

MRS. BISHOP'S KOREA.¹

WHEN, after returning from the perils and hardships of her adventures in the Bakhtiari country of Persia, Mrs. Bishop announced her intention of making an extensive journey in Eastern Asia, her friends knew that she would not return without having something of interest to tell regarding her travels in little-known regions. Although unfortunately ignorant of the languages of the countries in which she was to travel, and therefore dependent on others to a large extent, Mrs. Bishop had most carefully prepared herself for making all necessary observations and records. She is particularly to be con-

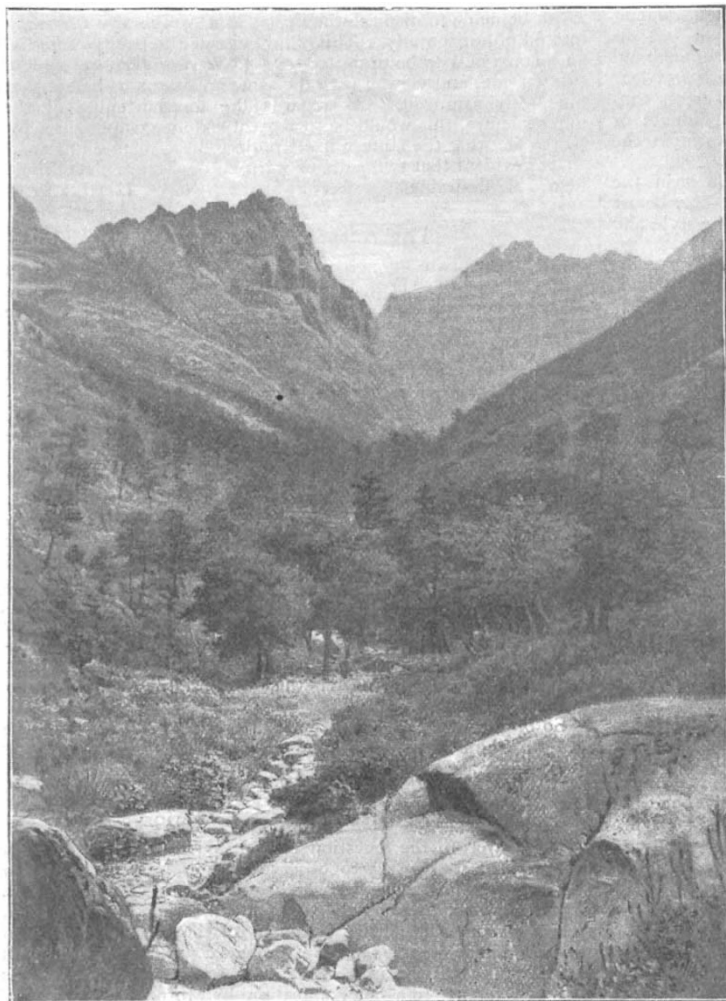


FIG. 1.—A Canyon in the Diamond Mountains.

gratulated on her skill as a photographer. The points of view were very carefully chosen, and the exposures accurately calculated, while the practice of developing the plates at the time, allowed duplicates to be taken if the first negative proved defective. The result is one of the best collections of photographs which we have seen as the result of a travelling amateur. We must congratulate the publishers also on the manner of reproduction employed: the more important views are printed as separate

¹ "Korea and her Neighbours. A narrative of travel, with an account of the recent vicissitudes and present position of the country." By Mrs. Bishop (Isabella L. Bird), F.R.G.S. With a preface by Sir Walter C. Hillier, K.C.M.G., late H.B.M.'s Consul-General for Korea. With maps and illustrations. 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1898.)

plates by the half-tone process, the others are reproduced as line-and-stipple blocks in the text, allowing the book to be printed on unglazed paper, and giving the volumes a lightness which is as desirable as it is rare.

Mrs. Bishop deals here with only a portion of her recent travels. Her important tour through Sze-chuan, on which she read a paper to the Royal Geographical Society—the first paper ever read by a lady to that Society—is not referred to, and the journey through Manchuria is but lightly touched on. Korea is the central theme; and although the interests of the authoress were obviously with the social and political aspects of the country rather than with its physical and biological con-

ditions, she succeeds in giving an excellent general account, all the more valuable because not a little rubbish has been written by chance visitors at the treaty-ports. We may be pardoned if we feel a little regretful that—for example—the character of the interesting rock in the foreground of the photograph we reproduce (Fig. 1) is not described; but doubtless, the pioneer work having been accomplished, scientific travellers will follow, who can tell us whether the stone is merely water-worn or bears the sign-manual of ice.

We have one definite fault to find, and that is with the spelling of Russian place-names. Vladivostok is an incorrect transliteration. A German would write Wladivostok properly enough; but the Russian letter *B* can only be represented by *v* in English, and the usual form of the name *Vladivostok* is the only correct one. There are some other slips—such as Richofen for Richthofen, and the terms flora and denudation are applied in a popular rather than a scientific sense.

Mrs. Bishop describes her landing at Chemulpo, and the journey to Seoul by land; one could hardly say by road, for "traffic has worn for itself a track, often indefinite, but usually straggling over and sterilising a width enough for three or four highways, and often making a new departure to avoid deep mud-holes." A residence in the insanitary and unsavoury Seoul followed, and then a journey by sampan up the south branch of the Han River, which was previously almost unknown to Europeans; then up the north branch of the river, and on ponies to the Diamond Mountains, and northward to Wönsun on the east coast. Returning to Chemulpo by sea, Mrs. Bishop was strongly advised by the British Consul to leave the country, and so crossed to China and made her way *via* Newchwang into Manchuria. It was a journey full of interest and of danger from floods, and the undisciplined Chinese armies on their way to the Korean

war. Then she went *via* Nagasaki to Vladivostok, studied the Korean colonies in Siberia, and tried to enter Korea from the north; but the rivers were impassable, and another long sea-voyage was necessary. A second residence in Seoul led to a journey northward along the old road to China for 200 miles. A third and final visit to Seoul occupied the last few months of 1896. As Mrs. Bishop lived in the village inns when travelling, and was in constant communication with the diplomatic agents and missionaries while in the capital, her opportunities for seeing native life and learning the state of affairs in the country were exceptionally good.

Her special study was the people. In a note we learn

that the average size of 1060 men, measured at Seoul in January 1897, by Mr. A. B. Stripling, was height 5 ft. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., chest-measurement 31 in., and circumference of head 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. The maximum figures were respectively 5 ft. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. The physique is generally good, and the people possess many amiable qualities. The total population is estimated at from 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. Most of the people are very poor, and have no inducements to thrift; any wealth they may gather is at the mercy of the official class, who are mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the miserable condition of the country. Under the just rule of the Russians in Eastern Siberia, Mrs. Bishop found the Korean emigrants happy and enterprising, making good profits from their farms and inhabiting comfortable houses. Given good government, people and resources being as they are would ensure prosperity to Korea. Into the tangled political history of the unhappy country we cannot enter here, nor can we refer to the many curious customs, ceremonials and beliefs, which are set forth at considerable length. These, perhaps, constitute the most valuable part of the book, for Mrs. Bishop caught Korea in an interesting transition period, when the old subjugation to China was being repudiated for ever, and reforms of many kinds were being introduced. The Altar of the Spirits of the Land, at which the ceremony of repudiation was carried out, is shown in Fig. 2. Few contrasts are more striking than that presented by Seoul at her first and at her last visit; when the filthy chaos of huts surrounding the palace gave place to well-ordered streets of good houses. The problem of the fourfold influence of Russian, Chinese, Japanese and European interests is very well handled. Of the industries of Korea the most interesting is the cultivation of gin-seng, the description of the processes employed in the manufacture of the dried root being, we believe, the fullest yet published.

The future of Korea is still uncertain, but it is bound to play a prominent part in the politics of the Far East; and this book will hold a place as a valuable work of reference for many years to come.

HUGH ROBERT MILL.

ASTRONOMICAL RESULTS FROM THE CAPE OBSERVATORY.¹

THESE three volumes, issued under the superintendence of Dr. Gill, form in some respects a very remarkable production. Not so much on account of the very numerous observations, whose discussion furnishes forth these weighty books, as by reason of the widespread assistance rendered by many astronomers, whose energies Dr. Gill has quickened, whose results he has collected, stamped with his own individuality, and incorporated in the "Annals of the Cape Observatory." There are very few instances in which the director of an observatory has been willing to take up a laborious piece of work at the suggestion of an astronomer, however eminent, go through the wearisome task of making the observations, and then be willing to hand over his results to an independent authority for final discussion or criticism. It is this quality of self-abnegation, which strikes us as so complete and worthy of imitation. We congratulate Dr. Gill on his tactful skill, by which he

¹ "Annals of the Cape Observatory." Vol. iii. The Cape Photographic Durchmusterung. Vol. vi. Solar Parallax from Heliometer Observations of Minor Planets. Vol. vii. Solar Parallax from Observations of Victoria and Sappho. (London: Published by order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1896.)

has emerged from his self-imposed task, without friction with his collaborators, and been able to present to the world, in a complete form, the result of a scheme which he carefully planned and carried to a successful issue. We think it an especial merit in Dr. Gill's work, that he has perceived the value of strengthening his heliometer observations by combining with them the results made with similar instruments elsewhere. It was quite within his power and instrumental means to have derived the solar parallax from observations of the asteroids made solely at the Cape Observatory. Other observers could have done the same work, but separate discussions, made at irregular intervals and under varying conditions, do not possess the proportionate authority that attaches to one discussion made with several instruments on a combined plan. Moreover, one feels that the last word has been said, for some years at least, on this subject of solar parallax, by means of heliometer observations.

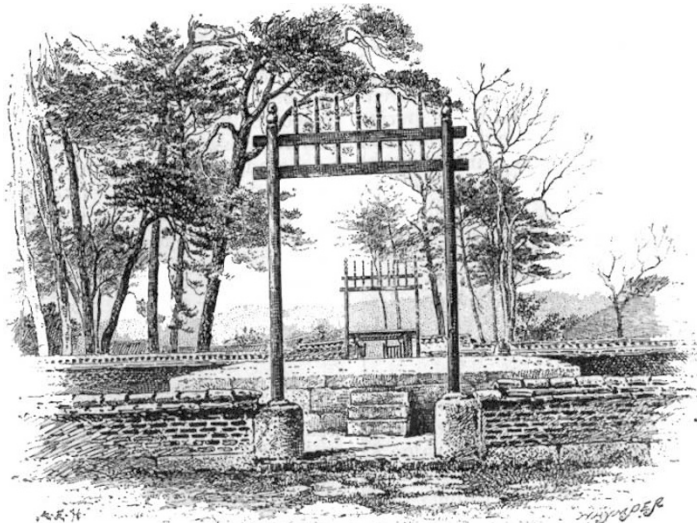


FIG. 2.—Altar of the Spirits of the Land.

Every observer must feel that, singly, he cannot do more than has already been done collectively. There can be no temptation to repeat the work. Consequently the owners of this class of instruments are freed from this particular investigation, for which the heliometer seems especially well fitted, and are at liberty to pursue other inquiries with advantage. It might be worth while just to mention, that to get the full power of a heliometer a considerable number of meridian observations is necessary. In this case some thousands came under the discriminating examination of Prof. Auwers. To use this mass of observations on one series of measures would be extravagant, but when combined with all the heliometer observations in a final inquiry, this cost of time and labour is disregarded, since they contribute to the increased accuracy of so large a body of measures. It is a true economy which Dr. Gill has practised, and the success which has followed it will bear much fruit in the future.

In the inquiry from which the solar parallax is deduced, we notice that no less than six observatories have contributed heliometer measures. Besides that of the Cape, we have New Haven (Yale College), Leipzig, Göttingen, Bamberg, and the Oxford Radcliffe Observatory, all furnishing measures of some or all of the three planets, Iris, Victoria, and Sappho, from stars in a previously selected zone, through which the planets passed. Several have further assisted by making a careful triangulation of the selected stars. The position