, Kato should have his choice, and he selected the one approaching Seoul from the south, which though more difficult, and leading into the defences at the Han River was said to be shorter than the other which approached Seoul from the east. And here they parted, Konishi however, first despatching some of his men in disguise ahead of Kato to destroy the boats along the Han and thus delay him if possible.

The news of the fall of Chong Chu reached Seoul on the 29th, and though the enemy were still a hundred miles away, the royal flight to the north was immediately settled upon, and occurred the next night. The determination soon became known in the city and occasioned an uproar among the already depleted populace; a further exodus began even among the most courageous; palace servants and clerks fled in dismay, and the palace became as silent as a tomb; soldiers on the city walls bribed their officers into permitting them to desert, and it seemed as though Seoul would be left without either inhabitant or defender. The royal flight took place at midnight of the 30th, in the midst of a storm which raged as though in league with the foe. The sight was a pitiful one; a handful of men guarding the Tablets supposed to contain the royal shades of Korea; the King and a few trusty men; the Crown Prince next, and last of all Her Majesty surrounded by twenty of the ladies of her court and guarded and guided by two trusty nobles. On they plunged through the darkness and rain as though Konishi was already at their heels, all that night and the next day, undeterred by the pitiless storm and pausing hardly long enough to take food. The next night they crossed the Im Chiu River, whose swollen and rapid waters were lit up by the red rays of a huge fire on the bluffs near, the flames of which were fed by oil. This spot is now marked by a Pavilion which in summer looks down upon an enchanting scene. Early on the 2nd of the fifth moon they entered the city of Sougdo, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Korea, a city which had suffered the vengeful wrath of the ancestor whose son it now welcomed as a refugee. Pausing here two days, on the 4th the flight is continued in a more orderly and less hasty manner until they reach Kium Kyo, where news reach them of the fall of Seoul, and again the flight is quickened into a dead run for the city of Pyong Yang, which the king reached on the 8th. He was met by the Governor of the province at the head of 3,000 men who came out to escort him with honour into the ancient city. Here he set up his Government, hoping he might have to go no further, but determined to cross over into China and throw himself on the mercy of Peking if the enemy should press him too closely.

Glad to bid farewell to his bitterly-hated, but fortune-favored rival, Kato abated for a time the destructiveness of his march and pushed on with all possible speed, determined to make sure of the capture of Seoul. Konishi's men however had done their work and the absence of boats resulted in a delay his temper could ill brook at that time. It was soon remedied and crossing he put to flight a camp of Koreans and soon appeared before Seoul. It was the morning of the 4th of the Fifth Moon. There in the distance was the wall of the capital running
up over the shoulder of the south mountain, while the magnificent top of the Great South Gate seemed to float up above the walls and houses clustered in front of it. Above it moved an ensign which seemed to portend a battle, but, without pausing, on they rushed only to find the gate wide open and the soldiers of Konishi waiting to welcome them. The ‘boy’ had once more borne off the prize; Soul had fallen into Konishi’s hands the day before, i.e. on the 3rd of the Fifth Moon.

The march on Soul was almost unopposed. The two chiefs left in command of the walls Kim Myong Wun and Yi Yang Wun had taken to their heels almost as soon as the royal party left the west gate. The great city was the easiest as well as the greatest prize Konishi took during the war. For ten days the Japanese struggled into Soul, and here Hideie, in chief command of the Armies, took up his head-quarters in the Ancestral Tablet Temple of the Royal Family. The royal Palaces and many of the minor magnificent buildings of the city were destroyed. Troops were garrisoned in several of the public buildings, and many were quartered on the people. A provisional Government was set up, and as many of the people as wished to do so were permitted to return to their homes inside the walls, though all egress and ingress to the city was by written passes from the Japanese headquarters. All criminals and transgressors were burned to death at the ‘Great Bell’ on the first offence, and great numbers of Koreans met this fate. This however did not deter many from returning to the capital where they were able to engage in lucrative trade with the Japanese and were soon on friendly terms with them. Hideie remained but a short time in the magnificent parks and buildings of the Ancestral Temples: for some reason he suddenly moved to the Nam Piul Kung, the palace which had sheltered the Japanese Envoys, and still continues to shelter Ambassadors Extraordinary, and he ordered the Temples to be set on fire. This was done and to the sorrow of the Koreans their Chong Mio was soon in ashes.

The south by this time was pretty well subjugated, only five towns in all K-jong Song remaining untouched, while the important places in the provinces of Chilla, Kangwun and Choung Chung were fast falling into the enemies’ hands. From Soul Hideie pushed rapidly the work of conquest: troops were despatched almost daily and though the Koreans often risked a stand, the result was generally fruitless. After the rout caused by the attempt to oppose Koto’s crossing of the Han River a subordinate chief named Shin Kok managed to collect a considerable body of troops and with them occupied an important position near Soul.

A detachment was sent against them, but strong in the natural advantages of their position and animated by the courage and skill of their commander they held their position until the Japanese, wearied and weakened, were about to draw off. Then Shin Kok ordered a charge before which the Japanese broke and fled. This was the first victory of any kind won by the Koreans up to that time. Shin Kok’s senior, however, the craven who had fled by night from the Capital, which had been entrusted to his care by His Majesty, without making even the slightest attempt at its defence, when he heard of this first victory borne off by Shin Kok, sent post-haste to His Majesty to denounce him as a traitor and recommended his execution; all too hastily came the royal command to decapitate Shin Kok wherever found. The command was carried out in the midst of the first Korean camp, whilst celebrating a victory over the Japanese. Soon however a true report reached His Majesty, and what saved the dastardly Kim from the punishment he so richly deserved remains a mystery unto this day. The fact that he was a son-in-law to His Majesty may account for it, though this tradition lacks reliable confirmation.

Firmly established in Soul the Japanese
forces were further augmented by the arrival of the Reserve of 60,000 men. The Koreans entrenching themselves along the banks of the Im Chiu River made preparations for a vigorous defense. Regarding this River as the key to the whole situation in the north, they determined to hold it at any cost. Numerous fortifications were thrown up, and a force of 5,000 men from the wilds of the North augmented the numerous forts along its northern bank. But here again the shoe-string backbone of the Commanding General brought disaster upon the Korean arms. Kim Myoag Wun, who had lost the Han, basely deserted Seoul, and he who was guilty of the blood of the first Korean officer to win victory from the Japanese, was unfortunately entrusted with the defenses of this important river. On the first approach of the foe, he did the only thing he knew how to do under such circumstances, he took to his heels. The native troops, however, fought not only with determination but with desperation, but the effect of Kim's craven flight was disheartening to them. The united forces of Kato, Konishi and Kuroda after a mighty battle broke the line of defenses, dispersed them with a disastrous rout and the whole north lay at their mercy. Here again Kato and Konishi got into a quarrel as to which one should have the honor of pursuing the royal fugitive. It was decided by lot, and again fortune favored Konishi, Kato drawing the Ham Kyong Province, Kuroda the Whoang Hui Province and Konishi Pyong Yang.

Kato immediately marched into the Ham Kyong Province and found the people ready to make any terms with him; not only had the fame of his cruel resoluteness filled them with terror, but the cowardice and venality of the officials had so embittered the people against them, that they joined the enemy in hunting them out. On the first approach of Kato the Governor of the Province fled to the mountains; his own soldiers pursued him, however, and capturing him delivered him into Kato's hands. The Commander in-Chief of the Province was at Kapsan with a few followers. The rough mountaineers rising against him drove him into the marshes, killed all his followers, beheaded him and the local mandarin and brought their heads to Kato. In harmony with the royal plans before leaving Seoul, the two Princes, Imhai Koun and Sioun Wa Koun, with a noble retinue, had come into the province to raise volunteers. Compelled to flee before this treason, they took refuge in the defiles of the great Machul Young Pass far to the Northeast. Here however they were pursued, captured, marched back and turned over to Kato. Thus treason betrayed many rich prizes out of Kato's hands; his battles were few and the subjugation of the province was accomplished in a short time.

His Majesty Sunjo, at Pyong Yang, was in sore straits. He was not entirely hopeless for he had not failed to implore aid from his great neighbor China, but it was so slow in coming, while every hour seemed to bring the foe nearer. On the 19th of the Fifth Moon news reached him of the failure of the defences of the Im Chiu River, and sorrowfully he determined to pass on to We Chu, the frontier city of the land, from which he knew he would depart, if that painful necessity was laid on him, never to return again. On the 8th of the Sixth Moon the advance guard with the sacred Tablets were ordered to march immediately for We Chu. The populace of Pyong Yang, hated even to-day for its lawless and riotous character, viewed with extreme disfavor this further royal flight and vigorously attacked the guard of the sacred Tablets; the trouble threatened indeed to be very serious for a time, but the royal troops managed to get the upper hand, and His Majesty was enabled soon to breathe the freer air of the country beyond. But the bad blood of the city was aroused and the officials had a hard time to quiet the people. On the 18th he meets at the mountain city of Kwoksan the first of the Chinese Allies sent to his aid, a
small body of 1000 men. These he takes back to We Chu with him as his Body Guard. He entered We Chu on the 23rd of the Sixth Moon 1692. The city was deserted; the native chronicles saying that 'even the dogs had fled.' His Majesty took up his headquarters in the Mandarin's palace, and sacrifices were offered in various parts of the old deserted city.

Konishi eager to lay hands on the royal prize so close to his clutch, but fearing a most determined resistance, pushed along the route of the royal flight. Strong detachments were left at Songdo, Paekhun, and Pongsem as centres to fall back upon in case of defeat at the walls of Pyŏng Yang. Forced marches brought him with a strong force to the bank of the Taı̂ tong River, which washes the walls of the city, a mighty, almost impassible, moat. Here the opposing forces watched each other; the walls seemed alive with men, but had he known it he would not have waited as long as he did, for many of the figures were men of wood set up to make an imposing show of defence. One engagement occurred, a night surprise attempted by the Koreans, but it was repulsed by the bravery of the former Envoy Yoshitoshi, though not until serious damage had been inflicted on the Japanese. This failure so disheartened the natives in command of the city, that destroying what stores and munitions of war they could, they fled from the city counseling the people to do the same.

Konishi entered Pyŏng Yang the next day, the 16th of the Sixth Moon, having in sixty-three days marched nearly 600 miles, and inflicted more damage than Korea has been able to recover from in three hundred years. Konishi despatched men posthaste to Sŏul, advising a rally at Pyŏng Yang and an immediate march to the west on to the Yalu and thence on into China.

But a cloud was already looming up in the South which was viewed with anxiety by the generals at Sŏul. The obscure official Yi Soon Sin appointed to a naval office on the coast by the Board of Coast Defences just previous to the invasion, had developed into a naval commander unmatched in strategy by any commander in the Japanese fleets. In his first battle he engaged and destroyed a large fleet of the Japanese, who reported their losses at 90,000 men slain. From this he vigorously attacked the Japanese wherever he found them, and aided by his famous 'Tortoise Boat' literally swept them off the coast waters of the peninsula. On one occasion he recovered the spoil of the royal palaces of Sŏul, which was being conveyed to Japan. Hundreds of ships were sunk by him, and thousands of the enemy killed, for he made no prisoners. One of his battles is named among the three greatest of the year 1592.

In addition to the news of this Korean Paragut, the uprising of native volunteers was already beginning to fill Hideie and his colleagues at Sŏul with anxiety; already they had been called upon to resist two desperate attempts to retake Sŏul, and though victory had been easily won they were not sure it might always be so.

Kuroda however was winning new laurels in the Whang Hui Province, and every place acknowledged the prowess of his arms except three, among these three being the ancient city of Yenan, the home of Shin Kŏk, the first hero to win victory for the Korean arms. The sturdy courage and desperate resistance of this old town, now famous only for the excellence of its rice, and the beautiful lake near by with the great Dragon supposed to inhabit it—made it the scene of desperate fighting. Kuroda determined upon its reduction after his first repulse, and in the Ninth Moon marched against it with 30,000 men. Emboldened by the enthusiasm and courage of their commander General Yi, the Koreans fought well, repulsing every attempt to scale the walls, showering down boiling water and casting huge stones, with which the town seems to abound even to-day, upon the heads of the Japanese. The result of three days' fighting proved indecisive and the besiegers
THE JAPANESE INVASION OF KOREA—1592.

The Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 caused a despairing struggle for the besieged. They fought with greater desperation, the battle raging by day and night. The Koreans, however, husbanding their arrows and firing only at a sure mark, set great piles of wood around the walls and these were set on fire whenever the enemy attempted to scale the walls. Women and children rained down firebrands upon them, and all within the walls fought with a desperation born of despair. At last the foe made one desperate attempt to scale the walls, and were repulsed with such terrible slaughter, that the Koreans, following it up with a rapid sally outside the walls, put the forces of Kuroda to flight, and the old town was not again molested.

Thus matters stood in the Autumn of 1592. The King of Korea a refugee on the farthest boundary of his realm, ready on the first move of the invaders out of Pyong Yang to the West, to leave his country, possibly forever, and to cast himself in humble entreaty at the foot of the Dragon Table; the head of the advancing host at Pyong Yang impatiently awaiting the order to push on and finish the work of subjugation and cross into China; Hideie at Siulan anxiously watching the volunteer developments in the south; Yi Soon Sin sweeping the Japanese off Korean waters; China already on the way to aid Korea with men and treasure.

Korea had naturally turned to China for aid from the very first, and, in answer to her appeals, on the 8th of the Sixth Moon, 1592, an Envoy arrived to investigate. He found the King on the eve of leaving Pyong Yang. Hastening back, he secured by his report the speedy dispatch of soldiers, first 6,500 men with 20,000 Yang of silver which were followed by 7,000 more men the next month—the Seventh Moon. On the 26th of the Ninth Moon the Chinese made an attempt to negotiate a peace with Konishi; an Imperial Ambassador named Yan Kyông arrived and on that date met Konishi, Taïrano, Yoshitoshi and Genesho in conference. The only result of this was a truce of fifty days, during which both sides agreed to suspend hostilities about Pyong Yang. The Japanese did not again see Yan Kyông until the 6th of the Eleventh Moon, when he returned with the fiat of Peking, which was as follows.

1.—The unconditional surrender of all cities and territories captured.
2.—The return of the two royal princes in the hands of Kato.
3.—The complete evacuation of the Peninsula.

Konishi laughed at the terms.

While in Pyong Yang, Yan Kyông made a sly attempt to discover the strength of the Japanese forces. He agreed to give a hat to every Japanese soldier, and distributed some 13,600 pieces of head gear; it seems hardly possible that Konishi was not sharp enough to see through the trick and successfully hood-wink the wily diplomat.

The last Moon of 1592 brought the main body of the Army of Recovery, sent by China to the relief of Korea. It consisted of 44,000 veteran soldiers commanded by Yi Yōsong, an able and experienced General, and a match in hard fighting for any Commander on the Japanese side, though in rapid strategy they outwitted him every time. The Chinese already rendezvoused at We Chu swelled Yi's command to 60,000 men, which was further augmented by an innumerable host of Koreans, conspicuous among whom were a large body of Buddhist priests; this force was led by the only commander among the native soldiery who did anything worthy of mention during the operations around Pyong Yang.

The Allies arrived in the region of Pyong Yang on the 6th of the First Moon 1593 and went into Camp for two days. The scene of the battle was a great plain, across which the traveller looks to-day with no more terrible vision to greet his eyes than fertile gardens and rice fields, and peaceful hamlets meeting the vision until it is intercepted by
the hills beyond. On the morning of the 8th the Allies marched across this plain in three columns making a simultaneous attack upon the three great gates looking out upon this plain,—the Chil Sung Mun, the Pongyang Mun and the Hamku Mun. The fight along the walls was desperate and the losses on both sides severe, the slaughter among the Allied Korean and Chinese forces being something terrible. To add to the terror of the scene a conflagration soon broke out within the walls and fanned by a high breeze raged behind and about the Japanese. This spurred the Chinese to redoubled efforts and a terrible contest ensued about the three gates; but Konishi's veterans fought with a ferocity that not only drove the Chinese bravely back but threw them into a rout; in a moment they would have been in full flight, they were already turning when the brave Yi Yüsong appearing on the scene struck dead the foremost of the retreating soldiers and inspiring his men with new courage turned them again upon the walls and gates. At last the superior numbers of the Chinese triumphed and an entrance was effected first at the Hamku Mun, and almost immediately afterward at the other two gates. But the Japanese had provided for this, and from the walls they retreated behind a line of barricades from which they poured a steady fire of bullets and arrows into the surging unprotected masses of the Allies. The slaughter was terrible, for the Chinese were like rats in a pit, and after a few brief moments during which his men fell by hundreds Yi ordered a retreat and the Allies, pouring out of the city in a disordered rout, left P'yōng Yang still in the hands of Konishi. A large force of Koreans were set to watch the Japanese, while the Chinese sought rest, and night settled down on one of the bloodiest and hardest fought battles of the invasion.

But the Japanese, brave soldiers though they were, were too overwhelmingly outnumbered to risk another such battle, and that night while the brave Chinese were sleeping and the Korean watchers were also sleeping, they silently withdrew from the city and commenced the retreat to the south. On no occasion did Konishi's good judgment appear to better advantage than on this occasion. His own forces were by no means numerous, though they had been considerably augmented by mercenary Koreans who enrolled themselves under the Japanese ensigns, and did some fighting when no other alternative was left them. But they could not be depended upon, and Sŏul failing to reinforce him, he naturally, fell back to where superior numbers would not prove such an insurmountable difficulty. The march southward was a rapid one, and revealed to Konishi's mind the seriousness of the situation which had caused such anxiety at Sŏul. He was everywhere beset by bands of Korean volunteers, who, too cunning to risk an open engagement with him, carried on a guerrilla warfare which was both exasperating and disastrous. He reached Sŏul in safety and was soon followed by Kato, who had made rapid marches from the Ham Kyōng Province back to Sŏul; by the 28th of the First Moon all the Japanese north of Sŏul were rendezvoused at the capital.

The remaining history of the invasion is soon told. Throughout the winter of 1592-93 the volunteer uprising among the Koreans had gradually grown in proportions, until it overshadowed everything else. They swarmed in every direction, attacking the Japanese with a persistence that tended annihilation. Gradually the troops in the outgarrisons in the provinces of Chul, Kyōng-sang, Kangwun and Chung Chung had to fall back on the central road up the Peninsula leading to Sŏul, which was held by the Japanese in strong force. Yi Yūsong discovered the flight of Konishi the next day and hastily gathering his forces started in pursuit; but though marching day and night he was unable to overtake the Japanese, and at last reaching
Pachu, 28 miles north of Soul, went into camp. From here continual skirmishing and small engagements took place chiefly with foraging parties of the Japanese. Having no definite information of the true state of affairs among the Japanese the Chinese were led into a blunder which showed that they by no means despised the military prowess of their 'dwarf' foes. Hearing that Kato was marching south from Ham Kyŏng, Yi supposed his objective was Pyŏng Yang, which would place the Allies between two fires. So, hastily gathering his forces, he started at a run for the northern capital and did not discover how groundless his fears were until he reached Whangchu, 155 miles north of Soul. Here he learned that Kato was already safe in the Capital.

Thus two months wore away, both sides too cautious to risk a decisive battle with each other. At last word came to the Chinese that the Japanese would listen to terms, if the Allies had any to propose; and the former Imperial Envoy Yan Kyŏng was called upon to conduct the negotiations. He reached the little town of Yougsan four miles out from Soul, on the banks of the Han River, in the Fourth moon, and there met a council of Japanese Generals, among them Kato and Konishi. He repeated his demands made at Pyŏng Yang, and the Japanese agreed to evacuate Soul on the 19th of that month, the Chinese not to leave Sungdo until that date.

On the 19th of the fourth moon the march south from Soul began, but the Japanese had used the time of the truce, in making terrible reprisals on the Koreans. The ground outside the South Gate became like a great slaughter-pit where thousands of the natives were executed. The city was set on fire and a good portion of it reduced to ashes. On the 20th, Ti entered Soul, and discovering this immediately ordered 1,000 men under his younger brother to start in pursuit. They did go a couple of days' march, when their valiant commander countermarched back to Soul excusing himself from the pursuit on the ground of a severe cold from which he declared he was suffering.

The march of the Japanese south was a holiday parade, with feasting, dancing and pleasure in every camp. Even the Korean Volunteers, who had swarmed about the garrisons in the South and fought with a spirit that sought rather to kill off the foe, than to win battles, suspended their wicked violence. We hear nothing of prisoners being taken by these volunteers, it is doubtful if they ever took any, while the dead, Japanese were counted with the greed of a miser counting his gold.

The Japanese reached the south end of the peninsula safely and massed their forces there, raising a line of fortified camps embracing a number of important magistracies. These were garrisoned with sufficient strength to hold the position.

The Koreans concluded to take matters into their own hands, and rallying in great force at the city of Chinchu made preparations to sweep the Japanese into the Southern Sea. But they, without waiting to be attacked, marched 30,000 strong against the natives and invested the city on the 22nd of the fifth moon. For seven days, from the 22nd to the 29th, the siege lasted, the fighting continuing day and night. At last the Japanese were compelled to withdraw, but not until they had inflicted losses which the Koreans estimated at 70,000 men.

Things continued thus until the eighth moon, 1593, when the final treaty of this first invasion was negotiated and the greater part of the Chinese forces were ordered home.

The return of His Majesty Sunyo to the Soul was a slow and sad procession. Pyŏng Yang fell into the hands of the Allies on the 9th of the first moon: on the 17th the king left his frontier refuge Wechu, and came as far as Sook Chun, 20 miles from Pyŏngyang. Here he remained until the third moon. His experiences at Pyŏng-
Yang on his last visit led him to give that city a wide berth, and passing around it and its turbulent populace, he came on to the city of Whangehu, where he remained until after the seventh moon, and it was not until the 4th of the 10th moon, 1593, after an absence of eighteen months that he returned to Soul, the queen remaining at Haiehu. He found a wrecked city and a decimated populace. His own palace had been destroyed by fire; the 'old' palace, (now the royal residence and one of the oldest palaces in Soul) had been used as barracks and stables and was in too filthy a condition for habitation, so temporary quarters were fixed up for him in the Palaces of the Five Princes, known as O Kung Po, and at present the property, or at least a portion of it, of the M. L. Mission. Here His Majesty remained until 1,610, seventeen years, which time was occupied in the restoration of his own palace, situated near the Great East Gate, and known among foreigners as 'the old palace.'

The condition of the populace of Soul was deplorable. Famine soon broke out and nearly completed the work of annihilation begun by the Japanese. His Majesty did all he could to alleviate the distress, opening five food dispensaries and freely distributing the royal stores to his starving people.

The Japanese remained at the south end of the peninsula safe behind their fortified entrenchments. There were a few small engagements at different times but nothing equal to Chin Chu. Ten Thousand Chinese were watching them, and remained in a position to block any attempt to march north again until the Eighth Moon of 1591, when the peninsula was reported as without Chinese defenders. The Japanese never completely evacuated Korea.

Thus ended for a time one of the bloodiest wars in history. During the two years and more the loss of life was frightful; nothing remains upon which to base a reliable estimate, but the War Monument at Kioto, and the accounts of such battles as Kyung chu, Choung chu, Haing chu, the Ien Chiu River, Pjung Yang, Yenan, the massacre at Soul, U-sun and Chin chu, and fifty other engagements would make a million lives a conservative estimate.

We leave it here. The end was not yet. Soon the fires of the Second Invasion would be lit and the land again drenched in blood. But for an interval Korea is to enjoy a respite of peace, during which her unhappy people may bewail their desolate homes, the famished and perishing living, and an apparently blank and hopeless future.

Geo. H. Jones.