

C. C. Vinton, "Literary Department," Korean Repository 3 (January 1896): 38-39.

Transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak

턴로력덩 *The Pilgrim's Progress*—By JOHN BUNYAN. Translated by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. GALE. Illustrated. L. 8vo. 93 leaves. KOREAN RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY. Chinese paper, paper covers, I nyang 40 poun each. Also in 2 vols. L. 8vo. 113, 102 leaves, Korean paper, stiff covers, 5 nyang each; 450 nyang per 100.

The holiday season of 1895-96 has proved unprecedentedly rich in the output of vernacular Christian literature from the Trilingual Press. Besides the Calendar for the new year, which is always to be expected at this time, new editions have just appeared of the favorite 성경문답 and the long desired 구세진전, and the much-talked-of new edition of the Gospel of Luke gladdens us with its neat typography and binding. But among these new friends and old ones in new guises one in particular stands forth as the most elegant specimen of the printer's art thus far placed by foreigners upon the native market, and furthermore as the most notable production toward a standard literature as yet made available to the Korean nation.

What Korean scholars have hitherto regarded as literature is comprised in the list of Chinese classics. Excepting novelettes and collections of laws, the native tongue has been unused as I means of preserving thought. Observing these facts missionary authors have themselves to prepare some better pabulum for that great majority of the people to whom foreign tongues are unknown. From the first we may observe a gradual improvement in the work they have done toward that end. Not merely have they been learning the language better and clearing their vocabularies to a considerable degree of alien terms, a process by which they have prepared themselves to speak simply and directly to the people in their own mother tongue; they have also been entering more familiarly into the mental habit of the nation, a process by which they have acquired a certain capacity to speak from a standpoint the oriental mind can understand. From the dry catechisms of doctrinal fact first promulgated and from the later harvest of argumentative treatises an advance has recently been made to narrative, to the Bible story, and now to allegory. In this series the 턴로력덩 forms for the present the climax. Let us hope only temporarily. The Korean mind assimilates with greatest ease that which comes to it by symbol and by intimation. This fact has lately been called to our attention in Mr. Gale's admirable paper upon Korean literature before the Decennial Missionary Conference. May we soon be favored with some work even nearer than this to his ideal and therefore to the Korean heart.

Bunyan wrote for all the world, and all the world understands him. Some of us will see in this another proof of the brotherhood of mankind. More Koreans have personally sought an opportunity to buy this book from us as custodian than all the other books we have handled in an experience of more than three years. And many are warm in their approval of it with a warmth of expression more than Korean.

Bunyan knew Korean nature, human nature. Perhaps no other English religious work could fill this requirement of a treatment of its topic implication as well as the Pilgrim's Progress. We have provably, therefore, reached the acme in translation, and must look to original production for further advances.

One who turns the pages of this book is likely to be gratified by the infrequent occurrence of those Koreanized Chinese words which constitute the delight of the pedantic native scholar and the bane of the general reader. That the translators have succeeded so well in eliminating these expressions and in finding for them simple native equivalents, testifies not only to many hours of laborious research upon their part, but may be quite as much due to the clear, unpretentious diction of the original. It greatly enhances the value of the work above that of any other known to us.

The typography of both editions is worthy of all praise. To the trained bibliophile some Pages of the two-volume edition are truly elegant, but a woodblock never can give such clear impressions as metal, and a careful selection of individual sheets of paper would have improved the effect. The binding disappoints us. It is neat, it is costly, but it is exceedingly rude to the artistic eye; however, the native may delight in it.

First, no doubt, to attract attention, although we come only now to speak of them, are the illustrations. Artistically they are fairly executed. Anatomically the figures far exceed in merit those of the best Korean drawings. To those for whom they are intended they come with peculiar acceptance because they are meant to represent Koreans and not foreigners.

Several are objectionable by reason of containing female figure, for women who are seen in public places and showing attentions to strangers as these are cannot be looked on in Korea as respectable. Had these few groups been omitted the volume could be more unhesitatingly placed in the hands of readers untaught as to Christianity.