

No.

AMERICAN LEGATION,
SEOUL, KOREA.

November 30 , 1905 .

Dear Henry :-

As a matter of fact its the next day but that makes no difference . The ~~ev~~^onts of the past few days have been crowding so fast that while I should have liked to write them all it seems impossible and I am obliged therefore to send you enclosures from the local paper , a journal which originally the subsidized Russian organ has now become the champion of Korea liberty . The news printed therein is fairly straight and corresponds with the ~~so~~^tories which we have through our own sources of information . The Palace scene on the night of the seventeenth , I could see fairly well myself for although the curtains were drawn in the room where the affairs went on from the Legation compound one can look over into the Palace yard seventyfive feet away and there I saw Japanese gendarmes and police ~~bet~~ . All during that evening I had been passing to and fro from the Legation to another mans house . The Emperor had sent a secret message to Morgan and I ~~was~~^Was the go between bearing good advice to the distressed potentate . ~~Let~~^{the} second clipping about the petitioners I believe ~~that~~ is also substantially correct . The row ^{edita} speaks of as having been started by three hundred Christians was as a matter of fact due to the desire of five men who had walked down from Pingyang one hundred and eighty miles away to present a petition . It seems that the gendarmes arrested them as they came to the Palace entrance and bound them . The five men knelt and began to sing Christian hymns and to pray , then one fellow who I understand was an enormous man , threw his arms back and snapped the cords with which he was bound jumped to his feet and slugged the ^earest gendarme . They ~~of~~^{later} of course outnumbered the Koreans and belaboring them with the flats of their swords beat them down and tied them up again .

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The official petitioners had in the meantime refused to leave the Household Department in the Palace where they were squatting in protest after the Korean custom. By the Emperor's order however, they were all arrested and taken to the supreme court to await sentence. Here they were, all day before yesterday. Late that night at the intercession of the Japanese, so Stevens, the American who advises the Koreans supposedly, but who is really a Japanese employee, told me, ~~In any case~~ the Emperor ordered them to disperse. As far as I can learn Min Yong Whan, the man whom you'll remember I wrote you about, he was the one with whom I dined when Senator Newlands was here and who would not listen to reason about the proper course for his country to pursue, ~~Min Yong Whan~~ bade farewell to this crowd of officials, whose head he had become since the arrest of ^hCyo, at about twelve, ~~then he we~~ ^{when he.} went to the house of a retainer, and having a room prepared, sat down on the floor and drove a knife into his throat, ripped it forward and killed himself. He was a man of almost royal blood, who could approach the Emperor as no one else could do, a cousin of the murdered Queen, he had been special Ambassador to the Queen's jubilee and to the coronation of the Czar, ex-prime minister, ex-minister for Foreign Affairs, and a nice gentlemanly fellow much liked by foreigners and as much as any Korean could be a popular idol. He had money and position, everything to live for, for the Japanese although they did oppose his recent appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, could not and would not have ~~inj~~ injured him. I remember perfectly well the morning he came here to plead with Newlands, the night we dined with him, but then he wouldn't do the direct thing and make an ^{Protest} appeal to the President in a dignified way. It didn't ^{appeal!} appeal to the Korean intellect. Yet he was very graceful and had much charm of personality as do many of the Koreans of the higher classes.

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It was a marvellous day yesterday and if one could have philosophised brought home many lessons about the temporary character of power and the irresistible march of events, the tide on which we ~~are~~ are all swept along and tossed, helpless. We heard of Min's suicide as we were going to the train to bid farewell to the British Minister and to old Mcleavy Brown for thirteen years head of the Customs. Here was a man whom the Russians and French had tried to force out time and again, with him the Representative of his country who had insisted in the face of almost overwhelming opposition that he should be retained, who had brought a British squadron to Chemulpo to make a naval demonstration on his behalf, Mcleavy Brown abandoned by a Government whose principle asset in this country he had been, who had done more for British interests than any one, turned down on a question of world politics, in an instant ousted by the Japanese, who with their usual damnable hypocrisy tried to persuade him to resign so that no one would criticize them. This ^{be} being an old sportsman he would not do, nor would he accept their decorations or the solatium with which they tried to tempt him. Laugh damn you but that's straight goods. Mcleavy Brown going away, with him half a dozen of the nicest foreigners in Korea the Customs officials at the various ports, oases in the desert for the chance traveller, they're off too kicked out. From this scene, the day before I had been to the station to bid farewell to Ito who had done it all, I went down to the centre of the city to learn of Min's death. Here around the central square there were dense crowds, orderly they seemed, but muttering. Such a hopeless inane lot you never saw. They ~~xxxx~~ have no determination no nerve, nothing to recommend them, they were talking in groups, one of the main buildings had been burned the night before, it was still smoking. Japanese police were everywhere making the people move on. I went into the supreme

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where the officials had been sitting the day before . Then came home . At half past four the Electric Light people who have their offices in the centre of the city telephoned that the Japanese were firing on the crowd . I piled onto my pony and made ~~foot~~ the place as quickly as possible . There I found several hundred infantrymen , with fixed bayonets , some picketed along the streets which were being cleared by police and gendarmes / others in platoon formation waiting orders . It seems that a man named Yi ^{Yi} was haranguing the crowd about the death of Min and that the Japanese in trying to shut him up drew blood . Yi then shrieked that he could not suffer such an indignity , he who was an official and killed himself in the street . The crowd started for the gendarmes and drove them into their quarters on the main street , some say that two were stoned and killed others that they were only severely wounded . In any case the Japanese rallied and came out firing over the heads of the crowd with revolvers and carbines . They say that the revolvers must have been pretty rotten for they only went off every other time . When I arrived on the scene the Japanese were chasing the Koreans like a lot of rabbits . smashing in houses and dragging them out by their hair , binding them and under guard of two or three gendarmes taking them off ~~bound~~ in gangs . They did not seem unnecessarily brutal however . I followed a crowd of fifty ~~poli~~ police to the Bureau of Decorations where the official memorialists were now located . Here I found more ^{Police} troops and a squad of infantry men and gendarmes . The Commander of the latter was arguing with one of the Korean officials . I presume that the whole crowd was arrested for as I came ~~away~~ I passed another gang of police bound in the direction of the Bureau .

To cap the climax , we had arranged a Thanksgiving celebration , which had to go off notwithstanding the tragedy which had crushed us all . Here we had the missionary stories .

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the bitterest stories . The suicide of Min's wife , of Chyo a highly respected ex-Premier of another official of very high rank . The whole community is excited about the withdrawal of the Legation not only is it hard for them to feel that when they have had so many complaints against the Japanese occupation that in the future it will be even harder to secure a hearing but they voice the sentiment of the Koreans when they say that they have been betrayed . So they have . It may not be the fault of any one in particular , but certainly because of our treaty they have looked upon the United States as a friend to whom they could turn . It has been to us that they have made most of their hopeless footless appeals in the past few months . They all realized I think that Legations would go and that their country was turned over , but it came as a cruel blow that the United States should have been the first to take such a step . It is claimed and I believe that it is true , that Mins suicide was largely due to the withdrawal of this Legation . He had hoped against hope that we could and would help them . Our interpreter who was his great friend told us that he was completely crushed when he heard the news . The Koreans are quite justified in their feeling that they have been sold . Word comes in from the Emperor too that he is in despair , all hope gone , yet he the damned skunk is the one who ordered the Minister for Foreign Affairs to sign the agreement telling him never to say that he the Emperor had told him to do so , he is the one who ordered Chyo and Min to their deaths . It is due to his weakness that all the shops in Seoul are closed while the officials and the people petition him to revoke an agreement which he ^{instructed} allowed the ~~men~~ ^{Ministers} to sign . The people are demanding the blood of the ^{affairs} ~~men~~ ^{who signed} and I imagine they'll have it sooner or later . Poor Min he did all that he could , he sealed his testimony with his blood and if ever man died for his country it was he . In a way it is the Korean way of looking at things , 'to say that its hopeless , unbearable , we'll die , that's all we can do , that is the attitude of the

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people who are flocking in from the country and of whom ~~many~~^{many} will die like sheep before this is over . Yet I think that Min realized what an effect his death would have upon public feeling . It will appeal to the Japanese more than anything he could have done , and may have some effect . Yet I cannot see that they could well do aught else . One would admire them more if they would come out in the open and say that they wanted this place and would have it , that the people did object and that they didn't care a damn, instead of trying to put it before the world that the Emperor and the people really appreciated the unselfishness of their aims , and want^{ed} them to protect and develop the country , that those who oppose Japan are merely a lot of malcontents and loafers and timeservers , instead of the best of the Koreans while their followers who are featured as the enlightened elements are the grafters and squeezers who before the Japanese came were in Russia pay .

Such is the East . Coming back from the scene at the bell tower , we heard the blatant hooting of a brass band and sure enough there they were , you know them , a strangely uniformed aggregation tootling and braying away , the parade for a Japanese circus . Murder , suicide , arson and a circus .

To cap it all Morgan received a dispatch offering him Cuba , It is a great compliment and deserved for he has kept his head here in a very difficult and delicate situation and the

President could do no better than to send a man such as he is to Havana . He made me an offer to go with him . Whether I will accept or not depends on circumstances . I hate to leave the East even for a short time to go home and see you all . We ~~do~~ leave Yokohama on either the 23 Dec. or the 5th Jan . Ill wire you from Frisco and well meet and talk it all over . Goodbye Henry , A bientot . What a story what a story . Lord but its pitiful .

Yours