

KOREAN TALES

BEING A COLLECTION OF STORIES TRANSLATED
FROM THE KOREAN FOLK LORE

TOGETHER WITH

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS DESCRIPTIVE
OF KOREA

BY

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FOREIGN SECRETARY OF LEGATION FOR KOREA

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NOTE.

THE national emblem of Korea, pictured on the cover, represents the male and female elements of nature; the dark blue representing Heaven (the male), the yellow representing Earth (the female). As seen across the Eastern Sea, the heavens seem to lap over and embrace the earth, while the earth, to landwards, rises in the lofty mountains and folds the heavens in its embrace, making a harmonious whole.

The characters represent the four points of the compass, and belong to the original eight characters given by the first King, and from which "all language" sprung. The whole set is as follows :



PREFACE.

REPEATEDLY, since returning to the United States, people have asked me, "Why don't you write a book on Korea?" I have invariably replied that it was not necessary, and referred the inquirers to the large work of Dr. Griffis, entitled "Corea, the Hermit Kingdom," which covers the subject in a charming manner.

My object in writing this book was to correct the erroneous impressions I have found somewhat prevalent—that the Koreans were a semi-savage people. And believing that the object could be accomplished best in displaying the thought, life, and habits of the people as portrayed in their native lore, I have made these translations, which, while they are so chosen as to cover various phases of life, are not to be considered as especially selected.

I also wished to have some means of answering the constant inquiries from all parts of the country concerning Korean life and characteristics.

People in Washington have asked me if Korea was an island in the Mediterranean; others