

must be practical experience. The trying out of the plans will eliminate the impractical and visionary and determine what is useful and good. At last the best features of all plans may be brought together and a really practical system of religious teaching in the public schools can be established.

## KOREAN LITERATURE.

BY J. S. GALE.

SOME of the greatest thoughts that dominate Korean Literature have come from the misty ages of the past. How long ago who can say? We are informed by credible historians that a mysterious being called Tan-goon, a *shin-in*, god-man or angel, descended from heaven and alighted on the top of the Ever White Mountains where he taught the people their first lessons in religion. The date given is contemporary with Yo of China, 2333 B. C.

Whoever he may have been, or whatever he may have taught, must remain a mystery, but echoes of this strange being are heard all down through the ages. Many writers have recorded the story of Tan-goon. The opening pages of the *Tong-gook Tong gam*, the greatest history of the early kingdoms of Korea, written about 1450 A. D., tell of his doings. The earliest contribution to Korean thought seems to have come from him, reminding the world that God lives, that he had a son, and that righteousness should rule in the earth.

A temple erected in his honor in Pyengyang, in 1429, still stands to-day. A huge altar, also, on the top of Mari Mountain not far from Chemulpo, date unknown, tells of his greatness in the distant past. Poets and historians, Koreans and Chinese, have sung his praises.

A second set of thoughts entered Korea more than a thousand years later, in 1122 B. C. This is indeed the most noted period in the history of the Far East as far as religion is concerned. Kings Moon and Moo of China came to the throne, "at the bidding of God," so reads the record. Moon had a brother called Choo-kong, who was a great prophet and teacher of righteousness. This group usurped the throne and inaugurated an era of justice, but Keui-ja, one of their associates, refused to swear allegiance, claiming that he would have to stand by the old king, good or bad. In this act he set the pace for all loyal ministers of East Asia who swear to serve only one master till death. Knowing Keui-ja's desire, the

King gave him Korea, or the East Kingdom, as his portion, and hither this great minister came.

He left an indelible impress upon the hearts of this people and all their future history.

In Pyengyang there was a temple erected to his worship in 1325 A. D. that still stands. A stone recording his life and acts was set up just before it, but was destroyed in the Japanese War of 1592. A new stone was erected in the last year of Shakespeare's life, and on it I find the following sentences:

"Keui-ja came, and his teaching was to us what the teaching of Pok-heui-si was to ancient China. What was this again but the plan and purpose of God?

"God's not permitting Keui-ja to be killed," (at the fall of the Eun Kingdom) "was because He reserved him to preach religion to us, and to bring our people under the laws of civilization. Even though Keui-ja had desired death at that time he could not have found it; and even though King Moon had determined not to send him to Korea he could not have helped it."

An appreciation of the over-ruling sovereignty of God is something as indelibly impressed on the Korean mind as it is on that of the Scotch Presbyterian. It came in with the pre-Confucian teachings of the East, and has had a mighty influence on the poets and thinkers of the peninsula ever since.

Following this for long centuries there is a blank. What Korea was busying herself about when Confucius and Buddha lived, no one can say. Page after page of time goes by all white and unrecorded.

About 220 B. C. we hear of the landing of bands of Chinamen, who had made their escape from the arduous labors of the Great Wall, and come to Korea to set up a kingdom on the east side of the peninsula, which they called Chin Han. Other kingdoms later came into being, called Ma Han and Pyun Han, three Hans in all, and so time dragged uneventfully on till the Christian era.

Fifty eight years before it, just about the time when Cæsar was attempting his conquest of Britain, the Kingdom of Silla in the south-east corner of the Korean peninsula was established. A few years later one called Ko-ku-ryu was likewise set up in the north, and another in the south-west called Paik-je.

Here we had three kingdoms occupying the peninsula when the greatest event in its history took place, namely the incoming of Buddhism. In 372 A. D. it entered the north kingdom.

The wonderful story of the Buddha and his upward pilgrimage from a world of sorrow and sin to one of eternal bliss, conquered

all hearts. The Koreans took to it as a thirsty man to water, and while they did not cast aside the great thoughts passed on to them by Tan-goon and Keui-ja, Buddha ruled supreme.

We are told that black men from India came preaching this religion. This was Korea's first introduction to alien races, a grateful and appreciated introduction. Their visits continued all the way from 400 to 1400 A. D., as Chi-jong, one of the most noteworthy of the men from beyond the Himalayas, died in 1363.

The most interesting monument in existence to-day bearing witness to this fact, is the cave-temple situated near the old capital of Silla, Kyung-joo. The writer once crossed the hill to pay it a visit. As he reached the highest point of the pass, away to the east lay the Sea of Japan, with the mottled hummocks of smaller ridges lying between him and the shore. A short distance down the hill he came to the cave-temple. Entering by a narrow way he found himself in a large hall with the Buddha seated in the middle and many figures in bas-relief on the walls about. One was Kwannon. Others were stately and graceful women quite unlike any types seen in the peninsula or China; others again, seemed to represent these far-off men of India—who wear strange half Shylock faces, types of the visitors, doubtless, who came preaching the good news of the Buddha 1500 years ago.

The present Prime Minister and former Governor General of Chosen, had plaster casts made of them and placed in the museum of Seoul in 1915.

Buddhism besides being a religious cult, introduced Korea to the outside world and brought in its train arts and industries that made of this people a great and highly enlightened nation.

With the middle of the seventh century we find Korea disturbed by internal troubles. The three kingdoms were fighting against each other with no likelihood of victory for any of them. The great Tangs were on the throne of China and Korea had already come to acknowledge them as the suzerain state.

A young prince of Silla, by name Kim Yoo-sin, disturbed by the unsettled condition of his native land, went to the hills to pray about it. We are told in the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (written in 1145 A. D.) that while he fasted and prayed to God and the Buddha, an angel came to him and told him what to do. He was to seek help of the Tangs. Thither he went, to the great capital Mak-yang, where his mission was accepted and an army sent to take Silla's part.

The result was that in 668 A. D. all the country was made

subject to Silla and placed under the suzerainty of the Middle Kingdom.

An old pagoda erected at that time, commemorating the event, stands near the town of Kong-joo. Its long inscription down the face is one of the early literary remains extant.

From 700 to 900 A. D. there are no books to mark the progress of events, and yet it was evidently a period of great literary activity. Many monumental remains still stand that tell of master Buddhists who lived through these two centuries. Some of these stones are eight feet high and four feet wide and have as many as two thousand characters inscribed on them, so that they constitute a careful and concise biography.

Here are extracts from one erected in 916 A. D.

"A Life of the Teacher of two Kings of Silla, called by the State Master Nang-kong. . . .

"His religious name was Haing-juk, Walking in Silence. . . .

"His mother's name was Sul. In a dream of the night she met a priest who said to her, 'From a past existence I have longed to be your son.'

"Even after waking she was still moved by the wonder she had seen which she told to her husband. Immediately she put away all flesh foods and cherished with the utmost reverence the object of her conception, and so on the thirtieth day of the twelfth moon of the sixth year of T'ai-wha (832 A. D.) her child was born.

"His appearance and general behavior differed from that of ordinary mortals, for from the days of his childhood he played with delight at the service of the Buddha. He would gather together sand and make pagodas; and bring spices and make perfume. From his earliest years he loved to seek out his teacher and study before him, forgetting all about eating and sleeping. When he had attained to a thoughtful age he loved to choose great subjects and write essays thereon. When once his faith was established in the golden words of the Buddha, his thoughts left the dusty world and he said to his father, 'I would like to give myself up to religion and make some return to my parents for all the kindness they have shown me.' The father, recalling the fact that he had been a priest in a former existence, realized that his dreams had come true. He offered no objection, but gave a loving consent. So he cut his hair, dyed his clothes, dressed in black and went forth to the hardships and labors of the religious life. He went here and there in his search for the 'sea of knowledge' . . . finding among the 'scattered flowers' beautiful thought and pearls of the faith.

"His teacher said to his other pupils, 'Prince Sak-ka-mo-ni was most earnest in his search for truth, and An-ja loved best of all to learn from the Master (Confucius). I used to take these things as mere sayings but now I have found a man who combines both. Blue-eyed and red-bearded priests of whatever excellence cannot compare with him. (Men of India?)

"In the ninth year of Tai-chong (855 A. D.) at the Kwan-tai Altar, in the Pok-chun Monastery, he received his confirmation orders, and so from that time on with his pilgrim bag and staff, he went to live in the grass hut of the religionist. His love for the faith was very great, and he longed to enter into the hidden recesses, where he might attain the desires of the heart."

"(He visited the capital of China) and on the birthday of the Emperor was received in audience. His Majesty's chief desire was to be a blessing to the state and to advance the deep things of religion.

"He asked of the Master, 'What is your purpose in coming thus across the Great Sea?'

"The Master replied, 'Your humble servant has been so blessed as to see the capital of this great empire, and to hear religion spoken favorably of within its precincts. To-day I bathe in the boundless favor of this holy of holies. My desire is to follow in the footsteps of the Sages, . . . bring greater light to my people, and leave the mark of the Buddha on the hearts of my fellow countrymen.'

"The Emperor, delighted with what he said, loved him dearly and showered rich favors upon him."

. . . . .

"In the seventh moon of autumn the Master, longing for the beauty of nature, retired to his temple in Mam-san. Here he lived in touch with the Four Great Hill Peaks, and near the South Seas. The waters of the streams that rushed by were like the rivers of the Golden Valley, the hill peaks, too, fought battles for supremacy like the Chaga peaks of China, a worthy place for a great master of religion to dwell in.

"In the second moon of the following year (916 A. D.) he realized that he was unwell and that sickness had overtaken him. On the twelfth day he arose early in the morning and said to his disciples, 'Life has its appointed limits, I am about to die. Forget not the truth, be diligent in its practice, I pray you, be diligent.'

"He sat as the Buddha, with his feet crossed on the couch, and so passed away. His age was eighty-five. For sixty-one years he had been a learner of the truth.

"At his death the clouds gathered dark upon the mountains and the thunder rolled. The people beneath the hill looked up and saw halos of glory while the colors of the rainbow filled the upper air. In the midst of it they saw something that ascended like a golden shaft.

"The Master's will had been submissive and so God had given him something better than a flowery pavilion to shelter him; and because he was a master of the Law, a spiritual coffin bore him into the heights. His disciples were left broken-hearted as though they had lost their all."

.....  
 "For years he had been a distinguished guest of the state, serving two kings and two courts.... He made the royal house to stand secure so that demon enemies came forth and bowed submission.... His departure from earth was like the fairy's ascent to the heights of heaven.... There was no limit to his wisdom and his spiritual insight was most perfect."

.....  
 "His disciples made request that a stone be erected to his memory and so His Majesty undertook the grateful task and prepared this memorial to do him honor. He gave him a special name, calling him Nang-kong, *Light of the Heavens*, and his pagoda, Paik-wul Soo-oon, *White Moon amid the Clouds*.

"A wise and gifted teacher he,  
 Born in Silla by the sea.  
 Bright as sun and moon are bright,  
 Great as space and void are free...."

"Written by his disciple, Member of the Hallim, Secretary of War, etc. Ch'oi In-yun. (916 A. D.)"

This is an example of the kind of men and thoughts that ruled Korea in the earliest days of her literature.

While the priest Hang-kong lived there lived also a man who is called the father of Korean literature, Ch'oi Ch'i-wun (858-951 A. D.) whose collected works are the earliest productions we have. What did he write about? On examination we find congratulations to the Emperor, to the King, to special friends; prayers to the Buddha; Taoist sacrificial memorials; much about nature, home life etc.

Here are a few samples:

*The Tides.*

" Like a rushing storm of snow or driving sleet, on you come,

a thousand rollers from the deep, thou tide. Over the track so deeply worn again you come and go. As I see how you never fail to keep the appointed time, I am ashamed to think how wasteful my days have been, and how I spend in idle dissipation the precious hours.

"Your impact on the shore is like reverberating thunder, or as if the cloud-topped hills were falling. When I behold your speed I think of Chong-kak and his wish to ride the winds; and when I see your all-prevailing majesty I think of the sleeping dragon that has awakened."

*The Swallow.*

"She goes with the fading summer and comes with returning spring, faithful and true is she, regular as the warm breezes or the chilly rains of autumn. We are old friends, she and I. You know that I readily consent to your occupying a place in my spacious home, but you have more than once soiled the painted rafters, are you not ashamed? You have left hawks and uncanny birds far off in the islands of the sea, and have come to join your friends, the herons and ibis of the streams and sunny shallows. Your rank is equal to that of the gold finch I should think, but when it comes to bringing finger-rings in your bill as gifts to your master you fail me."

*The Sea-Gull.*

"So free are you to ride the running white-caps of the sea rising and falling with the rolling waters. When you lightly shake your feathery skirts and mount aloft you are indeed the fairy of the deep. Up you soar and down you sweep serenely free. No taint have you of man or of the dusty world. Your practised flight must have been learned in the abodes of the genii. Enticements of the rice and millet fields have no power to woo you, but the spirit of the winds and moon are your delight. I think of Chang-ja who dreamed of the fairy butterfly. Surely I too dream as I behold you."

*Tea.*

"To-day a gift of tea comes to me from the general of the forces by the hand of one of his trusty aides. Very many thanks. Tea was first grown in Ch'ok and brought to great excellence of cultivation. It was one of the rareties in the garden of the Soo Kingdom (589-618). The practice of picking the leaves began then, and its clear and grateful flavors from that time were known. Its

especially fine qualities are manifest when its delicate leaves are steeped in a golden kettle. The fragrance of its breath ascends from the white goblets into which it is poured. If it were not to the quiet abode of the genii that I am invited to make my respectful obeisance, or to those high angels whose wings have grown, how could ever such a gift of the gods come to a common *literatorus* like me? I need not a sight of the plum forest to quench my thirst, nor any day-lilies to drive away my care. Very many thanks and much grateful appreciation.

*By Night.*

*Ch'oi Ch'ung* (986-1068 A. D.).

“The light I saw when I awoke,  
Was from the torch that has no smoke.  
The hill whose shade came through the wall,  
Has paid an unembodied call.  
The music of the pine tree's wings  
Comes from a harp that has no strings.  
I saw and heard, the sight and song,  
But cannot pass its joys along.”

Kim Poo-sik (1075-1151 A. D.) is the earliest historian of Korea. He it is who wrote the *Sam-gook Sa* or *History of the Three Kingdoms*, one of the most highly prized books to-day.

Two selections from his pen are given herewith that furnish the reader with a slight glimpse of the far-off world of the days of William the Conqueror. Kim Poo-sik was not only a noted *literatorus* but a great general. He was a man of immense height who quite overawed the world by his commanding stature.

*The King's Prayer to the Buddha.*

(Written by Kim Poo-sik.)

“This is my prayer: May the indescribable blessing of the Buddha, and his love that is beyond tongue to tell, come upon these forsaken souls in Hades, so that they may awaken from the misery of their lot. May their resentful voices be heard no more on earth, but may they enter the regions of eternal quiet. If this burden be lifted from me I shall be blessed indeed, and this distressing sickness will give place to joy. May the nation be blessed likewise and a great festival of the Buddha result.”

*The Dumb Cock.*

“The closing of the year speeds on. Long nights and shorter days they weary me. It is not on account of lack of candle light



that I do not read, but because I'm ill and my soul is distressed. I toss about for sleep that fails to come. A hundred thoughts are tangled in my brain. The rooster bird sits silent on his perch. I wait. Sooner or later he will surely flap his wings and crow. I toss the quilts aside and sit me up, and through the window chink come rays of light. I fling the door wide out and look abroad, and there off to the west the night-stars shine. I call my boy, 'Wake up. What ails that cock that he does not crow? Is he dead, or does he live? Has some one served him up for fare, or has some weasel bandit done him ill? Why are his eyes tight shut and head bent low, with not a sound forthcoming from his bill?'

"This is the cock-crow hour and yet he sleeps. I ask 'Are you not breaking God's most primal law? The dog who fails to see the thief and bark; the cat who fails to chase the rat, deserve the direst punishment. Yet, death itself would not be too severe.' Still, Sages have a word to say: Love forbids that one should kill. I am moved to let you live. Be warned, however, and show repentance."

Other writers follow, the best of all being Yi Koo-bo (1168-1241 A.D.). He was not a Buddhist but a Confucianist, and yet all through his writings is to be found a note of respect for the sincere religion of the Buddha.

He was an original character with a lively imagination, and a gift of expression possessed by no succeeding writer.

Here are a few samples of what he wrote:

### *The Body.*

"Thou Creator of all visible things art hidden away in the shadows invisible. Who can say what Thou art like? Thou it is who hast given me my body, but who is it that puts sickness upon me? The Sage is a master to rule and make use of things, and never was intended to be a slave; but for me I am the servant of the conditions that are about me. I cannot even move or stand as I would wish. I have been created by Thee, and now have come to this place of weariness and helplessness. My body, as composed of the Four Elements was not always here, where has it come from? Like a floating cloud it appears for a moment and then vanishes away. Whither it tends I know not. As I look into the mists and darkness of it, all I can say is, it is vanity. Why didst Thou bring me forth into being to make me old and compel me to die? Here I am ushered in among eternal laws and compelled to make the best of it. Nothing remains for me but to accept and to be jostled by

them as they please. Alas, Thou Creator, what concern can my little affairs have for Thee?"

*On Flies.*

"I have ever hated the way in which the fly continually annoys and bothers people. The thing that I dislike most of all is to have him sit on the rims of my ears and settle squabbles with his neighbor. When I am ill and see him about me, I am afflicted with a double illness over and above my original complaint. In seeing the multitude of his breed swarming about, I cannot but make my complaint to God.

*A Prayer to God offered by the King  
and Minister of Korea, asking for help  
against an invasion of the Kitan Tartars.*

BY YI KYOO-BO.

"We, the King and Officers of the State, having burned incense, bathed and done the necessary acts of purification for soul and body, bow our heads in pain and distress to make our prayer to God and the angels of heaven. We know there is no partiality shown in the matter of dispensing blessing and misfortune, and that it depends on man himself. Because of our evil ways God has brought death and war upon our state by an invasion of the Tartars, who have, without cause, encroached upon our territory, devastated the outlying lands and murdered our people. More and more are they encircling us till now the very capital itself is threatened. Like tigers are they after flesh, so that those ravished and destroyed by them cover the roadways. In vain are all our thoughts of ways and means to defend ourselves, and we do not know what to do to meet the urgency of the situation. All we can do is to clasp our bowing knees, look helplessly up and sigh.

"These Tartars are our debtors really, and have received many favors from us, and heretofore we have never had any cause to dislike them. Of a sudden has their fierce dread flood broken in upon us. This cannot be by accident but must, we know, be due wholly to our sins. But the past is the past, and our desire it to do right from now on. Grant that we may not sin. Thus it is that we ask our lives from God. If Thou, God, dost not wholly intend to destroy our nation, wilt Thou not in the end have mercy? This will be to us a lesson and so I write out this prayer as we make our promise to Thee. Be pleased, oh God, to look upon us."

*To his Portrait and the Artist.*

"'Tis God who gave this body that I wear,  
 The artist's hand sends me along through space.  
 Old as I am I live again in you,  
 I love to have you for companion dear.  
 He took me as I was, an old dry tree,  
 And sitting down reformed and pictured me.  
 I find it is my likeness true to life,  
 And yet my ills have all been spelled away.  
 What power against my deep defects had he  
 That thus he paints me sound, without a flaw?  
 Sometimes a handsome, stately, gifted lord  
 Has but a beast's heart underneath his chin;  
 Sometimes a cluttered most ill-favored waif  
 Is gifted high above his fellow-man.  
 I am so glad there's nothing on my head,  
 For rank and office I sincerely loathe.  
 You have put thought and sense into my eye,  
 And not the dust-begrimèd look I wear.  
 My hair and beard are lesser white as well;  
 I'm not so old as I had thought to be.  
 By nature I am given o'er much to drink,  
 And yet my hand is free, no glass is seen.  
 I doubt you wish to point me to the law,  
 That I a mad old drunkard may not be.  
 You write a verse as well, which verse I claim  
 Is equal to the matchless picture drawn."

*The Angel's Letter.*

"On a certain month and a certain day a minister in the Palace of God sent a golden messenger to earth with a letter to a certain Yi Kyoo-bo of Korea. It read: 'To His Excellency who dwells amid the noise and confusion of the mortal world, with all its discomforts. We bow and ask the state of your honored health. We think of you and long for you as no words can express, for we too serve on the high hand of God and await His commands. You, our exalted teacher, were formerly a literary attendant of the Almighty, took his commands and recorded them, so that when spring came it was you who dispensed the soft and balmy airs, that brought forth the buds and leaves. In winter too, you scattered frost and wind, and sternly put to death the glory of the summer. Sometimes you sent wild thunder, wind and rain, sleet and snow, clouds and mist. All the things that God commanded for the earth were written by your hand. Not a jot did you fail to fulfil his service, so that God was pleased and thought of how he might reward you.

He asked a way of us and we said in reply, 'Let him lay down for a little the office of secretary of heaven and go as a great scholar among men, to wait in the presence of a mortal king and serve as his literary guide. Let him be in the palace halls of mankind, share in the government of men, and make the world bright and happy by his presence. Let his name be sounded abroad and known throughout the world, and, after that, bid him back to heaven to take his place among the angels. We think that in so doing You will fitly reward his many faithful services.'

"God was pleased at this and gave immediate commands that it be carried out. He showered upon you unheard-of gifts and graces, and clothed you with the commanding presence of the Superior Man, so that you might have a hundred chariots in your train, and ten thousand horses to follow after. He sent you forth and had you born into the earth in that nation that first catches the light of the morning as it rises from the Poosang Mountains. Now, several years have passed, and we have not heard of your special rank, or of your having won a name. Nothing startling has been done by you, and no great book written. Not a sound has reached the ears of God. We were anxious about this and so were about to send a messenger to find out, when, unexpectedly, there came one from earth to us of whom we made inquiry.

"He replied, 'The man called Kyoo-bo is in greatest straits, most far removed from any sort of honor. He is given over to drink and madness; goes here and there about the hills and by the graves writing verses; but no seal of state hangs from his belt, nor wreath adorns his brow. He is like a dragon that has lost its pool, or a dog in the house of mourning; an ill-fated lonely literatus, he, and yet all from the highest to the lowest know his name. Whether it be that he is so extravagant that he has not been used, or because they have not chosen him I do not know.'

"Before he had finished this, however, we gave a great start and struck our hands in wonder saying, 'His earth companions are evidently haters of the good, and jealous of the wise. We must take note.'

"Thus it was we wrote a memorial embodying what had been told and God regarded it as right. He has prepared a great lock and key for these offenders, and now meditates setting matters straight. Little by little your wings will unfold, and your footsteps will take their upward way toward the heights. Far will you enter into the halls of fame. To the Chamber of the Ministry, though not equal to heaven, you will proceed. How glorious your way

will be! Now indeed you will drink your fill of heart's best joy, and the splendor of its dusty way. We, friends of yours, who are in heaven, impatient wait your high return. The harp that ought to dispense sweet music has dust upon its strings, and sad, awaits your coming. Your halls are silent as they mourn your absence, longing once again to open wide their gates. God has made ready sweetmeats of red dew, and butter of the golden mists of morning on which He feeds His angel hosts so freely. Make haste to fulfil your office among men and come back to heaven. First, however, you must attain to greatness of name and merit, wealth and honor. What we urge upon you is, be diligent, be diligent. We bow with this and present our grateful honor."

This is a piece of imaginative work, unusual to say the least. It was evidently written as a protest against his own adverse fortunes from a political point of view.

Yi Kyoo-bo writes on a wide variety of subjects. He touches nature again and again. Here is a translation of one of his poems on the family life:

*On the Death of a Little Daughter.*

"My little girl with face like shining snow,  
 So bright and wise was never seen before.  
 At two she talked both sweet and clear,  
 Better than parrot's tongue was ever heard.  
 At three, retiring, bashful, timid, she  
 Kept modestly inside the outer gates.  
 This year she had been four  
 And learned her first wee lessons with the pen.  
 What shall I do, alas, since she is gone?  
 A flash of light she came and fled away,  
 A little fledging of the springtime, she;  
 My little pigeon of this troubled nest.  
 I know of God and so can calmly wait,  
 But what will help the mother's tears to dry?  
 I look out toward the distant fields,  
 The ears shoot forth upon the stalks of grain,  
 Yet wind and hail sometimes await unseen.  
 When once they strike the world has fallen full low.  
 'Tis God who gives us life;  
 'Tis God who takes our life away.  
 How can both death and life continue so?  
 These changes seem like deathly phantoms drear.  
 We hang on turnings of the wheel of fate,  
 No answer comes, we are just what we are."

Here is one of his little quartettes that touches nature:

*The Cherry.*

“How wonderful God’s work!  
 So delicately mixed his sweet and bitter!  
 And yet your beautiful rounded shape  
 And rosy hue invite the robber bird.”

As time passes on other masters follow, one Yi Che-hyun, specially noted. He lacks the versatility of Yi Kyoo-bo but in power of expression even surpasses him.

He was sent in the year 1314 as a young envoy to China to the court of the Mongol emperors. A memorial was presented about that time that Korea be made a province of China proper. Yi Che-hyun, startled at this, wrote so powerful and persuasive a rejoinder that the emperor cancelled the memorial and let Korea stand.

He traveled much in China, and so I give one of the selections that he wrote there:

*The Whangho River.*

“Down comes the rolling Whangho from the west, with sources in the fabled peaks of Kol-yoon. The envoy of great Han built him a raft and went to see its fountain-head. From the heart of the hills it rushes forth, a thousand measures downward to the sea. He found it was the Milky Way that pours its torrents eastward and comes sweeping toward us. By nine great circles it outspans the earth even to the farthest limits of the eye.

“It is like a battle fierce between the Hans and Chos; the crash of ten thousand horse in an onset on the plain. Slantwise it comes rolling in big battalions, ever ceaseless. When it mounts and overflows the fields and meadows, people’s hearts forsake them from pale fear. By the opening gates of the mountains its way is cloven eastward. The fierce strokes of its blade cut a thundering pathway toward the sea.

“When I was young I played upon the bosom of the deep and wished to ride the fabled Moni. Now I would fain drink from the waters of this Western river. As fair they seem to me as the mystic lakes of dreamland that beckon to my thirsty soul. I would launch forth by boat from its sandy shallows. As I sit high and look upon it my soul and spirit are overwhelmed with awe. The fishy breezes kiss my startled gaze; great waves mount high in view like castled walls. The tall masts in the distance jostle the mountain tops. The sailor shouts his shrilly cry while sweat outlines his

tightened chin. Though the day darkens far he still must go before he lights upon the gentle village of the plain. I am not Maing Myung-si who set fire to his boats in order to settle accounts with the people of Chin; nor am I the man who threw his jewels into its boiling deep. Still, I like them, and my soul has longed to see this stately river. If the iron ox that stands upon the shore had wits to prompt his sleepy soul he would laugh at such as me and say, 'What brought you here through wind and weather and all the dangers of the way?'

Before Yi Che-hyun has passed away from the world there was born into Korea's circle of literati a most famous man to be, called Yi Saik who dates from 1328 to 1396 A. D. He is regarded as the greatest of Korea's authors, and yet the writer must confess that his investigation of his works has not led to that conclusion. A most voluminous writer he is, his complete works, numbering some fifty volumes, cannot be bought for less than thirty dollars. The charm of best originality seems lacking. He is a great master of the laws of Confucian composition, and from that point of view his works are faultless.

Two short examples translated herewith give only the thought, the real power of his Chinese composition is not evident.

*Concerning Himself.*

"This form of mine is small and poorly built, so passers think me but a mere hunchback. My eyes defective are, and ears, too dull to hear. When some one speaks I look around to see who it is, and act much like a frightened deer that haunts the busy mart.

"Even though some one were found to be my friend, he soon would change his mind and cast me off. Though I should show mine inner heart and soul to prove I was a grateful man, he'd run the faster. So my friendships end. Although my face may shine and lips speak sweetest things, to voice my heart, I still would be the northern cart that finds itself within the southern kingdom. Who is there then to fit my arrow-head or wing my shaft for me? Who comfort lends or listens to my woe?

"Away into unfathomed depths have gone the friends once loved and trusted, like trees that hide within the evening mist. If I regard myself I am as lonely as a single lock of hair upon a bullock's back. Whose teeth will ever part to speak his grateful word in my behalf? And yet just wherein have I sinned, or how departed from the rightful way? My wish and my desire stand

firm toward the truth. Where have my deeds been sordid, low or mixed with cunning? I am a straight and honest man, why then this doubt and disregard of me? My wish is one to teach all men the way. Why is my learning held of no account? In study my desire is full attainment. Where are the flaws? What have I failed to do? I hold the plummet line of rectitude.

"My failure, faults, and lack of round success are due to the one wish I had that good would rule. I may have failed, how far I cannot know, yet why expect success from him who's but a beast, whose name is counted over on the finger-tips, as though he were a bandit chief?

"Faults lie with you, my critics, you must change. God who sees full well and knows me he will count me clear. The law required, with all its feet and inches I have kept. No matter who, if he confess his faults, his past is buried evermore. To say I'm right and good, what joy is that? To jeer and treat me with contempt what care? Let me but so conduct myself that I be not an agent of the dark. To keep God's law this be my all in all."

#### *Japan and the Japanese.*

(Written on the departure of Chung Mong-joo as special envoy, 1377 A. D.)

"There is a king who dwells off toward the east, proud in his own esteem. He claims the belt he wears is righteousness, his robe the kindest sheen. Stern his appearance but gentle is his speech. How wags the world he holds his even poise, strong to endure. He recks not of this little life, and death he counts an honor. Not even Pook-goong could stand a match to him. His land recalls the warlike states of Choo. Fearful he is enough to scare one's locks straight stiff, or make one's soul jump from his skin. Be it distress that overtakes, he will accept no pity from another. A single look askance and he takes vengeance on the same. He counts not father, brother, son, if they oppose his way; his wife and daughters he regards as slaves, not even dogs or swine are they. His thought is in a name. 'Tis better death than lose one's honor, and he who soils his office mars the state. He'd make his people a refined, steel-hardened race. Though they regard it thus why should we blame? What runs its fullest source is bound to change, and change within a morning. Then we shall see what gentle habits will possess his world.

"Alas, we Chosenese know not to change, their boats and carts go everywhere while I have never crossed the threshold of my door. Theirs is the Sunrise Kingdom linked to the fairy world. All things



that live and grow abound on every side. The sun that shines upon its level plains lights up its world with splendor. How comes it that the evil-hearted rise from such a land, and like mad dogs bound forth on all who pass? Their wicked name has gone throughout the earth and all the world dislikes them. The thoughtful, learned, and good, regard this eastern state with deep despair. The end will be a whole world roused to war. And then her fate? We two stand side by side. Let's think how China's states went down. Cho lost her monkey and the fell result enveloped all the forest. Now we enter upon friendly relations but as we have no heart in it they will be sure to fail. Deceit is all they spell. You, a spiritually enlightened man, are trusted with a great commission. Full powers have you in hand, go forth. Be careful of the food you have to eat and hold your imagination well in hand. Keep sound in body and see to your office with right diligence and care. I am unable to write all my heart would say. Thoughts unexpressed rise still within my soul."

The Korean viewed the Japanese in those days much as the Englishman viewed the Frenchman. Beneath his highly contemptuous manner, however, there was also a high regard. So it has been. So it is to-day. Koreans enjoy a safety of life and property as never before, have a door of opportunity open to them that they never could have erected themselves, and they give promise of not only forming an honorable part of the great Empire of Japan but of contributing something original to this illustrious nation.

Chung Mong-joo who went as envoy to Japan in 1377 A. D. is also regarded as one of Korea's foremost literary men. He is the model, too, of the faithful courtier like Keui-ja, for he refused in 1392 to swear allegiance to the new dynasty, and died a martyr. His blood marks are pointed out in all sincerity to-day on the stone bridge in Songdo where he fell. Perhaps the fact that he lived up to this golden rule of the Far East, *Serve only one Master*, makes his writings more valuable than they would otherwise be. He went several times to Nanking on messages from his king and was once shipwrecked on the way. He is regarded by both Chinese and Japanese as a great master of the pen.

*In Nanking.*

BY CHUNG MONG-JOO.

"I, Chung Mong-joo, in 1386, fourth moon, with my commission from my king was in Nanking in the Assembly Hall. On the

twenty-third day the Emperor, while seated in the Gate of Divine Worship, sent a palace maid-in-waiting with a command saying that His Imperial Majesty desired me to come. I went and he talked with me face to face. What he said was most gracious. He ordered the yearly tribute paid by Korea, gold, silver, horses, cotton goods etc. to be entirely remitted. Greatly moved by this I wrote the accompanying song:

"A palace-maid at noon passed the command,  
 And had me called before the Dragon Throne.  
 To hear his gracious words it seemed to me that God was near;  
 Unbounded favors from his hand reach out beyond the sea.  
 I did not realize that in my joy my eyes were filmed with tears.  
 All I can say is May His Gracious Majesty live on forever.  
 From this day forth we thrive, land of the Han, how blessed.  
 We plough and dig our wells and sing our songs of peace."

*In Japan.*

BY CHUNG MONG-JOO.

(1377 A. D.)

"A thousand years have stood these islands of the deep,  
 By 'raft' I came and long I linger here;  
 Priests from the hills are asking for a song;  
 My host, too, sends me drink to cheer the day.  
 I am so glad we can be friend and kind to one another,  
 Because of race let's not be mean in mind or jealous.  
 Who then can say one is not happy on a foreign soil?  
 Daily we go by chair to see the plums in blossom."

"Raft" is a reference to the supposed means of conveyance by which Chang Gon went all the way to Rome and to the Milky Way.

In the next century, the fifteenth, a greater number of writers appear, historians, as well, like Su Ku-jung who wrote the *Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom*, the best history we have of the early days of his people. All through it he shows himself a man of level head who draws a definite line between mere superstition and facts for history to record.

And yet it was a day of superstition, for one of his contemporaries, Sung Hyun, writes endless stories like the following:

*Odd Story of a Priestess.*

"Minister Hong, once on a journey was overtaken by rain and went into a side way where was a house in which he found a young priestess about eighteen years of age. She was very pretty and possessed of great dignity. Hong asked her how it came that she

was here by herself in this lonely place, when she replied, "We are three of us, but my two companions have gone to town to obtain supplies."

"By flattery and persuasive words he promised, on condition that she yield herself to him, to make her his secondary wife on such and such a day of the year. The priestess all too readily believed him and awaited the day, but he never came, and the appointed season passed without sound of footfall or shadow of any kind. She fell ill and died.

"Later Hong was sent south as provincial governor of Kyung-sang Province. While there he one day saw a lizard run across his room and pass over his bed quilt. He ordered his secretary to throw it out, and not only did he so but he killed it as well. The next day a snake made its appearance and crawled stealthily into the room. The secretary had this killed also, but another snake came the day following.

"The governor began questioning the manner of this visitation and thought of the priestess. Still he trusted in his power and position to keep safe from all such trivial evils, so he had them killed as they came and gave orders accordingly. Every day snakes came, and as day followed day they grew larger in size and more evil in their manner, until at last great constrictors came pouring in upon him. He had his soldiers marshalled with swords and spears to ward them off and yet somehow they managed to break through. The soldiers slashed at them with their sabres; fires were built into which the snakes were flung and yet they increased in numbers and grew. In the hope of placating this enemy the governor caught one of them and put it in a jar letting it loose at night to crawl about as it pleased over his bed and returning it once more to its place when the day dawned. Wherever he went, about the town or on a journey, he had a man carry the snake along in the jar. Little by little the governor's mind weakened under the strain of it, his form grew thin and shortly afterward he died."

This unsavory thread of superstition runs all through the writings of East Asia and shares a large part in the mental fabric of the race to-day. The law of reason that governs modern thought is more and more making its influence felt through the newspaper and the modern book, and this old world is bound to disappear. The fairy part of it we would still see live; but the snakes and devils may well go.

As time passed on and the rumor became fixed that Koryu met

its fate in 1392 through the evil influence of the Buddha, Confucianism became more and more the state religion and the literati were the scribes and Pharisees who taught and explained its sacred books. While many of them were merely creatures of the letter, some again were devoutly religious and apparently most attractive characters. One named Yi I, or Yool-gok as he is familiarly called, lived from 1536 to 1584. His name to-day is recorded in the Confucian Temple No. 52 on the east side of the Master, and is revered by his people as no other.

*The Flowery Rock Pavilion.*

BY YI I.

"Autumn has come to my home in the woods, how many things I would like to write about. The long line of river goes by us on its way from heaven. The red leaves, tinted by the frost look upward toward the sun. The hills kiss the round circle of the lonely moon. The streamlets catch the breezes that come a thousand *li*. Why are the geese going north I wonder. Their voices are lost in the evening clouds."

*God's Way.*

BY YI I.

"God's way is difficult to know and difficult to explain. The sun and moon are fixed in the heavens. The days and nights go by, some longer, some shorter. Who made them so, I wonder. Sometimes these lights are seen together in the heavens; sometimes again they are eclipsed and narrowed down. What causes this? Five of the stars pass us on the celestial warp, while the rest swing by on the wings of the woof. Can you say definitely why these things are so? When do propitious stars appear, and when, again such wild uncanny things as comets? Some say that the soul of creation has gone out and formed the stars. Is there any proof of this?

"When the winds spring up where do they come from, and whither do they go? Sometimes though it blows the branches of the trees do not even sing; at other times trees are torn from their roots and houses are carried away. There is the gentle maiden wind, and then there is the fierce typhoon. On what law do these two depend?

"Where do the clouds come from and how again do they dissipate into the five original colors? What law do they follow? Though like smoke, they are not smoke. Piled up they stand and swiftly they sail by. What causes this?

"The mists, too, what impels them to rise? Sometimes they are red and sometimes blue. Does this signify aught? At times heavy yellow mists shut out all the points of the compass, and again a smothering fog will darken the very sun at noon.

"Who has charge of the thunder and the sharp strokes of lightning? The blinding flashes that accompany them and their roarings that shake the earth? What does it mean? Sometimes they strike men dead. What law directs this I wonder?

The frosts kill the tender leaves, while the dew makes all fresh and green again. Can you guess the law by which these are governed?

"Rain comes forth from the clouds as it falls, but again there are dark clouds that have no rain. What makes this difference? In the days of Sillong rains came when the people wished them, and desisted when their hopes were fulfilled. In the Golden Age they fell just thirty-six times, definitely fixed. Was it because God was specially favorable to those people? When soldiers rise in defense of the right rain comes; rain comes too, when prisoners are set free. What do you suppose could cause this?

Flowers and blossoms have five petals, but the flakes of snow have six. Who could have decided this?

"Now hail is not white frost nor is it snow. By what power has it become congealed? Some of its stones are big as horses' heads, and some again are only as large as chickens' eggs. Sometimes they deal out death to man and beast. At what time do these things happen? Did God give to each particular thing its own sphere of action when he made it?

"There are times when the elements seem to battle with each other as when rain and snow compete. Is this due to something wrong in nature, or in man's way?

"What shall we do to do away with eclipses altogether, and have the stars keep their appointed course? So that thunder will not startle the world; that frosts may not come in summer; that snows may not afflict us, nor hailstones deal out death; that no wild typhoons may blow; that no floods prevail; that all nature run sweetly and smooth, and so that heaven and earth will work in accord to the blessing of mankind? Where shall we find such a doctrine? All you literati who are deeply learned, I should think that some of you could tell me. Open your hearts now and let me know."

To prove that literary talent was not confined to the halls of the

rich we have a number of authors who rose from the lowest social stratum to shine high in the firmament. One, son of a slave, called Song Ik-p'il was born in 1534 and died in 1599. His works were re-published in 1762 and are regarded to-day as among Korea's best, almost sacred writings.

*On Being Satisfied.*

BY SONG IK-P'IL.

“How is it that the good man always has enough, and why the evil man should always lack? The reason is that when I count my lacks as best I have enough; but worry goes with poverty and worrying souls are always poor. If I take what comes as good and count it best, what lack have I. But to complain against Almighty God and then my fellow men means grieving o'er my lacks. If I ask only what I have I'm never poor; but if I grasp at what I have not how can I ever have enough? One glass of water, even that may satisfy, while thousands spent in richest fare may leave me poor in soul. From ancient days all gladness rests in being satisfied, while all the ills of life are found in selfishness and greed. The Emperor Chin-see's son who lived within the Mang-heui Palace was heard to say, 'Though I live out my life, 'tis all too short,' and so his worries came. The ruler of the Tangs we're told cast lots to meet his love beyond the veil because his heart was cheerless here, and yet we poorest of the poor when we wish only what we have how rich we are. How poor are kings and princes who reach out for more, while he who's poor may be the richest. Riches and poverty lie within the soul, they never rest in outward things. I now am seventy and my house has nothing, so that men point at me and exclaim 'How poor.' But when I see the shafts of light tip all the hill tops in the morning my soul is satisfied with richest treasure; and in the evening, when I behold the round disk of the moon that lights the world and shines across the water, how rich my eyes! In spring the plum-trees bloom, in autumn the chrysanthemum. The flowers that go call to the flowers that come. How rich my joy! Within the Sacred Books what deep delight! As I foregather with the great who've gone, how rich! My virtues I'll admit are poor, but when I see my hair grow white, my years how rich! My joys attend unbroken all my days. I have them all. All these most rich and satisfying things are mine. I can stand up and gaze above, and bend and look below, the joy is mine. How rich God's gifts! My soul is satisfied.”

The times of Shakespeare were the most prolific days of Korea's long period of literature. Suddenly a great tragedy befell the land in the war of Hideyoshi in 1592. This filled the mind of the new generation with its horror as one can easily see through the literature that followed.

Kim Man-choong, the author of the *Cloud Dream of the Nine* was born in 1617, the year after Shakespeare died. The echoes of the terrible war were not only sounded in his ears as a little boy, for his father and mother had seen it, but when he was nineteen years of age the Manchos came pouring in and extorted a humiliating treaty from Korea. By the side of the river, just out of Seoul, a tall stone with Chinese writing on one side, and Manchoo script on the other, told how Korea was brought under the imperial heel. The stone stood till 1894 when some of the youthful patriots of that day knocked it over, and it still lies on its face.

It would seem as though the spirit of destruction had entered society in the fateful seventeenth century, for the four political parties fought each other not as Whigs and Tories, who talk a bit, and then take afternoon tea together, but with knife and deadly potion. Song Si-yul, the greatest literary light of Kim's day, had to drink the hemlock when he was eighty-two and so depart this life. These were the days of Samuel Pepys, the Plague and the Great Fire of London. It would seem as though the spirit of trouble had abounded even to East Asia.

Here are some of the echoes of that period as seen in the shorter poems:

*Avarice.*

BY SOO-KWANG.

(1563-1628 A.D.)

"Busy all my days with head and hand,  
And now at last a mountain high I have of treasure;  
But when I come to die, the problem's how to carry it.  
My greedy name is all that's left behind me."

*Temptation.*

BY KIM CHANG-HYUP.

(1651-1708 A.D.)

"So many tempters lay siege to the soul,  
Who would not lose his way?  
For though the axe cuts deep the fateful tree,  
The roots shoot forth anew.  
By early morning light awake, my friend,  
And try thy soul and see."

Queen In-mok was one of the famous literary women of this age. She was a broken-hearted mother of royalty who spent her exile days writing out with silver ink on black paper the sacred Mita Book of the Buddha. This relic is preserved as a special treasure in the Yoo jum Monastery of the Diamond Mountains where the writer had a chance to look it through in October of this year (1917).

Here is one of her poems:

*The Worn-Out Laborer.*

BY QUEEN IN-MOK.

(About 1608 A.D.)

"The weary ox grown old with toil through years of labor,  
With neck sore chafed and skin worn through in holes would fain go sleep.  
Now ploughing's done and harrow days are over and spring rains fall,  
Why does his master still lay on the goad and give him pain?"

*An Ode.*

BY YOON CHEUNG.

(1629-1715 A.D.)

"Little there is that I can do in life,  
I leave it all to God and go my way.  
When brack and fern thick clothe the hills with green,  
Why should I sweat to till and dig the soil?  
And when wild hemp and creeping plants enclose the way,  
What need I furthermore of fence or wall?  
Although the breeze no contract written has,  
Yet still it comes unfailingly to cheer;  
And though the moon has sworn no oath of brotherhood,  
It nightly shines its beams upon my way.  
If any come to jar my ears with earthly woe  
Tell him no word of me or where I am.  
Within my mystic walls I sit supreme,  
And dream of ancients, honored, revered, glorified."

Since Kim's day famous authors have lived, many of them, and literature has held unquestioned sway till the year 1894 when by order of the new régime the government examinations were discontinued. With this edict all incentive for the study of the classics disappeared, and the old school system ceased to be. It is twenty-three years since this edict was promulgated, and a young man must have been at least twenty-two or twenty-three at that time to have had even a reasonable grounding. The result is seen to-day in the fact that Korea has no good classic scholars of less than forty-five years of age.



This tragic death of native literature that followed the fateful edict is seen in the fact that a famous father of the old school may have a famous son, yes, a graduate of Tokyo University, who still cannot any more read what his father has written than the ordinary graduate at home can read Herodotus or Livy at sight; and the father, learned though he be, can no more understand what his son reads or studies, than a hermit from the hills of India can read a modern newspaper. So they sit, this father and this son, separated by a gulf of a thousand years pitiful to see.

Nevertheless the poems, the literary notes, the graceful letters, the inscriptions, the biographies, the memorials, the sacrificial prayers, the stories, the fairy tales of old Korea will remain, a proof of the graceful and interesting civilization of this ancient people.

## A JEWISH TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE EDITOR.

A NEW Bible translation has been published, and this time it is a version of the Old Testament prepared by Jewish scholars.<sup>1</sup> The work is apparently well done, but the reviewer would like also to have seen short notes and explanations of the meaning of certain passages and in some cases the literal meaning of the text according to its historical significance, where the new rendering varies from the familiar ones.

The Old Testament is a Hebrew document as every one knows, but it forms an important portion of Christian Scriptures, and as such it first became known to the Gentile world. Since the rise of Christianity the Bible has been translated again and again. Two or more centuries before the Christian era the Hebrew Holy Scriptures (the Old Testament) were translated into Greek by seventy rabbis who are supposed to have rendered the text verbatim in such perfect agreement that this was believed to indicate that their translations were inspired and should be regarded as revealed. Therefore this version is called the Septuagint and is usually expressed by the symbol LXX (the Seventy). At the beginning of the Christian era a translation was made for the use of the Roman Church by Jerome, who mainly relied on the work of a converted

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text.* A new translation with the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities. Philadelphia, 1877—1917.