

SAYONARA

JOHN PARIS

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SAYONARA

Kimono, Mr. John Paris's first novel, has proved one of the most remarkably successful books published since the war. It has been a "best seller" in England and America; it has become famous all over the Far East and in Canada and Australia, besides being translated into several foreign languages. Its successor—*Sayonara*—has been eagerly awaited. The theme is based on the familiar aphorism that "East is East and West is West," and that any attempt to reconcile them usually means disaster. Dick Aylmer, a young missionary, marries a Japanese girl to save her from a life of shame. Shunned by all his friends, he hides away with his wife's family in a remote village, and begins swiftly to degenerate. Attempts are made to save him, but his character is tainted, and he disgraces himself again and again. In the end he is found in circumstances of utter degradation, and saved by Captain Baxter, a very unconventional sailor missionary. Here again, as in *Kimono*, are found the most vivid pictures of Japan, old and new; Tokyo and its underworld, a powerful picture of Japanese farm life, and the cruel slavery of the "Yoshiwara."

SAYONARA

(GOOD-BYE)

by

JOHN PARIS

Author of "Kimono"



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Yo no usa wo
Minishi tsumazuba
Tsui ni kono
Hotoke no michi mo
Shirade suguran.

The Lady Terutt.

The misery of this world
If we do not heap it upon ourselves,
Then,
We may pass, without knowing,
The Way of Buddha.

THE author wishes to express his gratitude to those friends who, by their advice and encouragement, have assisted him in writing *Sayonara*; and to record his obligations to the following books:—

Studies in Japanese Buddhism, by A. K. Reischauer
(Macmillan Co., New York).

The Foundations of Japan, by J. W. Robertson Scott
(John Murray, London).

Home Life in Tokyo, by J. Inouye (Tokyo).

The Way of Contentment, by Kaibara Ekken (trans.
in *Wisdom of the East* series), (John Murray,
London).

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CHAPTER I

THE CALL OF THE EAST

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."

Evensong was over in the parish church of Hernwood. The rector and his son—the son who had but lately been ordained priest and who had just preached his first sermon in his father's church—had withdrawn to the vestry. The congregation, village-folk and a few farmers with their families, had melted away. The vergers were stacking hymn-books and prayer-books on the shelves which they occupied during the week. Dusk was falling; and the brilliant robes of the expressionless saints in the stained-glass windows glowed dully like a dying fire. The lead-beading which marked their outlines stood out in strong relief. Shadows were gathering in the corners of the high building, under the vault of the wagon roof, and beneath the eaves of the fifteenth century rood-screen which spanned the chancel.

Alone, in the deserted nave, Mrs. Aylmer, the rector's wife, was still upon her knees. It was her custom thus to pray at protracted length until her husband, after disrobing in the vestry, came to rejoin her and to accompany her home. Her face was hidden in her black gloves. Only once did she look up at the Crucifix which Canon Aylmer had restored to its position on the screen, and at the figures of Mary and of the disciple whom Jesus loved.

"Woman, behold thy son!" the lips of the Crucified seemed to be saying.

Mrs. Aylmer prayed. She prayed for Richard, her only son. Her prayer was long and ruminant. At

times, it was a vague meditation on Richard's virtues. At times, definite petitions chased each other like swallows through the haze. At times the refrain of some familiar psalm or collect swept back upon her mind for no particular reason.

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept; when we remembered thee, O Sion. As for our harps, we hanged them up upon the trees that are therein. For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody, in our heaviness; Sing us one of the songs of Sion. How shall we sing the Lord's song: in a strange land?"

Why did this dirge of the exiled Jews pursue her thoughts so relentlessly? Richard was not going forth as an exile, but as an evangelist. Not only had he joined the Army of God's priests—his mother's dearest wish; but he had volunteered for the front. He was to be a missionary in Japan, a herald of the gospel in the lands of the heathen.

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."

This had been the text of his sermon that evening; and as the mother listened to her son, speaking to the people from his father's pulpit, she felt very proud, very thankful, and very anxious. Tears had filled her eyes, and a great wonder had gripped her heart. For a young man's confidence in his mission, if it be a noble and a lofty one, is perhaps the most touching—yes, and the most inspiring—of human manifestations, even to a stranger. To a mother's soul and sympathy it is a foretaste of Heaven.

"My friends, my dearest friends, among whom I have grown up," the young priest had thus concluded his sermon; "I beseech you to give me your sympathy and your prayers that I may be blessed in the work to which God has called me and that I may prove

worthy. Do not think, as I once thought, that Christian missions are a fad and that the money spent upon them can be more usefully employed at home. Remember that beyond our little world of Hernwood lies the greater world of England; and beyond England is Europe; and beyond Europe stretch the other great continents of the world. Remember that the Christian churches are the treasurers of Christ's teaching and the guardians of the secret of the Mass. Only we can impart this inestimable benefit to those who are still heathen; and if we refuse, who is there will do our duty for us? It is our great opportunity; and perhaps it is by this that our civilisation will be judged in the Day of Doom. We bear our fate in our own hands. It is for us to choose now—or refuse. It is for us to give light to Asia—or else Asia will plunge us in darkness.

"My brothers and sisters, pray for me and pray for my work in Japan.

"And now to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all might, majesty, dominion and power, henceforth and for evermore. Amen."

At the ascription to the Name of the Trinity, the young priest had turned in the pulpit so as to face the altar; and the congregation rose to their feet. There was a snuffle of emotion and a flutter of handkerchiefs. For although there were few who understood the meaning of the sermon, there were many who loved Master Richard. Besides, the confident tones of his voice moved them, the conviction which he communicated that he had made a gallant choice in life, and the possibility that they might see him no more.

Mrs. Aylmer had been the last to rise. Her son's eloquence had carried her mind far beyond the village sanctuary. The great voices of the Church Militant seemed to be echoing around her. Prophets, martyrs, evangelists, the glorious company of the Apostles, were murmuring their approval of her boy.

*" For all the Saints who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by faith before the worlds confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesu, be for ever blest.*

Alleluia ! "

The offertory hymn—which Dick himself had chosen—was being sung. The preacher descended from the pulpit, and walked up the chancel with the elastic step of a young officer. He joined his silver-haired father within the altar-rails. The rector raised the brazen alms-dish from the altar, carried it to his forehead, lowered it again to the level of his waist, and then turned to await the procession of the sidesmen up the aisle. Dick remained beside the altar.

He was of middle height, but beautifully proportioned. He had the delicate, feminine features of that Sir Richard Aylmer who was the friend of Herbert and of Falkland, and who fell at Edgehill. He would have had the same golden lovelocks as his ancestor, had fashion allowed it; and he had the same pink and white complexion, the same clear, blue eyes. Mrs. Aylmer was proud of her son.

She wished to remember him, when distance and time had separated them, as he stood there beside the altar of his father's church in his almost unearthly innocence of soul and body. As she knelt down for prayer after the service was over, she tried to impress that picture upon her memory; and then, just as she had succeeded in recapturing the fleeting image, the burden of the song of the Jewish exiles returned to her mind, and obliterated the vision with its importunate lament:

" How shall we sing the Lord's song : in a strange land ? "

Dick Aylmer and the rector at last emerged into the chancel from the vestry door at the east end of the church. They were both gowned in their cassocks,

those flowing black garments of the priesthood, which are among the few of the gracious robes of the Middle Ages still surviving in everyday use. Dick wore sanctuary shoes with square silver buckles, an unmistakable sign of his High Church opinions.

Canon Aylmer was taller than his son; and his abundant hair was snowy white. It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect type of parish priest, with his high intellectual forehead, his deep-set eyes, his Gladstonian nose, and his patient, mobile, humorous lips. Indeed, his features gave promise of qualities which he did not altogether possess; and he looked both a finer and a wiser man than as a matter of fact he was. Of course, it would have been hard for any man to live up to such a majestic and charming countenance. The rector was at least wise enough to know that his appearance was his greatest asset; and, as he grew older, he said little and did even less. But, as the old women of Hernwood used to declare: "Just the sight of rector made un feel fit for 'Eaven."

Throughout his life, Erastus Aylmer had been more comfortable than befits a man of God. His ample fortune raised him above the drudgery—and the humanity—of his fellow-clergy. His views, such as they were, were pre-eminently "safe." He was charitable in his attitude alike towards High Church and Low, and, in fact, was uninterested in their controversies. They were not matters of personal importance, like his rose-beds and his delphiniums. This Gallionic aloofness sometimes exasperated Dick, who was an earnest Anglo-Catholic and decidedly "advanced." He would have liked to have stampeded his father into vestments and prayers for the Dead and Reservation of the Sacrament and all manner of dangerous adventures. But Canon Aylmer was not the man to be rushed into anything. His comfort was the sheet anchor of his existence. He was so well off, and so well fed, and so well cared for. The adoring devotion of his wife secured his domestic happiness. He loved his children in his

somnolent way; but he was too serene to feel the need of them very keenly. When Grace, his daughter, had come to unseemly grief, this débâcle and its results had affected him less than he would have cared to confess. It had diverted him from a career which would have probably proved too onerous for him, and had relegated him to the sumptuous rectory of Hernwood, where he could combine the eminence of a county magnate with the graciousness of a village priest.

The departure of his son for the Far East entailed but a passing moment of emotion, a pious ejaculation and a seemly tear. By Monday evening the boy would be gone. The Canon would sit alone over his whisky toddy, lulled into a mood of gentle resignation, and unperplexed by the eager questionings of this lad who seemed so zealous to improve an already almost perfect world. He would miss the companionship; but it would be peaceful to sit alone. Besides, he was proud and satisfied that his son should be a missionary. That impatient blood, which was the Aylmer inheritance, seemed to have omitted the son, as it had omitted the father, from the list of the family victims. If it were to assert itself, then, at any rate, at a distance of ten thousand miles, the tranquillity of Hernwood Rectory would remain relatively undisturbed. His parents would not have to endure the Grace trouble over again.

Mrs. Aylmer rose, as her two dear ones approached her pew. She clasped her son's hand with emotional pressure. Slowly, he led his mother down the aisle, the Canon following. Mrs. Aylmer was tall, but she stooped a little; and she supported her steps with the aid of an ebony-stick. Her figure was becoming rather stout. Her hair was still dark for the most part, though flecked with grey over the temples; but at present it was hidden beneath an imposing hat. Her dress, too, was hierarchic in cut and colour, being of a sombre purple and gathered in many folds. Her eyes were usually downcast, and she spoke in slow, deliberate tones. The theory at Hernwood Rectory was that Mrs.

Aylmer's heart had been broken by her daughter Grace's conduct. As a matter of fact, she lived the easy, tranquil, country life which suited her. She had numerous friends throughout the county, and a library of edifying literature. Hers was a simple nature, though overcharged with arabesques of ecclesiasticism and unsound theology—sciences for which her Maker had no more formed her mind than for the Differential Calculus. She was absolutely devoted to her husband, whom she confidently assumed to be the greatest and noblest of men; and her son had only once caused her anxiety—during a daring period of wild oats at Oxford, when he had even hinted that he might go over to Rome. But his dear father had, of course, at once exposed the errors of the Papacy to Dick's entire satisfaction. Mrs. Aylmer felt that her "Gawd"—for so she was wont to name her Creator, in contradistinction to the deities of the heathen, who were but "gods"—had blessed her above all women in giving her a husband who could so persuade, and a son who could be so persuaded. Perhaps, too, her own prayers had not been without avail.

Leaning on her son's arm, she passed down the church; but at the porch she paused and turned to her husband.

"Grace has come," she said in a voice of deep solemnity and import.

"Oh! I'm so glad," cried Dick enthusiastically. "I knew she would."

The Canon said nothing. It was the first time that the erring daughter had ever been to Hernwood.

Grace was Dick's sister, but twelve years his senior. She was the child of the Canon and Mrs. Aylmer's early married life, when passionate love had perhaps quickened their humanity. But—that was now very long ago. Grace had grown up to be a daughter of the Church—rather than of mere earthly parents. Her life was a succession of Sabbaths and saints' days, of fasts and vigils, of collects, epistles and gospels.

She was deeply versed in the canonical colours, the golden numbers and the dates when Easter falls. At two years of age she could return thanks to the Almighty before and after meat; at six, she knew her catechism; at ten, she had written a course of sermons, which were privately printed by her delighted parents; at fifteen, she had read the "Tracts for the Times" from beginning to end, with inadequate comprehension perhaps; but at eighteen, she knew exactly why Newman had gone over to Rome, and what were the errors in the argument which led him to take so disastrous a step—in fact, her mind was stuffed with ecclesiasticism as a goose liver is stuffed with food, an unhealthy state for any young girl at the age of nubility. At nineteen, she married the Bishop of Dungeness, then the youngest suffragan bishop in the English church. The parent Aylmers thanked their "Gawd" once more for His inestimable benefits, in that He had called their daughter to share one day an archiepiscopal throne.

Then, after three years of married life, Grace decamped from the Bishop's house—suddenly, silently, without even asking her dear father's advice. She was next heard of in Switzerland in the company of a penniless and, no doubt, dissolute artist.

At that time, the Reverend Erastus Aylmer had been vicar of an important industrial town. He was known personally to Cabinet Ministers. He was a Bishop *in petto*. But his daughter's scandalous behaviour destroyed these prospects; and he became an incubus to the diocese, of which he had but lately been an ornament.

The Archbishop summoned him to Lambeth. So little did Mr. Aylmer, in his curious detachment from the world of others, realise the harm inflicted upon himself by his daughter's levity, that he obeyed the summons, thinking that the possibility of the expected bishopric was actually about to be suggested to him.

The Archbishop, a prince of diplomatists, never

completely disillusioned him. He offered him an honorary canonry and the rectory of Hernwood, which was in his gift but remote from his diocese, pressing him to accept this as a temporary expedient until the scandal should have died down. So Erastus Aylmer, bishop *in petto*, left the presence of his chief as Canon Aylmer and a nonentity. The Cabinet Ministers soon learned that Aylmer had retired to a country living and was henceforth out of the running for the episcopate. The Bishop of Dungeness thanked the Archbishop; and agreed that in the circumstances the best possible course had been taken.

Meanwhile Grace, whose respect for mitres had gone by the board, wrote to her husband from Switzerland, and asked for a divorce. She wished to marry her artist lover. The Bishop replied in the third person that divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons were alike contrary to his principles, and he referred to a suitable text in the New Testament. So a horrible period of six years commenced during which Grace and her artist lived together in open sin—though, fortunately, on the Continent.

Of course, during this time, no direct correspondence passed between the rectory at Hernwood and the lost sheep. The Canon wrote through his lawyers offering to make a small allowance. This was refused. Grace never at any time attempted to make any excuse for her conduct; nor did she ever raise the curtain which veiled the secrets of the episcopal alcove. Was this from loyalty to her husband? Or from a conviction that, with a mitred adversary, her own story would never gain credence? She adopted a proud and baffling silence, which was becoming to her personality but which destroyed all hope of confidence between herself and her parents. For even unworldly Mrs. Aylmer would have liked to know why so eminent a son of the church as the Bishop of Dungeness had proved so connubially displeasing to her daughter.

The Bishop's attitude had been characteristic of the

man. Marriage was a mistake, he admitted, for those who, like himself, had a higher call. He had deserved his fate, and he welcomed his punishment. Fortunately, his experience had not lasted long enough to destroy within his breast the spirit of the anchorite. In his domestic solitude he could now devote all his time to his God and his diocese. He refused to divorce his wife. He could not, of course, avail himself of the facilities open to mere laymen, and allow his wife to divorce him. He was robust; and he intended to live until he was on the throne of Saint Augustine. But his God had decreed otherwise. He was killed in a railway accident; and his widow promptly married the man whom she loved.

There was great relief at Hernwood Rectory when the period of open sin was ended. It was now possible to meet Grace once or twice a year in London, and to mention her name to friends. Her artist was no longer unknown and penniless. He was Carey, the landscape-painter; and his handsome wife, too, was a favourite in the artistic world of London. The Careys were at last invited to Hernwood. They did not refuse exactly; but they did not come. The Canon and Mrs. Aylmer were beginning to feel a wistful and plaintive regret that their daughter was not treating them quite as kindly as she might.

Eventually, George Carey's name appeared in the list of birthday honours. He had painted, for royalty, a picture of a Highland Gathering at Balmoral; his fame and his fortune were made. Mrs. Aylmer had written to Lady Carey, transmitting the assurance that God had blessed Sir George and her, probably in answer to a mother's prayers, and hoping that she would remember her promise to visit Hernwood; perhaps Sir George would like to paint the old church. Grace replied, almost affectionately, that nothing would give George greater pleasure; but that they were leaving in a day or two for Switzerland—"back to their old haunts"—and that the visit must

be postponed until their return. Mrs. Aylmer sighed over her child's ingratitude.

When the time for Dick's departure was at hand, she made a last appeal. She had telegraphed—reply paid—to Grace, who, as she knew from the papers, had come back from abroad, and had implored her not to miss the last Sunday at home. Lady Carey had answered:

"Delighted to come for Sunday night.

GRACE."

Just before evensong she had arrived in the village cab. The men had already left for church. Mrs. Aylmer embraced her tenderly, saying:

"May Gawd bless you, dear child."

She urged her to come to the service with her; Dick was preaching.

"No, mother, dear," Grace had answered, "I am tired and grubby; and Dick would not impress me. Besides, if he saw me in the audience, it might cramp his style."

So Mrs. Aylmer had gone on her way, alone.

Dick was very fond of his sister. In his early childhood she had been his playmate. He could remember her as a bride, an angelic vision. Then, all of a sudden, she had ceased to exist. He had been forbidden even to send her a Christmas card. She had become an unmentionable subject; and this in itself had secured for her his sympathetic interest. He gathered that she had committed a sin so terrible that he identified it in his mind with that awful—and, alas! unspecified—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness. Then he began to cherish projects for her salvation. He would find her, admonish her, pray with her and lead her back to "Gawd" and Herwood. But when he did at last find her, varnishing her husband's pictures in a Chelsea studio and talking to eight or ten people in three or four different languages.

he was appalled at the difficulty of his undertaking. His sister was so accessible and yet so impenetrable. But he did not despair. He urged her to accompany him to High Mass at St. Alban's, Holborn; and when she concurred gladly, he expected a miracle. She came; she wearied of the length of the service; she found the kindly Father's eloquence somewhat vapid; and she expressed intolerance at the sheeplike multitude, who gaped at the sermon and snuffed up the incense.

"Why go nine tenths of the way to Rome," she said; "if you are not going to finish the journey?"

There was a cold, hard charity about Grace which alarmed and fascinated her brother. Once he had compared her to the Lady of Shalott, after she had broken away from her mirror out into the real world.

"Don't," said Grace. "That's so true it almost hurts."

Her husband grunted through his pipe.

"Why, George, isn't it true?" she asked.

"No," said George Carey, who was a man of few words. "That's all rot."

Dick had been working in the East End of London in a slum parish. During this time, he had come to know his sister fairly well. He had very little wisdom as yet in his head; but what he possessed he had gleaned from her. She loved him in her way, having no children of her own to love. She saw, too, in his future a sort of masculine version of her own story. She saw him pursuing the same illusions, banking on the same false values, precociously ecclesiastical, morally immature, honest at heart, sincere so far as was possible in the entangling circumstances of his upbringing, affectionate, clean, gallant and true. But he must be heading straight for disaster. Only she could not as yet detect where danger might lurk. Not that she would save him from it. That was not her way. She believed wholeheartedly in the curative power of catastrophe. She would see him into it and through it; she would rejoice with him on the other

side of it; and together they would laugh at the wreckage. As a foreign playwright had once said, Grace Carey was an ethical sadist.

She introduced her brother to some of her women acquaintances, pseudo-artists, beautiful to look upon and quite devoid of morals. But Dick appeared to be unaware of either fact.

"She seemed a nice sort of person," he would say of some exotic Delilah, and would wonder why Grace laughed at his incongruous epithet.

Evidently no danger threatened him as yet from such quarters as those. But meanwhile Dick became increasingly attached to this sister, for whom he felt a kind of religious responsibility. It is true she paid little attention to his views and admonitions; but he made up for that by praying for her assiduously. After her sad bankruptcy, he felt, she was now in his spiritual receivership.

Nothing could have given him more pleasure than to know that the evening of his departure was to complete the reconciliation between Grace and his parents. They would be less lonely now, when he was gone; and she, perhaps, less bitter.

CHAPTER II

GRACE, LADY CAREY

LADY CAREY was walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, when her family returned from church. She was dark, tall and deep-chested, Junoesque in build and bearing. She wore a cream-coloured silk frock, very plain and Greek in its lines. Her head, with its thick tresses parted down the centre, was bare. She had large, dark, lustrous eyes, in which the hard experience of her life seemed to have been submerged and lost. Her lips were full and sensuous; and the shadow of a smile like *Monna Lisa's* hovered about the corners of her mouth. A rope of black pearls hung round her neck.

"Grace, dear," said her mother once again, laying her hand on her tall daughter's shoulder, "welcome home!"

"It's a very pretty home," answered Grace, "and it suits you and father. He was not made for the modern world; and here we are sufficiently remote."

Supper was served under a wide weeping-ash, hung with Chinese lanterns, which formed a green tent on the lawn. It was Dick's farewell banquet—cold salmon with potato and cucumber salad, copious strawberries and cream and a flagon of cider-cup. Long after the meal was ended, talking continued beneath the light of the lanterns. The air was heavy with the perfume of syringa. Grace smoked.

"Have you ever met any Japanese?" she asked her brother.

"No, not yet," he replied.

"And yet to-morrow you are setting forth to

convert their country—hundreds of millions of them. That's very brave."

"I think it's worth trying," said Dick confidently.

"To me it seems like trying to swim the Atlantic before you know whether you can float or not."

"St. Augustine did not think like that," interposed the mild tones of Canon Aylmer, "or St. Boniface or St. Francis Xavier or even Livingstone."

"But they were all experienced men," argued Grace. "Dick is such a boy, and he has had such a sheltered existence. He hasn't finished his education."

"Oh, yes," interrupted Mrs. Aylmer, "he won his first class at Christchurch."

Mrs. Aylmer was rather slipshod in the use of technical expressions of any kind.

"That is not education," Grace resumed; "that is just a stunt, like playing the banjo. Education is experience of life."

"Then, Grace," said her father, with that faint deprecatory smile of his, "I'm afraid you will find everybody in this house very uneducated."

"I do," said the daughter bluntly, and then added: "after London it is rather refreshing."

Canon Aylmer rose. He was afraid lest the harmony of that last evening might be marred, and lest acrimony might develop.

"Edith, dearest," he said to his wife; "it is late. I think you ought to go upstairs now. We will leave these children to talk—but not too long. To-morrow will be a tiring day for Dick."

When the parents were gone, Grace sat down again with a sigh of relief, and lit another cigarette.

"Be good to them, Grace," said her brother solemnly; "they love you very dearly—in spite of all."

"I wish you hadn't added that 'in spite of all,'" said Grace. "That is the rope which trips us all up. I'm fond of them—in spite of all. They love me—in spite of all. And that ends it."

"Oh, no, Grace, no; it doesn't," cried Dick. "I

know that mother prays for you every morning and every evening of her life."

"Yes, and when I was down and out, they didn't dare cross the street to help me. Not that they didn't want to. They wanted to, but they didn't dare. That is what vexed me—the meanness of it. They were not even hard, as the old Aylmers might have been. They were just mean. Then—when the street was safe enough to cross, they came. That was mean, too."

"But did you really want them to come, Grace, at any time?"

Grace Carey was silent. She puffed at her cigarette. Dick was right. She had not wanted them. She had been independent of them, and had finished with them long before her catastrophe came. She cherished them now—as a grievance. Her affection for them was a mere sentimental memory of happy childish days.

"Dick," she said at last, "I was only saying that to warn you. I hate grouching about what is past."

"Warn me? How? I don't understand."

"If ever you get into trouble, you must not expect much help from father and mother, because you won't get it."

"Trouble—but why should I get into trouble?"

"Most people do. The clergy are not immune."

Outside on the lawn it was quite dark. Within the green bower formed by the drooping branches, the lantern light illumined Grace's features with a dark rosy tint. She looked like a beautiful, calm Sicilian sibyl, prophesying woes to come. The sky was covered with stars; but the moon had not yet risen. The scent of the syringa was almost overpowering. Dick felt that he was in a kind of trance. His sister's voice,—a deep, musical, contralto voice—seemed to come from an immense distance and to be full of oracular significance.

"I can't think why you became a clergyman, Dick," she was saying. "I can't think why you want to be a missionary. No—that's not true. I do know why—exactly."

"It was the call of God," said Dick dimly.

"Perhaps," his sister replied, "but the more immediate cause was the pressure of home atmosphere. You became a clergyman, because you felt that for you there was no other alternative. I married a clergyman, for the same reason. Now—you want to escape, to get away from everything and everybody you have known, to start a new life in a new land. The vagabond spirit of the British race has got hold of you; and you think that you can reconcile that with your Holy Orders by becoming a missionary. You think you can turn this restlessness to merit by converting the Japanese."

"I don't see things quite like that, Grace; but I do feel that God has specially called me to preach the gospel in Japan."

"How will you set about it?"

"I go first of all to Tokyo. I shall be living there for a year or two, attached to the English Church, as a student. Then, when I have learned the language thoroughly, I shall launch out for myself."

"Yes—how?"

"I should like to gather round me a band of better-class, educated Japanese, earnest and keen. We would form a community, like the Community of the Resurrection or the Cowley Fathers; and quietly—simply—we would show Japan how the Christian Catholic life can be lived—the true message of Christ, what the Mass really means, and the power and influence It can exercise. The Japanese are an artistic people. They will come to appreciate the Anglican ritual, as Dearmer has explained it, with all that it symbolises and conveys—"

"To us, perhaps, but not to them. What do you know about Japanese symbolism?"

"Nothing at all, but—"

"There you are," said the deep, full tones. "Yet you expect them to welcome yours. Now, I do actually know a Japanese. He is an artist. He paints

beautiful little brush-point sketches in his own Japanese style. But he is here to study impressionist painting in the manner of Monet and Cézanne. Result—terrible daubs. The Japanese have their own virtues and their own religions. If they try to imitate European Christianity, the result will be a daub. This little man—his name is Abé—told me how an American missionary once came to his part of the country; and wherever he went, so soon as his name was announced, it was received with incredulity and silence—for the Japanese, as you know, are too polite to laugh aloud. It seemed that his name when pronounced by Japanese meant 'maggot.' Every time he was referred to in such phrases as 'the maggot said this,' 'the maggot prayed thus,' 'the famous American gentleman maggot,' the effect was so irresistibly comic that it spoiled the virtue of his teaching. Finally, Mr. Maggot returned to America, after his whirlwind evangelistic tour. He is to this day blissfully unconscious of the sensation caused by his name in the cities and villages of Japan. He never knew what his audience had been thinking."

Grace's voice was silent for a moment or two. Then Dick replied:

"But I intend not only to learn Japanese, but to enter into Japanese life. I will know what they are thinking."

"I wonder," Grace rejoined, "if a European, a white man, a non-Japanese, can ever do that. My husband asked Mr. Abé if Japan could possibly be converted to Christianity. Mr. Abé replied, 'We are adopting the strong points of Christianity in our moral system; we do not need to adopt the weak points also.' How do you like that eclectic attitude, Dick?"

"At any rate it shows some interest."

The light kindled, as the moon rose. Dick could see his sister's deep, shining eyes, the creamy tint of her dress and the black pearls. He rose from his chair and went out on to the lawn. The house stood on the

slope of a hill. Below him, the slate roofs of the village were gleaming in the moonlight; and the square church tower stood over them like a fortress. Behind, the whited walls of the rectory rose, pale like a Syrian mosque. In the dim distance lay the valley, with its military lines of poplar trees, its square coppices and the jagged edge of low hills opposite. A silver-blue light bathed the whole familiar landscape, so that it seemed to Dick to be becoming already different from that to which he was accustomed. It was already fading into the realm of memory.

Grace joined her brother, and took his arm in hers.

"England is an incredibly beautiful country," she said. "You will miss it."

"Not with my work to do," answered Dick. "I am glad to go."

"I thought so once," answered his sister, very softly. "I was an exile for six years. Oh! The hunger for one's home country. Dick—Dick, you cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land!"

It was curious that this refrain should have shifted unconsciously from her mother's brain to her own. Silence fell for five minutes or so, the heavy, brooding silence of a summer midnight. Then, with a preliminary jangle of old-fashioned machinery, the church clock struck twelve, and the chimes followed:

*"O worship the King all-glorious above;
O gratefully sing His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilion'd in splendour, and girded with praise."*

"I think I'll turn in," said Dick. "It's awfully late."

"Good-night, dear old Dick. God bless you, anyhow."

He left his sister still standing in the moonlight, with the transfigured vision of his home around her.

"He hasn't got much to teach the Japanese," she was thinking. "But he may find they have the devil of a lot to teach him."

CHAPTER III

TILBURY DOCKS

It was raining at Tilbury.

The journey from Fenchurch Street to Tilbury is not a consoling one. The vistas of grey streets and wet asphalt, of grimy rooms and sordid washing, of women prematurely aged and of men who work without honour or starve without work, all the filth, smoke and stench of East London, the smug monotony of West Ham, and Barking, and the flat depression of the subsequent countryside which waits in sullen resignation for its ultimate "development"—these are things which leave no conviction that all is for the best in the best of worlds. Tilbury itself, a severed limb of the great London dock system, has little to commend it to the thousands of travellers who yearly pass with the greatest possible expedition from its quays to its platforms and from its platforms to its quays. Even the gallant memory of the Virgin Queen on her white steed reviewing her territorials can hardly be reconciled with the gaunt factories, the interminable sidings, the smoke, the concrete and the rubble of the Gallions Station.

Rain at Tilbury completes the sense of desolation. The cranes and derricks work incessantly. The porters and stewards are running to and fro like ants. The dark lascars with their scanty and unusual garments, with their gleaming teeth and their lithe prehensile toes, pass on their mysterious activities like premonitions of strange lands. The liner's towering side overhangs the quay; and streams of agitated humanity are hurrying in and out of the dark apertures in her

flank. There is a swarm of distracted travellers round the purser's office; another swarm, less distracted, round the bar. Prolonged farewells—frivolous or broken-hearted; commonplace phrases and sobs of despair. Fear and guilt, love and courage, business, pleasure, crime and craft are mingled together in indistinguishable jabber until that august moment when—apparently without effort, pain or motive force—the giant vessel parts from her moorings, the angle of separation widens between deck and quay, and the ship, with her company and her passengers, her joys and her sorrows, sets out upon her journey to another world.

Grace Carey had returned to town from Hernwood with her brother, determined that only the last moment should part them. Her affection for him and her interest in his destiny seemed to increase prodigiously as the time approached which might take him out of her life for ever. He looked pathetically young as he sat opposite her in the railway compartment. He was dressed in grey flannels, too, so that he seemed more like a schoolboy going to a cricket match than like a missionary bound for the ends of the earth. Only his clerical collar and black stock gave him an air of precocious maturity.

The vicar of his East End parish—a hearty, corpulent man—two or three brother curates and a fluttering group of church workers of both sexes had been on the platform to wish him God-speed.

"Are you expecting anybody else to turn up at Tilbury?" his sister asked, as the train lumbered out of the murky station.

"No," he replied, rather ashamedly. He was disappointed at the remissness of his Oxford friends and vexed that his sister should realise how solitary he was.

"No girl friends?" she smiled.

"Oh, no!" he rejoined quickly.

Suddenly, that expressive voice of hers became serious again, and she seized this last opportunity to

embark on a subject which hitherto they had both been inclined to avoid.

"Have you ever been in love, Dick?" she asked.

"Oh, no!" he answered; and his face flushed, for he did not like to discuss such topics.

"There is no one," his sister continued, "whom you would like me to see now and then while you are away? Dick, dear, you know you can trust me. I have been sufficiently indiscreet myself to know how to deal discreetly with others."

"No, Grace, there's no one. I have never known what that kind of love is, and I hope I never shall."

"You are wrong, Dick; you are quite wrong. You are made of flesh and blood, boy—not bad-looking, either; and clergymen appeal to a certain type of girl. Yes, I know we are the inferior sex; but have pity on us, and don't despise us and the gifts we offer you."

"I don't think a priest should marry," the young man answered, "unless——"

But he checked himself, and his cheeks flushed scarlet again.

"Yes; unless what?"

"Grace—I don't think I ought to say these things to you."

"Don't be silly, Dick. I'm an old married woman."

"If ever I had to marry," Dick went on, "I would marry a Japanese girl."

"Good heavens, Dick, don't say that. It's indecent!"

"I would. It might help me to understand the people among whom I have to work."

"And your children—half-castes!"

Dick looked reproachfully at his sister.

"Don't, Grace," he said; "don't talk about unpleasant things—on my last day."

Grace smiled grimly; but she consented to change the subject, until at last a series of clatters and jolts announced that the train was approaching Gallions.

It was raining in torrents. Amid a scrimmage of

umbrella domes, brother and sister splashed their way on board the liner. After a preliminary baggage settlement, a glance into the crowded lounge and a whiff of the alcoholic bar, they took refuge in Dick's narrow cabin.

There they settled down to one of those awful periods of long silences and abrupt talk, which add so much sadness to farewells, and which are heavy with a sense of emotional impotence and a despair of human speech as a vehicle for the heart's expansion.

"Grace," said Dick for the twentieth time, "do go down to Hernwood now and then. It will make such a difference to father and mother."

"Yes, Dick, I will try. But it is difficult to get there both geographically and spiritually. They live such thousands of miles from our world in London—further even than Japan. And, besides, they don't want us *very* much. They are so happy together."

At that moment voices were heard in the passage outside, and some one asking for Mr. Aylmer's cabin.

"This way, miss," a steward answered.

Some one tapped at the cabin door. Dick opened; and then stepped back, embarrassed. A slim, fair girl edged her way into the tiny room. Grace Carey, remembering the conversation with her brother in the train, could not repress a slightly ironical smile.

"Miss Carbery!" exclaimed Dick. "It's very kind of you to come and say good-bye to me."

The pale girl smiled. Her skin was so white and her cheeks so colourless that her fair hair seemed in contrast darker than it really was. But her lips were bright carmine, and deep shadows ringed her eyes, which were of a hazel colour. The first impression was of a diaphanous person, almost ghostlike.

"I thought I must come," she said, in a voice so low that it sank to a whisper. "I brought you these."

She held out a bunch of red roses.

"Thank you very much," said Dick, still uneasy in speech and gesture. Then, turning to Grace, he added:

"This is my sister—Lady Carey. Miss Carbery used to help me in my parish in Bethnal Green. She is a Ministering Angel."

Miss Carbery laughed—a pleasing laugh.

"That's not necessarily a compliment, Lady Carey," she said. "It's the name of a society for which I am a worker. I visit from house to house in the East End, and report on deserving cases."

Dick was arranging his roses in the water carafe. The two ladies were seated—one on the lower bunk, the other on the settee which occupied the opposite side of the cabin. Luggage was stacked around them.

Miss Carbery wore a navy blue serge coat and skirt, with an inconspicuous hat of the same shade. She had a white frill round her neck and patent leather shoes. In spite of her unobtrusive attire, Grace Carey was aware of her curious beauty, and a certain modest charm in her way of speech.

"My last English roses," said Dick. "It was awfully kind of you to bring them. Have you got friends travelling by this boat?"

"No," said the girl simply; "only you."

Grace was secretly much amused at her brother's awkward acceptance of this fair girl's unconcealed devotion. He had never even mentioned the name of Carbery to her. Either it was a serious affair, which he had been too sheepish to avow—that was unlikely, though in love all things are possible; or else it was a case of affection on the girl's part, unsolicited and unrequited. In any case, she was glad that her brother had at least one girl friend, sufficiently interested in him to wish him good-bye, and to bring him a floral offering. It was a touching tribute; and it made him more human in his sister's eyes.

The hubbub in the corridor outside increased in volume. Trumpetings were heard, and voices calling: "All visitors ashore!"

Miss Carbery started to her feet.

"I'm sorry," she exclaimed. "I've been taking

up your time, when you wanted to talk to your sister."

"No—not at all," answered Dick. "It was very kind of you to come, and to bring me the flowers. I shall remember them long after they have faded. Thank you."

Dick Aylmer held out his hand to her, but she took no notice of it. Instead, she flung both arms round his neck, and her lips closed on his. For a brief moment she hung there; and the presence of the divine Aphrodite transfigured the narrow cabin. Then, in the most matter of fact way, the girl let loose the frightened Dick, stepped back and offered her hand to Lady Carey.

"Good-bye," she said; and disappeared.

Grace, in her turn, rose and moved towards the door.

"Well—Dick?" she said, smiling.

"I had no idea," stammered Dick, "that she was fond of me. I—I don't even know her Christian name."

Grace laughed outright.

"Cheer up, old Dick," she said. "You soon will, when she begins to write to you."

"But what am I to do?" said Dick solemnly; for he felt that after so compromising an episode he was already practically engaged to be married and almost within sight of the church door.

"Answer them nicely, but without promising too much," said his sister, "until they become more infrequent. That will happen before long, for she's certainly pretty."

Together they left the cabin, and threaded their way through the ship's maze.

"Here's the staircase," said Dick.

They emerged in the crowded lounge. At a corner table, four orientals, probably Japanese, with whiskies and sodas in front of them, were addressing picture post-cards.

"Your future parishioners," commented Grace; and then, as though talking to herself, she continued:

"And you can leave warm lips and bright eyes and the soft sound of your own speech to go and spread your ambiguous gospel among those inscrutable, incomprehensible people. Dick, you are very cold, or very conceited, or very undeveloped."

"Don't say that, Grace, just when I am leaving. You don't understand. It hurts to go away."

They had come out on to the deck, whence a gangway was passing its stream of visitors on to the wharf.

"I'm sorry, Dick. You know I'm fond of you—very fond, indeed. I hate to think of your going to live at the world's end. Let it be an experience, an episode, a drama in one act; and then, come back to us—quickly!"

In another moment she was gone, down the gangway, down among the crowd, the umbrellas and the rain.

The liner had awakened like a great water-beast after a prolonged siesta. Her mighty heart was beating audibly. The last gangway had been pulled ashore. The cables could no longer hold her. From above sounded the navigator's bell, and from below the churning of the screw. There was a sudden and terrific hooting.

In the wet, bedraggled crowd on the quay-side stood Grace Carey, with her brother's new-found admirer. On board the S.S. *Asia*, a grey figure was still waving to them. They waved back, until the ship had turned out of the dock into the river, and they could distinguish him no more. Women around them were weeping; but the rain discouraged much demonstration; and the scene became more than ever dark, melancholy and funereal, as the ship, with all her feverish activity, passed out of sight into the distance.

"Frater, ave atque vale!"

Hail, brother, and farewell! The echo of 'the Roman poet's hopeless woe' floated back to Grace Carey's memory, as she watched her brother's ship fade away, a phantom in the grey mist. Dick had come into her life so late, and had passed out of it so soon. For on this score she had no illusions. Whatever might be the end of Dick's journeying, whether, indeed, he would see the realisation of his dream of a Christian Orient or whether he would return within a few months knowing that his effort was hopeless, whether he came back to her as conqueror or as conquered, he would never again be quite the same Dick—so young, so inexperienced, so beautiful. The Dick, who had grown so dear to her, was being carried overseas like Ogier the Dane to that island of Avilion where dreams come true. But from that shore there is no return to earth. If Dick came back to England one day, it would be as another brother—a wiser and a better man, perhaps; but somehow different.

"Frater, ave atque vale!"

"Shall we see about getting back to London?" she said to the girl beside her, who was still staring at the place where the ship had vanished into the haze.

"Yes. May I really come with you?" Miss Carbery answered timidly.

"Of course," said the elder woman.

Then, as they moved off through the crowd, she asked:

"You're fond of Dick?"

"He's wonderful," the fair girl replied; and Grace Carey recognised, with a little smile, that tell-tale epithet which marks a stage in the romances of women.

"And he is fond of you?" she continued.

Miss Carbery laughed, softly but rather bitterly.

"Until to-day I don't think he was quite aware of my existence. But I meant him never to forget to-day."

"You are right. He won't forget that—the last kiss before he left England."

"But you kissed him yourself afterwards. I saw you."

"Sister's kisses don't count."

Miss Carbery had a pleasant voice, but rather a common intonation and turn of phrase, as though she had had considerable practice in the art of back-answering. Yet her lily-like pallor gave her distinction. Perhaps it was just as well for Dick that he had not remained at Bethnal Green. If such rare orchids were to be found in those mean streets, he might have changed his views as to the marriage of the clergy, and the result might have been disastrous. Japan was, at any rate, at a safe distance from Greta Green.

By now, the two women were seated on a hard yellow bench in a fusty waiting-room. Fly-blown maps hung on the wall; and gritty time-tables were perched on the overmantel. In front of an empty fireplace strewn with rubbish, a group of disconsolate friends and relatives were making a pretence of drying themselves. The cheerier members of the company had found their way to the bar.

"I suppose you think it was very forward of me to kiss him like that?" said Miss Carbery.

"No," laughed Grace. "It did him good."

"I would not have done it at other times—not with people about. I'm not that sort of girl. But I had made up my mind I'd do it—if the Archbishop himself were there—and do it I did. It's a kind of satisfaction!"

"Yes, it must be," Grace agreed.

"And he didn't seem to mind it either."

"He's not quite such a fool as that," laughed Grace again; and this time her companion laughed with her—her pleasant open laugh.

"You seem to understand things!" Miss Carbery commented.

This flattered Grace; but her hardened reason passed

verdict against this curious, half-frank, half-furtive girl. No; she would never have done as a wife for Dick; but, as an episode, she might have improved him and made him more human.

"What is your other name?" Grace asked.

"Chloe," the girl replied.

"Tell me something about yourself, Chloe," Lady Carey continued. "Where do you live and what do you do?"

So between the grimy waiting-room at Tilbury and the dark Fenchurch Street station, Chloe Carbery told a part of her story, and Dick's sister guessed something more of what remained untold. Chloe had a mother, it seemed, whom she admired but with some misgiving, and whom she lost sight of for long periods. Pressed on this point, she admitted rather reluctantly that her mother's name was Mrs. O'Hara, and that she was well known in racing circles. Lady Carey seemed to have heard of Mrs. O'Hara by name and reputation. Chloe did not add anything about her father, whom she appeared never to have known. She had been brought up anyhow—at times concealed and forgotten in farmhouses in the country, at times boxed up with her mother in luxurious London flats, spoiled and petted by "mummy" and by innumerable "uncles" whom she knew only by Christian names and pet names, then—suddenly—relegated to oblivion again. She had passed a year in a convent in Belgium, after which she had returned to London as her mother's confidante and unofficial maid. She followed the eccentric course of Mrs. O'Hara's nerves and fads, resorting to quack cures for the body and quack religions for the soul. She learned the elements of betting and gambling, being initiated into horse-racing in England and into roulette, chemin-de-fer, and baccarat abroad. She learned about men, their types and uses, the well-worn clichés which never fail to flatter, the thousand classic ruses for wheedling money, lies and when to tell them, truth and how to hide it, dress and undress, jewellery

and pawnshops, cosmetics and perfumery, and the rudiments of conduct and hygiene.

Then came a sudden turn in her mother's fortunes, which once again necessitated separation. Chloe fell back upon the comforts of religion. She and Mrs. O'Hara had recently been following a course of eloquent sermons by an Anglican divine on the "Sins of Society." Feeling that something must be done to redress the adverse family balance, Chloe plunged headlong into charity work. She would bury herself in the East End. She would minister light and consolation to our poorer brothers and sisters. Encouraged by a personal interview with the eminent divine, who had patted her hand and called her "my dear child," she had joined the Society of Ministering Angels, and had betaken herself to Bethnal Green.

She had started off with some romantic notion of saving handsome young aristocrats from opium dens, of which she believed the East End of London principally to consist. With dirt, hunger, rickety children and sweated labour she had less sympathy. The daily task of a Ministering Angel bored her faster than any of her former hobbies; and she would have left her ministering within a fortnight or so, if she had not happened to pass by the church where Dick Aylmer was serving his diaconate. It was evening; and the mixture of warmth and piety, suggested by the stained glass windows illuminated from within was attractive even to a Ministering Angel. "I will say a little prayer for poor mother," she thought; "and I will ask God to take me soon to Monte Carlo." As she entered, Dick was reading the second lesson. It was the story of Jesus Christ and the woman taken in adultery. "Neither do I condemn thee; go in peace and sin no more."

The young voice had a quality which tickled Chloe at the roots of her volatile emotions. Dick's halo of fair hair, and his evident faith and enthusiasm held her spellbound. Towards the end of the service he gave

a short sermon on the story which he had read from the Bible—a very simple address portraying Jesus' infinite compassion, his understanding of temptations and sins so remote from His own virgin nature, and the hard contrast of the Scribes and Pharisees who were so eager to condemn.

By the time the sermon was ended, Chloe was in love—for perhaps the eighteenth or twentieth time. But, as this time the event had occurred within the precincts of a sacred edifice, she fondly imagined that her sentimentality must be charged with some special blessing from on high. After the service, she betook herself to the vestry to convey to her new conqueror some intimation of his victory. She found Dick, and introduced herself as a Ministering Angel. She was such a novice at the work, she explained, and did not quite understand how she ought to set about it. Would Mr. Aylmer help her? From the beautiful words which he had spoken that evening, she was certain that he could. He had already given her courage to persevere.

So Dick had accompanied her on her rounds in the district, where he seemed to know by name all the snotty-nosed children and where all the dirty old women welcomed him as a personal friend. Subsequently Chloe was invited to the grim clergy-house and to the gatherings of other Ministering Angels and their like of all ages and of both sexes; but she never achieved that soul to soul intimacy with Dick which had been her dream. To win his approval and to retain his interest she struggled along with her ministrations; but always her idol seemed to be surrounded by a black flock of garrulous clergy, who treated him as one of themselves with unwarrantable familiarity and her with no special consideration. At last, in desperation she thought of announcing that she had never been confirmed, and asking that he might prepare her for the laying on of hands; but that would clash with the fact that she had been posing as a regular communicant.

Then, all of a sudden, she learned that Mr. Aylmer

was about to go to Japan as a missionary. Could not she, too, be transferred thither by the Ministering Angels or some other society? Clad in a *kimono* of silver-grey embroidered with cherry-blossoms, and teaching "Onward, Christian soldiers" to little Jappy boys and girls, she could not fail to attract even Dick Aylmer. She broached the proposal to her mother, who had just returned from abroad and was embowered in a suite of rooms at the Savoy.

"What? Marry a clergyman and go to Japan?" exclaimed Mrs. O'Hara. "Good God, child, are you mad?"

She then explained that if her daughter would only be patient until the autumn, she would take her to the South of France. She had a Russian nobleman in tow who was most generous.

"Only you must give up calling me 'mummy.' You're too big a girl now. You will call me 'Gaby' in future; and I'm your elder sister. Remember; it's most important. And if you're wise, I shall find a rich husband for you; and if you're foolish, like your poor old mother, well, you'll have a good time all the same. Marry a parson? Oh, la, la! What a joke?"

Something of this sordid, gaudy tale of dust and tinsel was conveyed by Chloe Carbery to Dick's sister during that melancholy ride back from Tilbury docks; and as they rattled over the sea of roofs which concealed Bethnal Green and the scene of her brief idyll, she added:

"But perhaps that memory of Dick will keep me straight. Yes—I'm glad I kissed him."

Grace Carey smiled her sleepy, tolerant smile.

"Are you going back to the Ministering Angels?" she asked.

"I should think not," answered Chloe. "I'm fed up with Charity. I think I'll try Art."

So Chloe Carbery, nobody's daughter, became an art student, and for a time an *habituée* of the Careys' studio.

CHAPTER IV

LETTERS FROM JAPAN

THE weeks passed and the months; and letters began to arrive from Japan,—some for Grace, some for the old people at Hernwood, and one at least for Chloe Carbery.

"DEAR MISS CARBERY," Dick wrote, "how kind of you to send me your news. I am sorry to hear that you have given up your work at Bethnal Green; but that kind of work is not for everybody. God gives different gifts to different people—different talents and different characters. You say that you wish to study Art, but you do not explain exactly what kind of Art. If it is drawing, painting, etc., my sister whom you met on the boat and her husband will be able to help and advise you.

"You ask how I am, and what I do, and how I like Japan. I love Japan. I am half Japanese already. I live in a little doll's house, made of wood and paper, in the suburbs of Tokyo. It stands on a hill; and from my narrow balcony I can watch the broad calm waters of Tokyo Bay, the dark island of Tsukijima with its tall smoky factory chimneys, the boats with their high white sails or their streaming funnels passing to and from the busy city between the diamond-shaped forts which float like rafts on the peaceful sea, and which the Japanese built in the days when the dreaded barbarians of the Western Ocean—that is, we and the Americans—first threatened their security.

"If I walk to the end of my balcony and look to the westward I can see the broad plain of marshy

rice-fields, ending at Yokohama, whence the big liners sail for home; and the low hills beyond, and the higher hills beyond them, and—still further—when the weather is clear, the dome of Fujiyama, half-way between heaven and earth. I have sent you a post-card of this beautiful mountain; but no picture can give any idea of its extraordinary personality. To the Japanese, of course, it is a sacred place. There is a temple on the top—twelve thousand feet above sea-level—and every summer thousands of pilgrims make the ascent. Until quite recently women were not allowed to climb the mountain because the Buddhist religion teaches that women are inferior. How wrong and stupid and senseless—especially here in Japan where the women are, from all accounts, so good and pure and gentle and true. Anyhow, that is changed now; and many women climb to the top.

“But it is from the distance that Fuji is most beautiful. I think of the words of the psalm—“I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord who hath made Heaven and earth.” My mother taught me to say that psalm every evening when I go to bed. But Fujiyama has given it a new meaning. I lift up mine eyes unto the hills! Fuji is like an assurance of God's presence. I cannot always see that wonderful winged peak. I cannot see it this evening. But I know that it is there. In the cloudy weather it is hidden. But, when the air is bright and sunny, its grey and silver outline can be seen; and when the sun sets behind it, it stands out like a purple pyramid. It speaks of peace and perfection, of remoteness from the worries and futilities of this life, of another life better and nobler than ours to which we can attain through labour and perseverance. They say that the Japanese moved the capital of their country from Kyoto to Tokyo in order to be within sight of Fuji. If so, they were quite right. It is indeed a Sacred Mountain.

"But I am going on like a guide-book. Meanwhile, my evening-meal awaits me—my bowl of rice, my slices of raw fish, my thin square blades of compressed sea-weed, and—my chop-sticks. O Katsu San, my dame of all work, is bowing to me from the doorway and is inviting me graciously to condescend to taste.

"*Sayonara!* Good-bye! It is such a pretty Japanese word. I think it means: "If it must be so——!" They always use it at parting, with those wonderful bows from the waist which look so easy and graceful, and are so impossible for us awkward foreigners to imitate. *Sayonara*, England! *Sayonara*, my home! *Sayonara*, all that I have loved and cherished! *Sayonara*, you of the red roses. I keep one of them in my Bible for yours and England's sake! *Sayonara!* God bless and keep you!

"Your sincere friend,

"RICHARD AYLMER."

To Hernwood Dick wrote about ecclesiastical matters and about the dreams and projects of his inexperience. As a missionary of the Church of England, Tokyo had been a surprise to him, and a shock. The church, his church, had been so hard to find and so inconspicuous. Dick had never been away from England before, and had never realised that, apart from the British Empire, Queen Elizabeth's Establishment occupies but a small place in the sun. Yet its claim to be catholic—at least in the geographical sense—is borne out by the voyage eastwards. The old Georgian Church at Penang, the white-towered cathedral dominating the playing-fields and the harbour at Singapore, and the Hongkong Cathedral rising amidst a hot-house luxuriance of palms and creepers, testify more clearly than any other sign that here is British soil. Even on international territory in the settlement of Shanghai the red-brick Anglican church carries an air of importance and authority which left Dick Aylmer assured as to the high destiny of Anglicanism overseas.

But in Tokyo things were different. The stucco cathedral in Tsukiji was the seat of the Roman Catholic Archbishop. The imposing structure in Honjo, with its domes and minarets, was the home of Greek Orthodoxy under Russian supervision. Another fine red-brick church was the pride of the American Episcopalian bishop. The Y.M.C.A. building in the Kanda quarter testified to a vigorous growth of Christian ideas; but this was the work of American dissenters. The Salvation Army, too, had a considerable following. Its crusades against tuberculosis and against commercialised vice had attracted attention in the Press. The red and blue uniform of General Booth was a not infrequent sight in the Tokyo streets. But the little English church of St. George on the hill by Shiba Park seemed very remote from the main currents of life in the Japanese capital. It was so English in aspect that it had a certain ugly charm—like the familiar sweetness of a plain face. But in this metropolitan city, where three Christian bishops and one archbishop perplex the native convert with their rival claims, the Anglican sanctuary is the most modest in its aspect. It is a wooden building painted a greenish grey without and furnished with pitch-pine within. A clergy-house is attached where the bishop lives and two or three priests; and there is a school-building for Japanese students and children.

Dick had stayed at the clergy-house for a week or so after his arrival. The Bishop and the three junior clergy had treated him with kindly patronage, but had appeared to be unimpressed by his views on the aims and conduct of foreign missions.

"A glance at the notice-board outside the church," Dick wrote, "was sufficient to show the gulf between their ideas and mine. The Mass relegated to the early morning hours on Sundays and Saints' days alone, and designated as 'Communion.' Mattins, Litany and Sermon at 11, Evensong and Sermon at 6.30—that persistent emphasising of the unessential

which is slowly draining away the vitality of the Church.

"It will be two years at least before I am free to go my own way; and it will be a long way from the pathetic insularity of St. George's. Our Church wants *life*. I never realised how much until I came out here. It is because we are afraid to acknowledge the Mass, which is the Body and Blood of the Catholic tradition. Until we restore the Mass to its central position in church worship, we cannot be more than the wraith of a church.

"I have only been here for a month; but already I know—something. Some One, perhaps, tells me—that this is what I must work for in this distant corner of the globe. It ought to be easier here in a new land than at home where our people are hide-bound by conventionality and prejudice.

"Here, in Japan, there are three great religious influences at work. There is Shinto, the ancestor-worship, which has developed into worship of Emperor and country. This influence is anti-Christian and anti-foreign. It is suspicious of all that comes from abroad. It is too self-opiniated to receive teaching from any one, from the foreign barbarians least of all. This influence is our greatest enemy. Yet, even here I think there must be room for compromise and conciliation, if the Japanese will only grasp the teaching of the tribute-money—'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's.'

"The second influence is Buddhism, which seems to be moribund, but whose roots have thrust deep into the soil of Japan. Buddhism is tolerant in its attitude towards other creeds. In fact, it is inclined to take them all in under its wing. One cannot help being struck with continual resemblances to Christianity—in the form of the temples, the robes of the priests, the altar and its ornaments, the ritual, the Divine Trinity, etc. But the Buddhist teaching, so I gather,

is pessimistic. It hopes for an escape from a world of misery into a future of annihilation. Yet I have no patience with those who treat the Buddhas as mere 'idols' and the Buddhist scriptures as pernicious nonsense. Rather, it seems to me as though the old faith of Japan should be regarded as the Old Testament of the nation, a true revelation, but out of date, from whose age and decline the New Testament of Jesus Christ should develop naturally and without effort. 'But lo! I will show you a more excellent way.'

"The third great influence is Christianity. The churches have done something, but they can do so very much more. The whole country is in an effervescence of renewal, like the Renaissance in Europe or like the French Revolution. Never was there a land so yearning for new faith and new ideals—something around which all this energy can crystallise. All that their own teachers can give them is an exaggerated and rather rancorous form of nationalism. They ask for Christ; and what do they get? The political ecclesiasticism of Rome, or the mere morality of the American methodists. Life, give us Life, they cry. If they ask bread of thee, wilt thou give them a stone?

"It is the most wonderful opportunity in the whole history of Christianity since Paul and Peter first preached in Rome. Yet the Bishop and my colleagues seem quite unaware of the ferment around them. They go about their services, their Bible-classes, their round of petty visiting—for all the world as if they were in charge of a country parish in England. They are most exasperating. Pray for me, mother and father dear, pray that God will give me patience to await His own good time. 'Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me! Even so come, Lord Jesus!'"

To all this exuberance, Canon Aylmer replied that the roses at Hernwood that summer had been even

more remarkable than in the past. Gorton, the gardener, had won no less than three first prizes at the local show for some particularly fine blooms. The Canon had decided to dig another rose-bed on the further side of the croquet lawn, to demolish the old summer-house, which had become a positive disfigurement, and to construct a rock garden in its place. It was Grace who had suggested these changes; and she had really been very helpful on the subject of the rock garden. Her knowledge of Alpine plants was most comprehensive; and her visits to Hernwood were much appreciated by her parents. By the time Dick returned, which the Canon assumed would be within two or three years at the most, he would find the new bed and the rock garden both firmly established. The Canon also inquired about Japanese lily-bulbs. The *lilium speciosum* was a hardy plant and most effective, especially when growing in wild surroundings. He would like to experiment with a few dozen to begin with, planted at random around the fruit orchard.

CHAPTER V

A CHRISTIAN SAMURAI

GRACE CAREY was favoured with a more detailed narrative of her brother's daily doings.

"I am sending you a kind of diary," he wrote, "which will give you an idea of the circumstances in which I live, and the people with whom I am in contact. I give you as much local colour as possible, since it is the local differences and peculiarities which are the most interesting to a foreigner's eye."

Dick had removed from St. George's clergy-house to a Japanese villa on the hill of Kamiyama (God's mountain), which forms part of the western suburbs of Tokyo and is about four miles from the centre of the city.

It was hot, very hot, he wrote, hotter than anything he had experienced in England. A torpor lay over the Japanese capital; and all those who could afford to do so had departed for the mountains, the hot springs or the sea-side. But in the evening a cool wind would blow in from the bay; and the maid, O Katsu San, as she brought the evening "omuretsu" (omelette) out on to the verandah, where Dick was busy with books or writing, would murmur encouragingly in her melodious colloquial:

"Gradually it is becoming cooler—*né, danna san.*"

Danna san (the master) would turn reluctantly to the steaming plate and the insipid food.

The mosquitoes were persecuting Dick. One of them, evidently a fanatical anti-Christian, had just stabbed him on the tip of his nose. This insult had swollen up as large as an apple, he said, and was

obstructing his eyesight. At night, he slept under a green net, suspended from the ceiling of his room. But the enemy penetrated within his defences from time to time. Then, he would awake with that infuriating metallic Pzzz! in his ear. He would smite and struggle in the darkness. But the elusive creature would almost always escape him; and next morning he would find leg or arm or chest embossed with a new design in large, red lumps.

Dick slept in Japanese fashion. His bedroom occupied the upper storey of his tiny dwelling. A steep companion-ladder rose from below to the balcony; and one entered the apartment as it were through the window. It was a square room of the area of eight mats; and the view over the bay and the mountains was even more extensive than from below. Every evening O Katsu would lay the *yagu* (night implements) in the middle space of the golden *tatami* (matting of rice straw). There was the *futon*, the thick silk-covered mattress which formed the bedstead; there were the white sheets, and the thin silk counterpane; and there was the small hard pillow which Dick always rejected.

Sleeping on the floor was not such a hardship as he had imagined. He soon accustomed himself to the low elevation; and his slumbers were deep and undisturbed. It was a relief, too, in the morning to see all traces of the night disappear, when O Katsu had rolled up the *futon* and stowed it away in a cupboard at the end of the verandah. A European bedstead, he commented, is a gross, bulbous and embarrassing piece of furniture, which it is an indecency to have under one's eyes during the day-time.

In this eyrie of pine-wood and paper, open to all the winds of heaven, Dick Aylmer dreamed the first dreams of his new life in Japan. O Katsu did not entirely approve of the open air theory. A Japanese house, in her opinion, should be hermetically shuttered at night time. During the dark hours the *dorobo*

(robbers) were on the prowl with their sharp swords. Had they not attacked a foreigner—a *senkyoshi* (missionary) like *danna san*—in his home in Tokyo only a few years ago, and had slashed him to death, yes, and *okusan* (his wife), too. Besides the *dorobo*, whose activities were known to all, were there not *o baké* (the ghosts), *kitsuné* (the demon foxes), *tanuki* (phantom badgers), and *oni* (the devils), whom some people called *mukashi banashi* (old wives' tales), but whom she, O Katsu, had learned to know better?

The first sound which aroused Dick at early dawn was usually the clatter of O Katsu removing the *amado* (shutters) downstairs. Then he would rise from beneath his green net canopy; and, clad in his *yukata*, a striped cotton *kimono* for night wear, he would stroll out on to the verandah and gaze in the direction where the dome of Fuji might be visible in the rosy morning light. He would watch the rays of the sun glancing between the red trunks of the pine-trees in the neighbouring garden of the palace of an Imperial Prince. He would yawn and stretch himself, and scratch his mosquito bites and drink in the delicious morning air with its pure resinous flavour.

Sometimes he would bicycle down to the sea-shore at Omori for a bathe before breakfast. Sometimes he would merely descend his narrow stairway to his ground-floor sitting room, and read and study for an hour or so, until O Katsu brought in the meal.

After breakfast, Mikami San would arrive; and Dick's serious Japanese lessons would begin. Mikami was verger, bell-ringer and general factotum at St. George's Church. His father had been a *samurai* in the service of the Shogunate, and had taken part in the last desperate battle in the snow among the Uyeno temples during that bitter winter, when after two and a-half centuries of peaceful rule the Tokugawa feudal system was swept away by the impact of those new forces which have created the modern Japan.

But the conquerors were generous in their treatment of the defeated Tokugawa adherents; and young Mikami, a promising lad, was sent abroad as a Government student. He was in Paris at the time of the siege; he knew the leaders of the Commune, and was rumoured to have waved a red flag on the barricades. But early promise came to nothing. Mikami returned to Japan, and dabbled in journalism. He filled the curious post of "prison editor" for more than one ephemeral newspaper. The "prison editor" is the person nominally responsible for the matter published in the paper. If this infringes the Press Laws—and at the end of last century almost any criticism of Government involved a statutory offence—the "prison editor" is arrested, arraigned and sentenced; but the actual working staff of the newspaper may continue their avocations undisturbed.

Tired at length of prison editing, Mikami, who was a Christian, became verger at the English Church; but a curious hallucination grew upon him that he was, in fact, preparing for his examination for entering the Japanese Diplomatic Service. As he was well over fifty, this project was scarcely credible; but, with tears in his eyes, he would tell his pupils—and he taught most of the young English clergy on their first arrival in Japan—that his examination was coming on early next year, and that he was very much afraid he might fail.

He was a man of short stature, with grizzled hair, almost bald at the top of the head. He had a large vocabulary of English words, but no knowledge of its use. He drew his words at random as from a lucky-bag or bran-pie; and he would mix up "dog" and "cat," "horse" and "cow," "he," "she" and "it" with gay insouciance. As a teacher, so Dick soon discovered, he was most misleading.

As he was rather blind and very obstinate, it was useless for the pupil to correct his master. The old Japanese would take off his large horn-rimmed

spectacles, wipe them on his greasy brown *kimono* sleeve and murmur:

"*Tabun so gozaimasho!* (Perhaps it may be so!)" Five minutes later he would plunge into the same mistakes, quite impenitent. His face, which had once been round, was now uneven in shape and marked with small-pox. The little finger-nail of his left hand had been allowed to grow to a preposterous length, as a sign of his scholastic profession. With this dingy claw he would follow line by line the book or newspaper which he was reading. He was, in his own opinion at least, a fine writer of Japanese script, a poet of merit, an expert at the game known as *go* (a kind of chequers) and a devout Christian.

But with all his peculiarities, and in the face of his extreme poverty, Mikami remained, as he was born, a Japanese gentleman of the old school. Generous, brave, and unworldly to the point of childishness, he was the descendant of those two-sworded *samurai* who had swaggered through the streets of Yedo, as Tokyo had been called under the Tokugawas. With him a whole civilisation was in decay, a powerful theory of government which had kept the country at peace for two hundred and fifty years, a proud and manly aristocracy, and a high tradition of courage, discipline, polite manners and artistic refinement. In his grimy *kimono*, his shapeless hat of limp felt and his hideous side-spring shoes, Mikami stood for the courtly era of Genroku in the same degree as Dick Aylmer represented the lordly land-owning days of Walpole.

Mikami was a devout attendant at church, but he never appeared to be in the least interested in the mysteries of the faith or in its historical development. If asked how and why he had first become a Christian, he would reply:

"As young man I travel to study in foreign place; then I become Christ."

"But what was it about the Christian faith which appealed to you, Mr. Mikami?"

"Sa! That is very long time past," he would answer. "It is forgot. The heart is unquiet, when she is young."

"And would you give up Christianity now?"

"No, sir. When she is old, the heart is still. He would not be loyal servant, I think."

Mikami, the *ronin* (unattached *samurai*) had entered the service of Christ, the *daimyo* (feudal prince). There was no question here of faith or unfaith, of doubts or difficulties. No argument could shake such unswerving fidelity. Mikami's Christianity had little in common with our notions of religion. It was founded neither on the doctrine of the atonement, nor belief in immortality, nor acceptance of the Athanasian creed, but upon the binding power of a plighted word. Instead of propounding theological riddles to Mikami, or asking him how he could account for the existence of Cain's wife—matters of no earthly concern to him—you might say, as many had said before you:

"Well, Mr. Mikami, if Christ were to fight against the Emperor of Japan, which side would you take?"

Mikami, wiping his spectacles and blinking his myopic eyes, would answer, quite sincerely:

"I would say prayer to Christ, and I would cut my stomach with my sword."

As a matter of fact, Mikami had fallen into dire disgrace on his return from his studies for the very reason that he had become a Christian. He was offered various advantages if he would recant; and his stubborn refusal was one of the contributing causes of his subsequent ill-success.

"Then, Mr. Mikami," said the enthusiastic Dick, on hearing this story for the first time, "I think that you have earned the martyr's crown!"

"*Tabun so gozaimasho!*" replied Mikami, who had not the slightest idea what his pupil meant. Then he folded his spectacles in their case, which he slipped into his capacious *kimono* sleeve.

"It has become late," he added; "I must return home."

Dick would usher him to the front door, where he would encase his feet in the side-spring shoes. Then, standing on the flag-stones of the narrow front garden, he would incline obliquely from the waist in a series of those salutations which are such an essential part of Japanese etiquette. He would at the same time suck in his breath with a peculiar hissing noise, which sounded somewhat serpentine, but which indicated deep deference. "*Sayonara*," he would murmur. From the narrow ledge of his house, which did duty as a porch, and where old paper umbrellas and wooden clogs were stored, Dick would reply "*Sayonara*." Bow and hiss from Mikami; bow and hiss from Dick. Finally, with a backward gravitation as at Court, the old teacher would reach the end of the garden, would let himself out by the wooden gate under its pent-house roof like a church lych-gate, and would pass beyond the high bamboo fence which enclosed Dick's tiny domain.

Life in Japan. *Life à la japonaise*. It was all very new and very pleasing to the young Englishman. Because he slept on the floor, wore *kimono* evening and morning, and ate large quantities of rice, he imagined that he was living as a Japanese and, by a process of assimilation, was beginning to understand the soul of these inscrutable people. It never occurred to him that he was merely masquerading.

CHAPTER VI

A BISHOP AND FOUR CLERGYMEN

As soon as Mikami had departed, Dick changed from his *kimono* into a grey flannel suit, and encased his neck in a clerical collar. This was an object of attire which deeply offended him. It is the principal symbol in the world's eyes of Anglican clericality—a layman's double collar reversed. Why not reverse the coat or the trousers, and so mark apart the caste of God's priests? It is an inadequate and ridiculous distinction, uncomfortable, too, and irritating; for the projection of the windpipe cannot accommodate itself to the round shape of the collar, which must in consequence always be a size or two over large for the wearer. The French *soutane*, thought Dick, is a more decorous garb for the clergy; or why not the *kimono*?

To-day he had to wear the objectionable collar, for he was lunching with his Bishop; and the Bishop and the clergy-house were sticklers for the petty insignia of the order. Lunch was served in a dusty dining-room hung with Arundel prints. Pointed "gothic" windows, each with a bordure of red and blue stained glass, indicated the quasi-consecrated character of this refectory. At one end of the table the Bishop carved the roast of Kobé beef. At the other end, his mother, Mrs. Blackett, a severe old lady with a face phenomenally long and lined rising like a cliff above a large cameo brooch, sat awaiting her turn to serve the prunes and rice.

Between them were the four clergy, two on each side of the table; Dick at the Bishop's right hand; next to him, Mr. Porter; and opposite him, Mr. Porteous and Mr. Paul. But the old lady's presence cramped the

conversation of the younger clergy, and they glanced nervously towards her before daring to contribute to the disjointed symposium. Mrs. Blackett was a Calvinist. She did not believe in the practicability of the salvation of any Japanese—least of all, of her own servants.

"Nass-ty creatures!" she would exclaim; and she would order them about their business with a wonderful colloquial of her own, in which French, Italian and Malay words were mixed up helter-skelter. The Bishop she still treated as a child; and his clergy as fools. The Reverend and Honourable Augustus Porteous was her special butt.

"Why ever did you come to this nass-ty country?" she would repeat. "What's your family about not to find you a suitable incumbency with nothing to do?"

"No, no, Mrs. Blackett," the mild Porteous would reply, balancing his pince-nez for an unsteady moment on his aquiline nose; "there is work for us first of all."

"What work can you do, pray, you and the House of Lords?" the formidable old lady would retort; and her white lace cap would bob up and down above her high forehead like an uneasy rider on an awkward steed.

When Dick was first introduced to the Bishop's mother, she had said:

"Whoever sent this child out to this nass-ty place?" Since then she had seldom taken any notice of his existence; but Dick had been assured by the other clergy that this abrupt manner of hers concealed the warmest of hearts, as he would find if ever he were ill or unhappy.

Mr. Porteous was tall, spare, fair and bald. He had been for many years in Japan. Mr. Porter, who had been a journalist and whose writing was more polished than his speech, was round, red-faced and stertorous. His mania was "edgication." Missionary work should be based on "edgication." His own life was progressive "edgication"; and by "edgication" should a man be judged.

Mr. Paul was an alumnus of Keble College, Oxford.

His face was pale and his hands were damp. He was deeply versed in the lives of the saints, concerning whom he would retail embarrassing and sometimes deplorable episodes. He was for ever fasting or keeping some vigil or other, and he was rumoured to wear a hair-shirt.

Such were the three P's, as the pillars of St. George's church were familiarly called. Dick was not attracted by any of them, and after his first short stay at the clergy-house he was glad to escape to his Japanese villa. But he liked the Bishop. Indeed, who could help doing so? He was such a whimsical little man, with shiny black eyes, with grizzled moustache and pointed beard. Out of doors, he always wore a capacious black waterproof ulster, which completely enswathed his small person. He looked like some cleric gnome or elf, ever intent on some business of his own, and generally amused at the clumsy activities of mankind. He wrote an exquisitely neat hand with a gold fountain-pen, the only sign of luxury in his austere domicile.

The Bishop was a higher critic of some distinction; but, although his destructive mind had whittled away most of the Christian faith, yet he clung all the more tenaciously to the little that was left. His mother, whom he adored, afforded continual preoccupation and entertainment for him. He appeared to be constantly and attentively listening to her and observing her, as though he were an audience watching some consummate actress, relishing like a drop of rare liqueur each word that fell from her lips. To his clergy, the Bishop was a healthy and reasonable influence; but an indifferent leader. He was too destructive, too negative, too depressing.

"Many are called, but few are chosen," was his favourite text in speaking of the Japanese mission-field. Continuing, he would ask himself and his colleagues:

"But why should Japanese come to the *English* church? What is Good Queen Bess to them, and

jolly roast beef and the Archbishop of Canterbury? What comfort can they glean from the Thirty-Nine Articles? Why should they worry and flurry about our affairs?" He had a curious habit, perhaps acquired almost unconsciously from Browning, his favourite poet, of employing jingles in his sentences, even when he was preaching.

"They will come if we teach the Catholic Faith," said Dick, greatly daring; for Mrs. Blackett frowned.

"They want edgicating," wheezed Porter. "They want the schools first. Then the churches can come after. Teach 'em to read and write and think like Christians—and there you are!"

"In the days of the blessed St. François Xavier," Paul intervened, "a thousand Japanese were converted for every one that we can get now; and they died as martyrs in those days. They were crucified, boiled in oil, cast down the craters of volcanoes——"

"That's right," Porter interrupted, not quite catching the drift of the argument; "treat 'em friendly and they'll eat out of your hand."

"They're nass-ty savages," Mrs. Blackett affirmed; "and they always will be savages. You *can't* convert them."

The Bishop smiled that charming, wistful smile of his. With his elbows on the table and his finger-tips touching each other, he asked:

"But, gentlemen, you miss my point. For sound moral teaching they can go to the Methodists; and for the Catholic Faith they have the Romans. But what do we Anglicans stand for, if not for England? What, in fact, is the Anglican angle? And why should a Japanese wish to become English by religion any more than by nationality?"

"There is Mikami San," said Porteous timidly.

"Yes," said the Bishop; "and the one man who believes in us baffles me more than all the millions who don't. What is there in common between his Christianity—his feudal Christianity—and ours?"

"Then, Hugh," said his mother, "if you really feel like that, why don't you resign, and let us go home?"

"It is for that very reason, mother dear, that I am fain to remain."

The Bishop's paradoxes shocked and delighted his clergy. There were anticipatory murmurs of "Why?" "Indeed?" "Of course!"

"I shall remain until they promise to appoint a Japanese bishop as my successor."

Silence followed this sensational remark, which was broken by Porter saying:

"But there are none of them fit to be a Bishop! They haven't got the edgication. It would turn their heads!"

"Naito or Kamimura might do," the Bishop answered. "Anyhow, a bad Japanese would be better than a good Englishman. It would put some meaning into this nucleus of a national church which we have got here. It would continue the story, and give *them* the glory."

The talk then rambled away into a discussion of the personal characters of possible Japanese candidates for episcopacy.

"If we don't look out, we might get a man like Kato," said the Bishop.

"What? Kato Gintaro?" exclaimed Porter.

"Yes. He's Aylmer's teacher now. What do you think of him, Dick?"

The young man referred to was Dick's second teacher of Japanese. He gave his lessons in the evening, whereas Mikami came in the mornings only.

"He is rather a bounder," said Dick; "but I think he means well. He is evidently much distressed by conscientious doubts, which I am trying to help him to solve."

"Tell him not to drink 'sarky' or run after the girls, and not to be a stuck-up hypocrite," snorted Porter, who evidently had a poor opinion of Mr. Kato. "Doubts, indeed!"

"With sympathy and tactful handling I think he will come to us," replied Dick in tones which were intended to convey a rebuke. He had high hopes of effecting his teacher's conversion—his first convert, as dear to a man's heart as is his first love!

"We don't want him, or any of that lot," retorted Porter. "They do us more credit outside than in!"

The Bishop glanced up and down the table with his whimsical smile.

"In our Father's house are many mansions," he said. "Perhaps, brother Porter, there may be room there for Kato Gintaro *and* for you!"

Dick could not help liking the Bishop personally, but the atmosphere of the clergy-house was the first shock to his evangelistic zeal and to his Anglo-Catholic ideals. Neither Porteous nor Porter nor Paul nor even Bishop Blackett himself seemed to have any practical programme for winning Japan for Christ. They were prepared to cultivate their own small garden—and that was all. They ministered to the spiritual needs of the British community—socially distinguished, for the Embassy attended St. George's—but numerically insignificant. They ran a night school and a Sunday school. They organised desultory classes for the students of the Middle Schools, High Schools and Universities, who did not object to taking their English instruction with a strong religious seasoning. They opened the doors of the clergy-house to these students, when they dropped in at odd times to practise their English and to show off their knowledge. They served as headquarters to a number of missionaries scattered throughout the country.

But there was always something parochial about St. George's. Its pews of pitch-pine, its organ, its ornithological lectern, and its stained glass were pathetically British. To its European congregation it was a welcome corner of the old country. But what message could this mean architecture, and these ugly embellishments convey to the Japanese?

Over the way and standing back from the twisting lane as though shrinking aside from the unseemliness of St. George's was the shrine of Tenjin Sama. This prudent deity is the apotheosis of a Japanese Minister of State of many centuries ago, who after faithful service and unmerited banishment became an Immortal, and the patron god of literature and bureaucracy. His trim temple on the Shiba hill charms the eye with its thick thatched roof, its polished wooden steps and verandah, its dark mysterious interior where a round mirror glimmers, and its gong hanging over the entry with rope attached for the faithful to pull, thus arousing the god's attention from his ambrosial meditations, and invoking his assistance for some loved one in the throes of an examination.

Still further down the Hill of Shiba are the huge lacquered Buddhist temples where the Princes of the Tokugawa family lie buried. In the shadow of the black cryptomeria trees they sleep their last sleep; and their bronze sarcophagi look down from the tranquil heights of death upon the grey scales of the temple roofs and upon the broad flag-stoned courts with their regiments of ceremonial lanterns—some of bronze, some of granite—the offerings of *daimyos* dead and forgotten, which still wait in military formation for the ghosts of the past to review their silent files.

Listen! They are standing at attention now. A silk-swathed chamberlain with a coal-black mitre, is reading in raucous recitative the Shogun's latest decree.

"The country is in imminent danger. The black-robed foreigners who call themselves servants of God, are the secret emissaries of the King of Supanga (Spain), a powerful prince of the Western Ocean. He has already conquered many nations by their aid. He has advanced his tents as far as Luzon in the South Seas. And now he is aiming at Japan. After these priests he will send his armies, men dressed in iron and wielding iron fire-tubes. Danger is near. But there is still time to crush this evil sect like serpents' eggs before

they are fully hatched. The Government has taken stern measures; and thirty-five thousand believers in the evil doctrine called Christianity have been destroyed at the taking of their stronghold at Shimabara. It is the intention of the Government to destroy the Christian sect entirely. No foreigner shall henceforth be allowed to land on these shores—on pain of death. No Japanese subject shall be allowed to pass overseas—on pain of death. No person shall be allowed to profess Christian principles openly or to propagate them secretly—on pain of death. No person shall possess Christian books or Christian images—on pain of death. The figure of the Christian god shall be set in the pavement of some public place throughout the land, and any person who refuses to stamp upon the same as a sign of contempt and abhorrence shall die by crucifixion!"

Dick Aylmer, passing through the courtyards of the Shiba temples, seemed to hear around him the echoes of the not so distant past. The temple pigeons wheeled above his head, perching from time to time on the votive lanterns or alighting on the pavement to peck at invisible insects. Broad stone steps led up to the sacred buildings; and at the top of the steps was a low parapet of stone. Against the green background of the Shiba woods, the red pillars of the temple and the high pointed roofs floated in a mid region of majestic repose, like a magnificent Noah's Ark. On the summit of the hill behind, the tiers of a pagoda tower rose like a prayer into the blue sky.

An old Japanese woman crossed the courtyard. A girl of twelve or thirteen accompanied her, carrying a baby strapped to her shoulders. The infant squinted up at the sunshine like an intoxicated hansom-cab driver. A little boy, a primary school student, in blue kimono spotted with white stars, with a kind of yachting cap on his head and his bare feet thrust into the thong of his wooden clogs, completed the family group. They washed hands and mouth at the ceremonial stone washing-trough, and then stumbled up the steps to the shrine.

Why cannot the Catholic Faith, thought Dick, be shrined in buildings such as these, and be presented to the Japanese as something indigenous, something familiar, like the cryptomeria trees and the wheeling pigeons, the grey stone lanterns and the tall pagoda pinnacle—an essential part of their beautiful, beloved and historic country?

Was he, Dick Aylmer, the chosen prophet, destined in the fullness of time to reveal the Truth to the Japanese nation in terms such as these—the only terms which could be acceptable to them? The Catholic Faith is the universal faith; so one day Japan must fall within its orbit. One day—why not to-day?

Hitherto, the faith had been presented to Japan by earnest but gauche missionaries in a guise which appeared foreign, antagonistic, even dangerous to the country. Christianity was *hakurai-hin*, i.e., a thing imported from overseas. Why should Japan, "the country of the gods," take new gods from abroad? Are not Kamo and Sumida, rivers of Japan, better than all the waters of Europe and America?

Yet these missionaries, male and female, came to this ancient and mighty country, to Japan, proud of her centuries of civilisation and refinement, and shouted in uncouth language that the old faiths were lies, that the daily offering must no longer be made at the ancestral shrine, that the dead are not soothed by the chanting of the *sutras*, and—most outrageous of all heresies—that the Christian must not bow before the Emperor's portrait. This *Christokyo*, then, cut at the roots of family unity and patriotism, the basic virtues of the Japanese. What good could come of such dangerous thoughts? What merit could be acquired by the practice of such pernicious doctrines? Let us leave them for the use of the *Seiyojin*, who are materialistic, self-seeking, money-loving, cruel and coarse. *Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!* (Praise to Buddha Amida!)

CHAPTER VII

THE HILL OF THE RICE GOD

DICK walked on in the direction of his own house along the switchback of hills between Shiba and Shinagawa. His way led him through narrow lanes whose discreet bamboo fences hid the private residences of the Tokyo *bourgeoisie*, and through broad thoroughfares with their double stream of little shops, their eddies of pavement stalls, their staggering lines of telegraph poles, and their rickety tram-cars.

As he watched the drab multitudes shuffling on their way in the pitiless heat of the August sun, it seemed to be borne in upon him that he, and perhaps he alone, could really understand the Japanese point of view. He would not presume to contend against the beliefs and ideals of the past. Christ was come to fulfil the law, and not to destroy it. The Shinto, Buddhist and Confucianist legacies were the natural foundations upon which he—and Christ—must build. The old faiths must not be deleted; they must be absorbed. "Give us this day our daily bread!" What did that petition convey to a Japanese? Breadshops in Tokyo were few and peculiar. Dick found himself wondering whether it might be possible to replace the bread and wine of the Sacrament with the rice and *sake*, which were far more vital symbols to the Japanese mind.

Dick was passing an oval lotus lake which nestled beneath the high woods of the Park. The green stems of the sacred water-lily raised their fan-shaped leaves and their globe-shaped blossoms of tender mauve and pink to a height of three or four feet above the surface of the pond. In places they grew so thick together

that the water was entirely hidden. This lotus, as Dick remembered, is the holy flower of Buddhism, upon whose petals as on a throne the calm gods are seated. This is the flower of the spirit of man which, rooted in the mud, aspires to heaven.

Upon an island in the middle of the lake a little rustic building floated among the lotuses, like another larger, browner water-flower. It was the shrine of Benteu, goddess of Love—Venus Pandemos, Love as love is known in the *geisha*-houses, in the *machiai* (houses of assignation) and in the *yukwaku* and *kuruwa* (licensed quarters)—Love who brings rich lovers to her professional servitors, and who guides men to the fruition of their desires. Was there place for the wanton Benteu in the new gospel according to Richard Aylmer? But Dick had as yet no knowledge of the ways of this powerful deity, nor of her influence over the destinies of men. Unheeding, he passed the shrine.

He went on his way in the direction of Kamiyama. Opposite him, on a low hill, above the maze of brown wooden houses and grey roofs, rose the red-brick walls of Keio University, an entirely modern and exotic structure. This is the temple of Japanese Utilitarianism, as founded seventy years ago by Fukuzawa Yukichi, a great educationalist but a dry philosopher, whose books and translations first introduced European science and European thought, as typified in Herbert Spencer, to the avid intelligence of the Japanese Renaissance. Work, Duty and Patriotism were Fukuzawa's ideals. He did not bow down to any gods, old or new; and to him the cry of man's heart for aid from the invisible was a mere symptom of childishness. "Help yourselves," was his advice; "and help each other. There are no gods to help you. Get on, or get out!" The weight of his agnosticism hangs heavy on the wings of the New Japan.

Up and down the hill which leads to the Mita University, the students of Keio were coming and going, the rising generation of a strong race. Some were dressed

in blue uniform with brass buttons and military cap; others wore spotted white *kimono*, a more suitable vesture in the summer heat. Dick had intended to walk the whole distance to his house, but the sun and the dust were too much for him. He could by this time recognise the two signs for Shinagawa which marked the trams going in the direction he desired. The first which passed him, labouring, lumbering, creaking on its way, carried a red sign hanging over the conductor's head—"man-in" (full)—a phrase whose sound, Dick thought, was curiously inadequate to express the sweltering congestion of the crowd, which had jammed and wedged itself into the car, and which clung and swayed in clots to step and platform. Somewhere beneath this turgid mass, the ticket collector went about his business, burrowing like a mole—calm, unruffled and polite. *Man-in!*

The next car was sufficiently empty for Dick to edge his way into it. There was no place for him to sit down; but straps of bamboo hung from a rail along the ceiling, to which supernumerary passengers could cling unsteadily. Dick seized one of these. A young man of the student class rose and offered him his seat. Dick protested. The young man insisted. The contest of amiability was solved by a third person leaving the car. Dick took the empty place by the student's side.

"What is your name?" said the latter, in English, but with stilted staccato accents.

Dick gave his name. He was used to the desultory inquisitiveness of the English-speaking student.

"Are you English?"

Dick admitted his nationality.

"Are you married? or spinster?"

"I am not married," Dick smiled.

"How many child's have you?"

The jerky conversation continued until a woman, prematurely old and withered, entered the tram. A large baby was saddled to her shoulders. All the seats

were occupied. Her skinny hand groped for the support of the bamboo loop. The seats were for the most part occupied by men. Some were reading newspapers or correspondence, some were picking their teeth, some were talking and some were just staring blankly. Not one of them stirred to make room for the little woman. Dick rose and offered her his place, murmuring in futile English that he was just going to alight. The woman gazed at him with an uncomprehending expression, but made no effort to occupy the vacancy.

After descending from the tram-car, Dick wandered up the narrow road which led to the hill where his house was situated. It was a quarter of *setomonoya*—china shops; and the bright colours of the wares, the reds, the blues and the gilding, sparkled cheerfully in the sunlight. Each shop was full to overflowing with a multitude of little objects, ornamental, domestic and religious; and Dick could not help wondering whence all the customers could come to maintain these establishments in their apparent prosperity. At the top of the hill, on the left hand side of the street, stood a red *torii*, that ubiquitous symbol of the Shinto religion which is scattered all over the Japanese islands, and wherever the Japanese armies have set their conquering steps. In shape it is an open gateway, with two posts and two lintels, of which the lower one is lodged between the posts and the upper one is laid across them with projecting ends. The *torii* symbolises the entering in of Shinto—the Way of the Gods; and any one who passes beneath the *torii* and follows the direction indicated will sooner or later come upon a Shinto shrine. These elementary sanctuaries are in shape like dog kennels (on stilts) of greater or lesser splendour. They also resemble those native huts of the Malay Peninsula, from which they probably derived their origin, and which are raised on piles above the surface of the ground so as to be beyond the reach of the malarial miasmas of the tropical night.

Dick passed under the red *torii*, and entered the secluded compound of Kamiyama. The little cluster of six or seven middle class houses, of which Dick's own dwelling was one, was completely hidden from the street of the china shops, so that one might have passed the red *torii* a hundred times without ever imagining that this tranquil corner of suburban respectability was thus tucked away behind the busy thoroughfare. These miniature homes of the penurious middle classes are very similar in size and construction. Each is withdrawn behind its bamboo fence, and jealously guarded by its gate of plain white wood under a low pent house roof. Within this gateway is the front garden, consisting of stones, pebbles, earth and pine-trees, and crossed by a kind of rivulet of stepping stones leading from the gateway to the actual door. This brings the visitor to the house itself, a wooden construction with grey tiles, sometimes of two storeys resembling a Swiss *chalet*, and sometimes a bungalow building of one floor only.

As Dick made his way through these quiet precincts, he passed on his left the establishment of an ophthalmic doctor, the most important dwelling in the compound, for it had a private clinic of its own in a wing detached from the house. In the main street, at the side of the *torii*, was a tall wooden post like an elongated milestone with an inscription on it advertising the doctor's presence. His patients were poor people for the most part, and his little garden was at all times besieged by a crowd of men, women and children, smiling and cheerful in spite of their bandages, gossiping, showing their symptoms, bowing their salutations, and waiting patiently by the hour for the doctor's leisure.

Between the doctor's hospital and Dick's own house lived a retired major-general, who had won fame in the Chinese and Russian wars. Now he was living on a pension of four or five pounds a week, and was devoting his old age to the study of the Japanese classical drama.

Morning and evening, the echoes of Kamiyama would resound with the stentorian voice of the veteran hero, intoning scenes from his favourite literature. But to-day there was silence. His Excellency had visitors. A rickshaw-runner was squatting on the shaft of his little car in front of the general's doorway, and was puffing at his slender reed-like pipe.

Beyond Dick's house was the temple of Inari, the rice god, which gave its name to the hill and to the compound. A gallery of votive *torii* led up to the modest and dilapidated shrine. They looked like a succession of large red croquet hoops. No religious ceremonial appeared ever to take place at the shrine; but once a month there was the *ennichi* or temple-fair. The space in the midst of the residential compound then became the centre of popular activity. Little temporary stalls of sweetmeats and cheap clothing, toys for the babies, writing utensils for the school children, hair ornaments for the women, and plants and dwarf shrubs for the gardens filled the open square outside Dick's door with subdued hubbub and hustle; and Kamiyama resounded with the laughter of the little ones, the chaffering of the merchants, the clang of the temple gong and the clink of copper coins cast into the big money box in front of the shrine. To and fro above the trumpery wares the vellum-coloured lanterns swing in the warm summer breeze. A young salesman had started an auction sale, and is vaunting the almost miraculous qualities of some cheap cotton underwear. An old thread-bearded priest is on duty at the shrine dealing out charms for travellers, for barren women, for women in childbirth and for children, and amulets against fire and robbery; and a colleague with bald head and mottled skin is telling fortunes with the aid of divining rods and the Chinese Book of Changes. Above his bent back and peering face, the stone foxes of Inari grin down upon the crowd.

Dick recalled such a scene as he loitered for a while

under the giant cryptomeria trees which formed, as it were, a cathedral transept over the site of the local chantry. He could not believe that this childish superstition was wholly inimical or idolatrous. It was a sign of the instinctive groping of these simple folk in the direction of the divine. Here in the temple precinct of God's Hill, Dick felt that he was at the heart of Japan, learning to know the people, growing used to their customs and ways of thought, so that one day, in the fullness of God's time, he might speak his message confidently, not as a foreign gospel, but as the Divine Truth, manifest to these Eastern folk and alive in their midst.

On the doorpost of Dick's domain was his own name inscribed perpendicularly in Japanese script on a small bone plate. This in itself pleased the young priest—to see his English name so transmuted. Only—as Dick soon realised—the characters employed were of the kind specially used among the Japanese for the transliteration of foreign names and words; and their very form and shape marked his dwelling apart from those of the doctor and the general and the other true Japanese around him. The names of the occupants were also repeated on the round lamps like soap bubbles, which at night-time glowed with a pearly light above the street doors.

Dick pushed back the latch and stepped into his garden. He was fortunate in having been able so quickly to settle himself in such a completely Japanese *milieu*. It was an immense improvement from his point of view on the clergy-house of St. George's. Porter—or was it Paul?—had told him that it would be so difficult for him to get a real Japanese home. The Japanese do not like letting their houses to foreigners. They are considered disagreeable, destructive and unclean. However, through the help of

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Mikami, Dick had managed to secure this typical corner in the Tokyo suburbia for the modest rental of thirty yen, or about three pounds per month. Mikami San had assured the landlord that Dick was *otonashii*, a quiet (or literally "noiseless") man, that he respected Japanese customs, that he would not walk with dirty boots over the straw matting, that he would not tear up the garden or play baseball among the shrubs, that he would not give noisy parties or call in low women, and that, for a foreigner, his smell was practically unnoticeable.

Shaking off his shoes in the porch, Dick ran upstairs to his bedroom, where he found that the careful O Katsu had hung out his tennis flannels and his college blazer on a kind of lacquer framework, ready for his use. He changed quickly; and then, armed with a racket, he mounted his bicycle and retraced his way to the centre of Tokyo city, avoiding with some dexterity the clumsy trams, the precipitate rickshaws, the scampering children, and the hazy grown-ups, who moon about the crowded thoroughfares, impervious to the dangers of the traffic, as though they were in the security of their own back gardens. He skirted St. George's compound, and descended the long straight hill from Shiba to Tora-no-Mon, the Tiger Gate, where the new Tokyo Club, a red brick building of some size and solidity, asserts the claim of the Japanese capital to be considered as an up-to-date and fashionable metropolis. He left to the right a vista of modern government offices, and ascended another sharp hill, around which the official residences of Cabinet Ministers and Imperial Princes are scattered, and upon the summit of which are the tennis courts.

When Dick arrived, there was only a meagre concourse of players on and around the courts. Most of the Japanese were away from Tokyo during the hot season; and the Embassies were in *villegiatura* among the mountains of Chuzenji. Dick played two singles with Jackson, a lean and sinewy student interpreter

from the American Embassy, who wore a black sweater and had a sweat-band bound round his forehead.

"It's really too hot to play," gasped Dick after his second beating.

"*Mushi-atsui da, ne!* (Hot and sultry, eh?)" answered Jackson, showing off his knowledge of the colloquial.

"What does that mean exactly?" asked Dick, the novice.

"Conversions slump during mosquito season," drawled the American.

CHAPTER VIII

KATO GINTARO

DICK took his exercise almost daily on the tennis-courts. But the company of Europeans, whether lay or clerical, was beginning to exasperate him. Even in appearance they seemed so large, so clumsy and so raw-boned in this miniature country; and they went their own way and followed their own sports, avocations and amusements, careless of the dense native life which swarmed about them, insensible to its beauties, and unsympathetic with its struggles and ideals. If by any chance they condescended to comment on this world in which they lived but in which they had no share, they would saddle the delicate Japanese intellect, so feminine and so instinctive, with their own heavy thoughts and clumsy pleasantries. Dick wished that he had been born dark instead of fair. He could then have assimilated himself so much more easily with his native flock; and the crazy idea came to him that he might facilitate matters by dyeing his hair. But how could he change the colour of his eyes—the blue eyes of the *Seiyojin* (foreigner), which the Japanese mistrust and fear?

On his return to Kamiyama, O Katsu was awaiting him on the steps of the wooden loggia.

"*Danna San* has honourably returned."

She murmured the formal platitude, bowing twice with the stomachic salutation which propriety demands.

Dick sat down on the step of his porch, and shook off his tennis-shoes before entering.

"Will *danna san* make use of honourable hot water?"

The plump matron thus inquired whether her employer wished to take a bath.

"*Kato San arimasen?*" asked Dick, in the horrid jargon of the early Japanese stages.

"Mr. Kato has not yet come, *danna san*," O Katsu replied.

"Then hot bath, O Katsu, quick!"

Dick disappeared into his bedroom, and in a minute or two descended again in a cotton *kimono*, on his way to the *yudono*, the "hot-water chamber" or bathroom, which was in the extreme wing of the house, close to the roadway and beyond the kitchen and the room where O Katsu and her husband lived. The oval wooden bath-tub was heated by a wood fire underneath one end of it. An iron pipe took the smoke away outdoors. So the bath resembled a small stationary locomotive of the "Rocket" or "Puffing Billy" era.

Custom forbade that Dick should begin his ablutions by entering the tub. He must soap himself outside, and wash the soap off his body with a ladle. Then—and not until he was completely clean—he might immerse himself in the boiling water of the tub, and gently simmer for five or ten minutes. O Katsu had at first offered to assist Dick by scrubbing his back, but the young priest could not at once discard his British prejudices in favour of privacy in bathing. In spite of this rebuff, the obsequious duenna felt it to be incumbent upon her to call at least once at the bathroom door and inquire whether the water had become tepid; and once, when Dick by way of variation had exclaimed that it was almost cold, she came bustling into the "hot-water chamber" and started to stoke up the fire so that it crackled merrily beneath the tub where Dick was immersed, and the flames leapt up around him as though in anticipation of his early martyrdom.

When his bath was over, Dick returned to his room, leaving the same water to serve the purposes of O Katsu and her husband and her two small children. Seated on the verandah he found Kato San awaiting him. Kato was Dick's second teacher, Mikami presiding over the morning studies and Kato arriving in the evening,

generally and rather obviously about supper-time. Mikami and Kato were bracketed in Dick's mind as representing respectively Japan Ancient and Modern. As Dick entered, the Japanese rose from his chair, and with his left hand still embedded in his trouser pocket, extended the right hand to greet his patron. Of course, Mr. Kato was never known to wear a *kimono*. He sported a suit—coat and trousers—of a creamy Shantung silk, a shirt rather heavily striped, and a high stiff double collar, all slightly soiled. His yellow tie was secured by a tie-clip of false gold, blazoned with an unknown burgee. His hair, which was wavy, was smeared with unguent; and he wore pink socks of the Leander shade. A panama hat and a malacca cane had been deposited in a corner of the room.

Dick, the orientalisised Englishman, in his flowing *kimono*, shook hands with Kato, the Europeanised Japanese. He motioned to him to resume his seat on the balcony, overlooking Shinagawa and the sea.

Kato sat down with a flop, and started to fan himself with an oval Japanese fan, the advertisement of some grocery store, which lay among the Japanese language books on Dick's table.

"It is indeed most dam hot," said the Japanese in English.

Kato Gintaro was a florid young man of about twenty-two. His forehead was broad and intellectual. His cheeks were round and red. His nose was rather snout-like, but it was mobile and humorous. His eyes were hidden behind gold-rimmed spectacles, which trembled on the bridge of his nose in unsteady equilibrium, and could have been of no possible assistance to the vision. They were secured to the lapel of his coat by a thin chain of spurious gold. He had heavy black eyebrows, and a short thick moustache of the toothbrush pattern. For a Japanese he was tall, about the same height as Dick; and his figure was slim and athletic. Judged by foreign standards he was quite a

good-looking young man; and he appeared intelligent, but conceited and vulgar.

For half an hour or so the lesson proceeded. At the end of that time, O Katsu brought in the simple evening meal—an omelette, toast, butter and jam. There was also a plate of the delicious preserved persimmon, which looks like a browned and burnished tomato outside, and which is so soft and glutinous within. O Katsu served coffee, which she called "*co-hee*," for her master, and for his guest a bottle of Kirin Beer. The young man's eyes shone in anticipation at the light, cool, delicious drink, and his tongue was almost immediately loosened.

"Alcohol is most excellent thing, I think," announced Kato, "for wit, also for stomach; but American methodist denounce for deadly sin, and say 'Love God No Booze'; but you, sir, English Christian priest, commend? How so?"

"It is not the use of drink, but its abuse, which is sinful," said Dick sententiously. "Our Lord Jesus Christ turned water into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana. The strict people said, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Kato had taken out a note-book, and was writing down the word "wine-bibber," which was new to him.

"Religion to you, sir," he observed, "perhaps is not matter of great solemnity and gloomy consideration of end."

"Of course not. It is happiness; the only true happiness there is. To *know* that everything is for the best in this world, to *know* that good must prevail over evil, to *know* that Christ is reigning in Heaven, to *know* that during life He feeds us with His precious Body and Blood, and to *know* that after death we shall be with Him for ever—that is happiness!"

"Then I also would wish to be Christian, for I have happy heart."

"I am delighted to hear you say that, Kato San."

"But just now there is, I fear, immense impediment."

"What is that, Kato San?" urged Dick. "You can tell me. I am a priest. I am here to help people with their difficulties."

"I am just now pragmatist philosopher," exclaimed the Japanese, his spectacles falling from his nose at the excitement of this avowal; "also I sow wild oat."

Dick was taken aback; but his evangelistic earnestness yearned for the young man with a longing akin to a woman's desire for a child of her own conception and travail. He longed to be able to write home to Herwood to announce that he had made his first convert to the Church of Christ, that he had won his spurs as a warrior of God's Army. It seemed to him, too, in spite of the depreciatory criticism which he had heard at St. George's, that Kato was not unpromising. True, he was crude and rather bumptious; but he seemed also to be sincere and anxious to learn.

"Do you read your Bible?" Dick asked.

"I read all through when school student," answered the Japanese proudly. "I now progress more far. I study Professor Buster's Element of Atom; noble and sublime truth. How so?"

"You prefer Professor Buster to the Bible?" commented Dick with a tolerant smile.

"Bible I find many superstitious tale for old woman and babes—silly thing for progressive person."

"But Jesus Christ—what think you of Him?"

"Inspired leader of men, but not enough pep, I think. I think more great Bismarck and Saigo Takamori."

Dick Aylmer had no knowledge as to the identity of the latter personage, whom his projected convert seemed to prefer to the Son of God. Later on, he learned that Saigo was the leader of the Satsuma rebellion in 1877. When the rebellion collapsed he committed *harakiri*, that is, he killed himself in the correct fashion by cutting his stomach open. Thus he became in Japanese eyes the incarnation of military virtues and of the *samurai* spirit. So Dick had no answer to this challenging assertion; for he did not wish to show his

ignorance. Instead, he handed his cigarette case to Kato, and began to smoke in silence.

The hot summer night had fallen. Lights were peeping among the tree-trunks which surrounded Dick's garden—the pale pearly surfaces of light which the paper *shoji* reflect to the world outside their domesticity, and the round street lamps which are like luminous balloons. Yellow rickshaw lanterns jogged on their way hither and thither; and in the main thoroughfare of Shinagawa, the lighted trams crept up and down like insects ablaze. In the distance, ships' lights, white and red, were gliding across the calm bay; and light-houses were occultating from three different points. In the deep blue sky, the stars looked like apertures in the silken texture of the heaven, revealing a further prospect into dazzling light.

At the foot of Kamiyama, a train snorted past on its way to Yokohama. From a line of barnlike buildings beyond the railway, the sound of music rose—a bar of harsh screaming melody, the scrape of a *samisen*, and the laughter of a company of men. Dick shivered, though there was no cold breeze abroad that night. He flicked his cigarette ash aside with a gesture of displeasure. Those long black houses were the blot on his perfect landscape, a constant reminder of evil and a deep affliction to his soul's innocence.

"*Ma ! Kuruwa wa nigiyaka da, né !* (Indeed, the licensed quarter is lively, eh!)" exclaimed Kato, lapsing into the vernacular, as he followed the trend of his own thoughts.

"It's monstrous!" cried Dick; and Kato made a note of "monstrous" in his pocket-book.

"It's monstrous!" repeated the young Englishman, "that such places should be allowed to exist in a civilized country and that the government should license their existence. How would you like your sister to be sold into such degrading slavery?"

"Such thing is shame to family," Kato admitted in serious tones; "it is too bad to speak about."

Then he added in a burst of confidence:

"I know many man, school chum to me, they pay school fee because sister become *geisha* girl. Such thing is good deed for family sake, but too shame to say, I think. So we say '*mi-s'teru*' ('throw away body') into shameful life; yet soul remain pure, I think, Christian say so. How so?"

But Dick was watching the long black roofs, and listening to the jarring music.

"So those big houses are full of *geisha*?" he asked.

Kato put his head on one side in the attitude of consideration.

"*Geisha* girl a little different, I think," he said.

"Such girl as here we call *joro*. *Geisha* girl dance, sing, make merry music—very nice. *Joro* girl more fool, I think."

"But both classes are equally women of immoral lives?" Dick asked.

"Shameful life, yes, but jolly woman. *Joro* girl plenty lover, little money every time; *geisha* girl not so plenty lover, big money every time. That is difference. In England there is no such custom?"

"No *geisha*, Kato San; but sin—yes, that is always there."

"I read in London book, sir, that *joro* there walk in Piccadilly thoroughfare, make public show, and cry 'I love! I love!' even to fashionable gents of upper class and nobility. How so?"

"I'm afraid it's true, Kato San. The streets of London at night are a disgrace to England."

"Perhaps," suggested Kato, reflectively, "because of suffragette agitation, Englishman now fear to keep woman in control. Therefore they vagabond in streets and cry 'I love! I love!'"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Dick. "On the contrary, I think that the new awakening of women to a sense of their rights will be the beginning of a great reform."

This was beyond the Japanese altogether. He shook

his head, and helped himself to another glass of beer. Then he remarked :

"In Japan we say, '*Dan-son-jo-hi*,' that is, 'Respect to man, female inferior object.' For woman to walk in street and cry 'I love!' is, we think, very disgusting importunity, also embarrassing trouble to other party. We wonder Western civilisation permit such disgustingness."

"Yet in Japan parents will sell their daughters to become slaves in prisons like that," argued Dick.

"That is family question," replied Kato evasively.

It was a big night evidently in the Shinagawa licensed quarter. Three or four separate concerts broke out in spasmodic gasps, howling their lamentations to the newly risen moon.

"*O tsukimi no o kyaku* (guests for moon watching,") explained Kato. "The jolly fellows have come to pleasure houses to watch autumn moonlight on Tokyo Bay. It is common custom in Japan."

A woman's voice, high and piercing, rang through the warm night :

"*Sasaya, sasa, sasa wa irimasen ka?*"

Then men's voices took up the well-known refrain which Otaka Gengo first sang on the eve of wreaking vengeance for his master's humiliation, two hundred years ago. Kato, too, was humming it under his breath, his eyes shining at the thought of the fun of the night in the women's quarters, the wine, the singing and the heavy perfume of the girls.

"I love *geisha*," he avowed candidly to his disconcerted clergyman friend. "I love *joro* also. I am young man. Sometimes, I think, I am, perhaps, superman. It is no sin, I think, for young man to love pretty girl."

"My poor fellow," said Dick out of the depths of his twenty-six years of inexperience, "my poor fellow, that is a dangerous way to think. The lust of the eye,

the lust of the flesh and the pride of life—what do they leave behind them when the momentary pleasure is gone? Remorse, bitterness, weakness, disease and misery. No, Kato San, live a clean life; and if temptations are too strong for you, marry a nice girl who will really love you and be a comfort to you when you are sick or unhappy. God will bless a happy marriage."

The Japanese was silent. He seemed to be absorbing this advice and meditating upon its wisdom. The singing had died down in the houses of Shinagawa. There was a pause of complete tranquillity. At last, Kato said:

"After hospitable entertainment I fear it is late. I must take leave. But first I wish to ask counsel in one point, to who I give much thought."

Both host and visitor had risen. Dick laid a friendly hand on the young man's arm.

"Yes, tell me, Kato San, tell me anything you want to say."

The priest's heart beat with perceptible emotion. He felt that the great moment was at hand, that his first convert was nibbling at the bait, and that with a little skilful play he would soon be landed.

"Tell me, sir," said Kato very seriously, "is it now the vogue——"

He pronounced the word "vogyew," so that Dick had to ask for a repetition before he could understand.

"Is it now the vogyew among noble gents in England for pocket handkerchief to show him a little in coat pocket, or must he conceal him quite?"

Dick could not help smiling at the bathos, but he did his best nevertheless to explain what he knew about the art of carrying the handkerchief, hoping that trifles might one day lead on to things of more significance. Thereupon, Mr. Kato took his leave, satisfied with himself—as he usually was—and with the progress which he had made in mastery of the English language and in familiarity with fashionable deportment.

Dick lay back with a sigh of relief in his long wicker

chair. The company and conversation of Japanese, he thought, are really very exhausting. They seem to take so much and to give so little in return. Mikami San, vague and inscrutable! Kato San, with his naïve vanity and his second hand philosophy! And yet? There was something about the young man which appealed to Dick and which flattered him. He imagined the Japanese to be a kind of Nicodemus, visiting him by night for fear of giving offence to his own people, yet irresistibly attracted by the magnetic power of the Christian Faith. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" He had often seemed to reach this point with Kato San, only to slide off towards some futility. But the day would come, of this he was certain, when Kato would hesitate no longer, but would declare himself fearlessly to be a candidate for Christian baptism.

And was not Kato a type of young Japan? Did he not embody in his uneven personality the vigour, the intelligence, the restless curiosity, the apprehensive mistrust, the vanity, the ostentation, the adaptable mind and the conservative spirit of his race? If Kato became a Christian, Dick thought, it would be, as it were, a sign from heaven that his whole nation was about to follow his example. The youngest of the great nations,—called to Christ! That vigour, that intelligence, that expansive force dedicated to the service of the Master! This was a country in which miracles might happen. Was not the evolution of the New Japan in itself a miracle? Was not the victory over mighty Russia almost miraculous? More than three hundred years ago, the early Roman Catholic missionaries had succeeded in converting almost one-third of the population and many of the rulers of the country. They had even been allowed to build their cathedral within the walls of sacred Kyoto. But they could not resist dabbling in politics—so like the Romans!—and so had buried themselves in the ruins of their great achievement. Saint Francis Xavier, apostle of the Indies,

had first brought news of the Gospel to Japan. Saint Richard Aylmer! Apostle of the East! From Japan the new Christian revival would at once cross the straits to Korea, which was already most favourably disposed. From Korea it would pass to China with its four hundred million people, the greatest of all mission fields; and thence Westwards, following the sun, through India and the Mohammedan countries, until faithless, renegade Europe was reawakened by the faith of her own converts, until the earth was filled with the Glory of God, as the waters cover the sea!

At that ecstatic moment, O Katsu San broke in upon *danna san's* meditation. After removing the remains of the evening meal, she came out upon the verandah to inquire whether anything further was required.

"No, thank you, O Katsu," said Dick. "It is a beautiful night, eh?"

The woman rested her chubby elbows on the verandah railings, and smiled up at the moon. Her face was rather moon-like in shape, and her smile revealed thick lips like a nigger's and a row of brownish uneven teeth.

"Honourable Mister Moon," she murmured, intoning a children's song, "round, round, round as a tray!"

Then, breaking off suddenly, she exclaimed:

"*Ma!* Shinagawa very lively—dancing, singing, laughing!"

She turned, laughing herself, to Dick, whose expression darkened.

"It's bad, O Katsu," he said, "very bad!"

"When the heart is floating, one is happy," replied O Katsu. "When one is happy, one is not bad; when one becomes gloomy, one becomes bad. No doubt, *danna san* is lonely. Perhaps English *okusans* come to Japan one day?"

"No," said Dick. "If I marry, I shall marry a Japanese girl."

"Then she is very lucky girl. *Danna San* is good

and quiet, never drink too much *sake*, never beat *okusan*, I think."

Dick had picked up his Bible. He appeared to be reading and disinclined for conversation. So, with the regulation bow, O Katsu murmured a final, "*O yasumi nasai* (Please, rest!)", the "Good-night" of the Japanese, and withdrew.

Dick settled himself for an hour's meditation. It was his rule to meditate for an hour every day either first thing in the morning or else late at night, when the pressure of the day's business was removed. He would then detach his mind from earthly matters; and, speeding it on its journey with some text or some high matter for sailing orders, would let it float away far from the sphere of its ordinary activities. Sometimes, his consciousness on this dream journey would express itself in a chain of thought; sometimes he would pass out of the world of thought into vacuity; sometimes he would skirt the realm of Immediate Perception, and catch a reflection of that Vision Beautiful, which is vouchsafed—so he believed—to the great contemplatives.

Pa-pa-pom! Pa-pa-pom!

The rhythmic beat of a drum was sounding from the Shinagawa licensed quarter, accompanied by the confused murmur of many voices, and the clatter of wooden *geta* along the pavement. Very ancient gods and very powerful influences were abroad that night—Priapus, Cotytto and Libitina!

Pa-pa-pom! Pa-pa-pom!

Far out across Tokyo Bay, a shooting star streaked the sky. Dick could meditate no longer, and it was too hot to go to bed. He turned to his writing-table and commenced a long letter to his sister Grace.

Pa-pa-pom! Pa-pa-pom!

CHAPTER IX

THE BISHOP ON MIXED MARRIAGES

"MARRIAGE is a matter of geography," wrote the sententious Dick. "If I had stayed in England I don't suppose I would ever have thought of marrying anybody. I was, and am still—in theory—opposed to the marriage of the priesthood.

"I shall never know what love is in its more ecstatic implication. Of this I am glad. Such love is akin to worship, and should be reserved for God alone. A European woman would expect this kind of love as a matter of right. You have told me about Chloe Carbery and that you thought she loved me. But she is clearly not the kind of woman who would be content to be a missionary's wife. To tell the truth, I have almost forgotten her already—the shape of her face and the colour of her hair. You tell me that she is behaving foolishly and making friends with the wrong kind of people. I am very sorry to hear this, but what can I do? I have written to her and told her to be good; but from what you tell me she will not relish this advice.

"I could never love Chloe or any English girl now. I have become too Japanese, too impersonal already. So if I marry, I shall marry a Japanese; and that is why I said that marriage is a matter of geography. If I thought I would return to England, I would not take such a step. But my work lies here. It may even be that such a marriage is essential to a missionary who wishes to enter into the life of these people. They have an instinctive mistrust of—and perhaps contempt for—the foreigner, which is most difficult to overcome.

"You say that you and George are likely to come out to Japan before long. How perfectly splendid!"

Grace Carey tossed Dick's letter across the breakfast table for her husband's laconic criticism.

"I think Dick is going balmy," she said. "Just read that. He says he'll marry a Jap, as a sort of passport to get into touch with the other Japs. People marry for weird reasons; but this is absolutely the limit. Can't we do anything to stop him? We must! Can't we go to Japan?"

"No," grunted the painter from behind Dick's effusion; "it's too far!"

"But, George, he's my only brother. It will break the old people's hearts."

"You've broken them already, I thought."

"Yes, but they're just beginning to mend again," pleaded Grace. "There will be a terrible relapse, at the thought of the Jappy daughter-in-law. She'll be worse than an artist."

"She may be a Christian, though," observed George.

He finished reading the letter, while Grace bemoaned the fortunes of the house of Aylmer. At last, he laid the missive down and passed sentence upon it.

"That's a lot of rot."

"You don't think he means it seriously, then?" asked Grace.

"No. If he does, then he's got no guts; and he'll perish anyhow. But I think it's just green fever."

"And the cure?"

"Castor oil."

So Grace wrote to Dick a long letter of motherly advice. He must take care of his health, she said, in that nasty, semi-tropical climate; and if there was no improvement, he must pack up his *kimonos* and come straight back to England.

"I don't think that a yellow bride," she wrote, "would be a permanent satisfaction to you or a real assistance to your work. I cannot believe that any

God—yours or mine or the seven thousand tutelary gods of Japan—looks with favour on mixed marriages. Or why did He create so many races with such great differences between them of appearance and of character? And why did He make half-castes so objectionable? They say that the Eurasian inherits all the vices and none of the virtues of both the parent stocks. Has it occurred to you, Dick, that we Aylmers still represent a family to which we are proud to belong? I don't think you've any right to try such drastic experiments with the breed."

But this solemn warning crossed a further letter from the hope of the Aylmers, in which he apologised for writing so much nonsense and explained away his last effusion as the result of the enervating summer weather and a series of sleepless nights.

"That sounds better," commented Grace; "but I am not altogether reassured. It's our way to feel things coming; and then to do them, so as to justify our sense of foreboding."

Letters came so frequently from Tokyo during Dick's first year of absence that his sister was able to piece together a fairly complete picture of his life in Japan. On the whole, she found that he was happy in his illusions, interested in his new country, full of zeal and ambition and averse from any idea of returning to his native land. He sent all kinds of pretty presents home,—Japanese dolls in all their fascinating variety from O Hina Sama and his consort, the courtly figures of the Girls' Festival, to the familiar baby doll with its gay dress and its liquorice-coloured eyes, *kimono* of silk and cotton, models of Japanese houses, Japanese kitchens, Japanese gardens, rolls of different kinds of silk, firm *habutae* and crinkly *chirimen*, curios of all sorts, images of the gods, porcelains, swords, lacquer ware, ivory carvings, prints and paintings.

The hampers which Dick sent home from Tokyo, wrapped in orange-coloured oil-paper and redolent of the East, were a source of endless delight in Hernwood

Rectory and of genuine appreciation in Sir George Carey's studio. Among the recipients of Dick's offerings, Chloe Carbery alone turned up her pretty and impertinent nose at what she called a parcel of silly little toys.

Miss Chloe had progressed considerably since that farewell day in the rain at Tilbury docks. She had progressed out of the sphere of the Ministering Angels. She had progressed even out of the radius of the Careys' studio. Her straw-coloured hair had become henna red. Her eyebrows were darker, her eyes more lustrous, her lips more scarlet and her cheeks more rosy. In a few months she had lost entirely that supramundane air which had so impressed Grace Carey at their first meeting. Now she looked commonplace and fast; but the men she wanted appeared to prefer the new style. She was living, so Grace learned from a mutual friend, in splendour and luxury in a Kensington flat; and an Argentine financier was paying the bills.

"Probably a more suitable establishment for her than Dick's paper bungalow," said Grace. "But I can't help feeling sorry. She was a sweet child so short a time ago—and now? Do you think, George, that I should go and see her and try to save something from the wreckage?"

"No," said Sir George firmly. "She's a minx."

Such was the epitaph on Dick's first love romance.

Chloe's farewell kiss had, however, marked a stage in Dick's development. The freshness of that memory had soon faded with new interests, new work and new scenes. The last of her roses had fluttered out one day from between the pages of the young priest's Bible on to the floor of a Tokyo tram-car, and had perished unheeded. Yet, all the same, that kiss had wrought a certain change in Dick. At Hernwood Rectory, the subject of sex had been taboo; and at school and at college, Dick had closed his ears to the indelicacies of some of his acquaintances, if indeed he had so much as understood their allusions. He had, of course, as most

high Anglicans do—for a time—adopted the views of the Roman Catholic Church as regards the marriage of the clergy. So, all the circumstances of his upbringing had tended to repress his natural instincts—to repress, but not to destroy. Beneath the calm surface of his consciousness, they were preparing their revenge. In this hot, languorous climate the desires of the passionate Aylmer race were astir. They asserted themselves already in the visions of the night, and disconcerted Dick with imaginings which he promptly disavowed. Such orgiastic violence could never be the fruit of his own pure mind, but rather suggestions of the Evil One, to be combated with tennis and prayer. For a time, the devils were scared away; and then, during this second summer of his residence in Tokyo, they returned to the attack with redoubled fury. Another Dick Aylmer seemed to be emerging from his native mire, whom the golden-haired evangelist of Hernwood and Kamiyama was ashamed to acknowledge. Tennis and prayer were now of no avail. Perhaps, then, these phenomena were signs that marriage, after all, was Dick's vocation—marriage, of course, with a Japanese girl who could help him to enter into the heart of her country.

So, one day, when he had already been in Japan for a year or more, he decided to consult his Bishop, though he did not hope for much sympathy from so determined a celibate. One Saturday evening, after the duties of the coming week had been duly divided up among the four junior priests, Dick delayed his departure from the book-laden, dust-haunted library.

"Well, Dick," said the Bishop, when the two were at last left alone, "so you're not lonely out in the suburbs?"

The Bishop had a way of appearing to anticipate one's subject which was rather disconcerting.

"As a matter of fact," Dick blurted out, "I was thinking about getting married, and I wanted to ask your advice."

Up went the Bishop's hands and the Bishop's eyebrows. He had heard similar announcements before and they generally heralded the loss of one of his most promising young men.

"Dick," he exclaimed, but his voice was very gentle, "I can't say I'm glad; but I do hope and pray that you will both be happy and that God will bless you. You have no need to worry about ways and means like so many of us poor clergy. You are wealthy and you are healthy. What more can you want? It will probably mean the end of your work in Japan; it would not be fair on your children to bring them up in such an alien country. No, Dick; but there is plenty of work to be done everywhere, and I don't think you will regret your experience out here. And now, may I ask who is this fortunate young woman?"

He clasped his fine white hands round his knee, and searched Dick's face with his keen black eyes.

"No," said Dick, "there's no one—as yet."

The Bishop loosened his clasp with a gesture of evident relief.

"I am glad to hear that," he replied. "You know my views about the priesthood. Priests should never marry, as I thought that you Anglo-Catholics would have agreed. But there is human nature, too. Which is the real ideal? Perhaps a happy marriage is the only halting-place between Heaven and Hell. That is from Pascal—a hard saying, but a true one. I don't want to dissuade you, Dick, if your heart is set on the ideal of human happiness—a loving wife, a home to found around you, children, a social entity, the joy of earthly continuity, a kind of insurance on immortality for one or two generations at least. It is an ideal satisfactory to the manly man. But are you altogether like that, Dick—you with your vivid spiritual conceptions and your high ideal of the sacramental life? Marriage is a turning to the human from the super-human. A good saint makes a bad husband. And it will mean the end of Japan for you. The type of woman

who is likely to appeal to you is not the sort of woman who will sink herself and her children in a lifetime of missionary work in Japan."

"But if I marry a Japanese?" Dick interjected.

The Bishop started up from his chair. Dick had never seen the little gnomish man so visibly excited. He was standing now with his back to the empty grate. His dark eyebrows and his grizzled beard were twitching with emotion; and he thumped with one fist in the palm of the other hand to emphasise his disapproval.

"Marry a Japanese!" the Bishop repeated. "Dick, Dick—are you seriously contemplating this disaster?"

"I have been thinking about it quite a lot lately. I think it might help me in my work."

"Don't be a hypocrite, Dick. If you want to marry, the reason is sufficiently obvious, and it has nothing whatever to do with your work."

"You are unfair, my lord," said Dick, ashamed to think that the Bishop had guessed his secret. "I consider that the missionaries out here, and the Anglicans in particular, are hopelessly out of touch with the Japanese whom they profess to teach."

"And you think that if you marry a Japanese they will listen to you?"

"It will show at any rate that I don't look down upon them as an inferior race."

"And you think that you can find a Japanese of a class corresponding to your own, a prosperous well-nurtured *samurai*, who will give his daughter to a foreign missionary, in order to encourage him in his work?"

Dick was silent. He felt that an altercation with his spiritual superior would be unseemly. But his thoughts were in obstinate opposition to the Bishop's words.

"You can get a Japanese wife. Nothing easier. Any drunken sailor can who comes ashore at Yokohama. But what will she be? A tea-house or restaurant girl, a broken-down farmer's daughter? He will sell her to you as he would have sold her to

the Yoshiwara. But such a wife and such a life—will *that* help you with your work?"

Dick lit a cigarette, but did not attempt to interrupt. The Bishop continued:

"The Japanese don't want us as sons-in-law, and they are quite right, too. It is nothing whatever to do with inferiority or superiority. In their heart of hearts they think they are the better race; in our heart of hearts we think that we are. God alone can judge such a question. We are here to *show* them our ideals, not to force them down their throats. They may reject them; and perhaps they will be right in doing so. There, again, God alone can judge. We cannot convert them to our ideals by ourselves making a grotesque attempt to become Japanese. We lose our own platform and we do not gain theirs. And how, Dick, do you propose to treat your wife? Like a Japanese—that is to say like a superior servant, a breeder of children, a social nonentity? Or like an English lady? The Japanese way would degrade you; and the English way she would not understand."

"I would love her," Dick murmured feebly.

"Love, love!" cried the Bishop, his fist hammering more furiously than ever. "'O lyric love, half-angel and half-bird, and all a wonder and a wild desire!'"

"My poor boy"—the Bishop hereupon seated himself at Dick's side on the sofa, and laid one hand on his knee—"It is an attractive theory; but I know that in practice the song goes wrong. There was poor Harkness of Sendai, an earnest man full of zeal. He married a Japanese. Out of his small salary he had to support all her lazy brothers and uncles. Then he took to drinking *saké*. Then one evening his boat was found capsized, and a day or two later he was washed ashore. It may have been accident or it may not. Then there was Joliffe, down in Kyushu. He had one Japanese wife at first, and then more than one. He drifted down and down, until he became a regular

beachcomber, touting for fraudulent subscriptions from people coming ashore from boats. The last I heard of him, he was in prison in Shanghai for theft. Fortunately, it is not a habit among missionaries. Generally it is the merchant or the trader whom you find married to a Japanese wife—sometimes not unhappily—the Stonhams, for instance. But he is a retired sea captain with a warm heart, great experience and a simple outlook on life."

The Bishop had a tiresome way of neglecting general principles and of arguing from particular cases. As he knew what he was talking about, this inductive method gave him an unfair advantage.

"But I am neither Harkness, nor Joliffe, nor Captain Stonham," exclaimed Dick. "I believe that it is our duty to get to know these people, and that very few of us do. And that if one has a vocation for marriage——"

"Vocation fiddlesticks," interrupted the Bishop. "You mean if you can't control your passions."

"If you prefer that point of view, my lord," said Dick icily.

"Well, what then?" the elder man asked.

"If one wants to marry," Dick continued, "I think one should marry a Japanese. That is a seal to one's sympathy for the country. The Japanese will understand it as such. However you, my lord, may feel on the subject, it will prove conclusively that I, at any rate, do not believe that the white races are incontestably superior."

The Bishop wrinkled his forehead. Young men, when they explain themselves, are so hard to understand.

"I don't follow the argument," he said. "You have white wine and red. Both are good. But you don't blend them both together in your wine-glass. There are many things which don't mix. Among such are the Aryan and Mongolian races. My poor, enthusiastic Dick, you are stumbling and fumbling with an

ancient and distressful problem, which Nature has settled for us once and for all. Look at the result of such mixtures—the Eurasian motley, all over the world—feckless, futile and pathetic. Look at the young Caldicotts—a brilliant father, a quiet unselfish mother, plenty of money, plenty of friends—of a sort. The whole family going to pot! No self-control, no steadfastness of purpose, silly sensuality, vanity, extravagance! That is Eurasia, Dick! That is your children's future if you marry a Japanese!"

The Bishop was pacing up and down his library, pausing at times opposite the rash young man who had dared to flout him on his special subject, the interracial marriage question. Dick still sat huddled up in a corner of the sofa, crushed but obstinate.

"Caldicott was an atheist;" he expostulated. "I would bring my children up to serve God!"

"Do you remember Kipling's *Lispeth*," the Bishop retorted, "that solemn warning to all us missionaries?"

'To my own Gods I go.

It may be they will give me greater ease

Than your cold Christs and tangled Trinities.'

Dick was silent and resentful. He was a priest; but he was of the age and temperament which dislikes counsel, unless it coincides with one's own preconceived ideas. He had not expected sympathy from his Bishop. He had not got it. He was determined to be annoyed by this emasculate, explosive man.

"So if I married a Japanese," he said ruefully, "all you Christians would cut me and turn me out into the wilderness?"

"Not if it were an honest and honourable marriage; we would try to do our best. But I will admit it would be difficult."

There was a pause; and the Bishop once again resumed his seat on the sofa at Dick's side.

"Dick, dear boy," he began. That 'dear boy'

exasperated where it was meant to soothe. "How old are you?"

"Twenty-six, my lord."

"Don't think of marriage for another five years. You must prepare yourself. You must gather more experience before you thrust children upon the world. And you are well off—for a missionary."

"I have a small allowance from my parents and a little capital of my own. As you know, I have never taken any salary for my work."

"Oh, the wonder of it! To have one's own income! To feel that you can say *Bo!* to your bishop; Dick, you're a very lucky fellow!"

The Bishop laughed a high, cackling laugh, which hardly did justice to his kindly nature. Then he continued:

"You may be sure the Japanese have got wind of your wealth; and if once you get into their hands—as you will if you marry one of their women—they will suck at you and drain you until there is no money and no honey left in you at all."

"I don't understand, my lord," said Dick stiffly.

"You have only been here a year. You will in time. Where are you going to for the summer holidays?"

"I hadn't thought of going away at all. I was going to stay in Tokyo."

"What! Two summers running in this Tokyo dust-and-steam bath? No wonder you feel desperate. You want a holiday up in the mountains. The damp heat here saturates one's mind and spirit. Come up with me for a month to Karuizawa. You will meet all the missionaries in the Far East—Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Salvationists, Quakers, Seventh Adventists and Plymouth Brethren. No—don't make a face at them. Sybarites like you and me are not fit to hold a candle to most of them. There are ladies, too, and one or two pretty ones. Perhaps they will persuade you better than I can to

give up this Japanese romance—this dreary, weary, bleary-eyed romance!"

"Might I bring Kato, my teacher, with me?" asked Dick, thinking that the Japanese might possibly be moved to conversion by the sight of so much evangelism *en masse*.

"No, certainly not," was the categorical reply. "No more books, no more work, and above all no more Kato for a month. You labour at that young scoundrel's conversion; and it's a plaster masterpiece, you know. The material is not worth your trouble, Dick, especially in this hot weather."

"I'm sorry for him," said Dick. "And I want to help him."

"Ah!" sighed the Bishop. "If only the Japanese could feel half the sympathy for us in our troubles that we feel for them in theirs!"

The holiday was agreed upon and the exclusion of Kato; but Dick walked back to Kamiyama full of acrimony and indignation. The Bishop's tone had irritated him, his inopportune laughter and his total lack of sympathy with Dick's ideal. Beneath a superficial geniality, thought Dick, he had a hard celibate's heart. He was too dry and too intellectual to appeal to the emotions of the Japanese, too proud to enter their simple domesticity, too race-conscious to share with them the sacrament of marriage. So far had the Bishop's words been from shaking the young man's resolve, that he returned home feeling more strongly than ever that it was his *duty* to assimilate himself with these people, to bear their griefs and carry their sorrows, even if his own race should cast him off.

"This," he thought in his foolishness, "is what Christ would have done."

CHAPTER X

KARUIZAWA

KARUIZAWA—the Light Pool Marsh—is an up-country resort among the mountains of central Japan. Originally an obscure Japanese village nestling at the foot of the volcano Asama, it was selected many years ago by an English Archdeacon of Tokyo as a suitable spot in which to recruit health, strength and zeal during the hot months of summer. His choice was confirmed by an anonymous medical authority, who laid down once and for all as an axiomatic fact that Karuizawa is the healthiest place in the whole country. A foreign invasion commenced on an unprecedented scale. The native inns were soon inadequate to cope with such diversity of tastes and doctrines; for the visitors were mostly missionaries. So-called hotels sprang up; and chalet bungalows began to spread themselves among the woods. Then came the railway; and with the railway the holiday incursion doubled and quadrupled. Not Japan only, but Korea, China, Formosa and the Philippines contributed their quota of haggard and exhausted men and women. They came from the slums of Osaka, and from the fight against disease and degradation; from the frozen forests of the Hokkaido, where the ancient Ainu race, once paramount throughout Japan, ekes out its few remaining generations; from the land of *O Kaiko Sama*—the Silkworm—and the golden cocoons; from the coral shores of Kochi and from the fishing villages of the Inland Sea. They came from the outlying islands—from the Bonins, which were No Man's Land; from the Luohus, which hang like a pendant between Japan

and the tropics: and from Taiwan, which is wholly tropical and which the Portuguese called Formosa because of its beauty. They came from Korean towns and villages, where the people are garbed in white raiment and where the sound of the laundry clappers is never still. From China they came, from walled cities hundreds of miles up the Yangtse, from the vast province of Szechuan where there is a population of sixty million people and not a single mile of railway, and from the precipitous marches of Tibet. They came from Malay rivers, which creep fever-haunted among mazes of mangrove and nipa, where humanity is few in numbers and where the forests with their shadows and their ghostly terrors are still supreme.

Once in a while an opportunity offers to these tired evangelists a holiday at Karuizawa, the company of people of their own race and interests, and an escape from the monotonous insistence of Oriental poverty, superstition and disease. Summer at Karuizawa is therefore a kind of Sabbath of the Saints, twelve weeks of Sundays, but with tennis permissible on six days of the week and mild card playing for the more daring ones. Moreover, since at least two-thirds of the missionary population are women, and since again two-thirds of these are spinsters, Love—Venus Urania, of course—is by no means a stranger among the pews and pine-woods of the mountain settlement; and to the maiden gospel-bearer there is always something of the excitement of a lottery in a holiday at Karuizawa.

The arrival of a handsome young priest, presumably unmarried, in the company of popular Bishop Blackett, was an event which did not pass uncommented. When, in the course of the following week, Dick preached at one of the week-day evensongs, his good looks, his eloquence and the charming inflections in his voice became the general theme of conversation among his fellow-missionaries—especially among those of the gentler sex—both episcopalian and nonconformist.

Some one, too, had whispered that he was a rich man; and another had added that he was heir to an earldom. A third reported that he was in very truth a peer, and the owner of an historic castle, and that he had renounced his inheritance in order to enter the service of the Lord. Could anything be more deliciously, more inspiringly romantic?

Mrs. Atterbury, the acknowledged queen of Karuizawa, invited Dick to a high tea in the gardens of her pretty villa, which every summer transformed into a hive of missionaries. She paired off the young priest with Viola Tyrwhitt, a charming girl, tall and fair as a lily, whom some strange wind of idealism had wafted to this alien shore.

Dick could imagine her gliding among her flowers in an English country garden. Instead, she was explaining to him her social work in the inferno of industrial Osaka, the hideous life of the working girls, and the living-in system as practised in Japanese factories.

"These poor girls toil for twelve hours on end," she said, "in the din and reek of the factories—all day long, all night long, as the case may be. They sleep in pens, mat jostling against mat on the stale flooring. The day shift sleeps on the same mat which the night shift has just left. The room is never aired or even empty. So consumption spreads; and the girls who return to the country spread the germs among the villages."

"How awful!" said Dick. He had not yet seen anything of this side of Japanese life. "But are there no factory laws? Can't the authorities do anything?"

"The laws are all on the employers' side," answered Miss Tyrwhitt; "and no one seems to care. 'If they die, they die,' I heard one old scoundrel say. 'There are always plenty more. Japan is overpopulated, anyway!'"

She talked with a simple grace that brought back to Dick pleasant memories of his English home.

He played tennis with her once or twice; and once or twice he went for walks and picnic-parties with her and her friends. By that time, Karuizawa had decided that there might be something in it; and Mrs. Atterbury was congratulating herself on one more link to her chain of triumphs. But Dick alone was unconscious of the conspiracy. He was obsessed by his own idea; and he had little time for individuals.

"Don't you *love*—the Japanese?" he asked Miss Tyrwhitt.

"I like some of them," the English girl replied guardedly.

They were seated on a fallen tree-trunk on a hill-side overlooking Karuizawa. Before them lay a broad upland valley with Japanese farms, brown and thatched, scattered here and there among green rice fields, straggling plots of mulberry and tall millet-plants. In the centre of the valley was a village, stretched out on cross roads and cruciform in shape, as though in instinctive compliment to its summer visitors. Around the village, among the woods and moors of the lower mountain slopes, were strewn the brown two-storeyed chalets of the missionaries. In the distance they looked like boxes or cupboards—the impedimenta of some giant, which he had dropped in his panic flight across the mountains. In the middle of Karuizawa a low rambling hotel marked the place as differing from other Japanese villages; so did the tennis-courts and two or three iron-roofed churches and chapels. But in a grove of pine-trees stood the high-thatched temple of the native faith. Higher up the valley, where the steep hill-sides closed in upon the stream and the rice-fields, stood another European-style hotel of a sickly green colour. Beyond that point the landscape became indistinct; and range after range of mountain-ridge guarded the horizon. Evening was beginning to fall; but the sky was still blue and cloudless, save where the smoke of the fires of Asama floated over the bare dome of the volcano.

"Just think!" exclaimed Miss Tyrwhitt; "that mountain is full of fire. Any moment it might break out and destroy us all."

"Like Mount Sinai in the *Pilgrim's Progress*," Dick answered.

"I feel Japan is just like that," his companion continued. "I once saw a foreign sailor going off to his ship in Kobé harbour. He had trouble with his rickshaw-man about the fare. He began to shout and swear and throw his fists about. In a minute—they rose like flies around him—he was surrounded by hundreds of Japanese, all threatening him and scowling at him—although he was very likely in the right. The police had to come and get him away from them, or they would have torn him to bits. Japan is like that. They hate us because we are the white barbarians from overseas."

"Oh, no," said Dick. "You mustn't say that, even if you feel it is true. People seem to get so discouraged out here; and then they can do nothing. But I am sure the Japanese are not really unfriendly. I feel as Our Lord must have felt when He had compassion upon the multitudes because they were like sheep having no shepherd. If only all this energy and national pride and sense of duty could be somehow Christianised, it would be the most wonderful thing that has ever happened since Constantine saw the Sign of the Cross in the heavens. *In hoc signo vinces.*"

"It would be wonderful," sighed Viola. "But is it possible?"

"With God all things are possible," answered Dick. "I mean to work for that."

"But how will you start about it?" the girl asked. "I'm afraid I haven't made many converts yet. Have you? I have only been able to help a few poor girls in trouble, but I'm not much good at preaching to them."

"I think I have almost made one," said Dick lamely.

He had Kato in his mind, but he quickly regained assurance and continued:

"I don't want *conversions*. The word is too abrupt. It suggests too violent a break with the past. I don't want to see these little Bethels with their alien ugliness adding to the modern disfigurements of Japan. I don't want to see surpliced clergymen droning matins, evensong or litany to listless congregations. I don't want to see English Christianity imported into this country. What I want to see is the Christ ideal developing out of the old ideals, naturally and peacefully, just because it is the best. I want to see the old symbols and the old idols still honoured because they are symbols and types of Christ. I want to see these beautiful, gracious old temples quickened into sanctuaries of the living God, and native priests in their native robes rededicating them with the sacrifice of the Mass. 'This is my Body which is given for you—for you English, and you Americans, and you Japanese and you Chinese.' Why not?"

"Oh, how wonderful!" exclaimed Viola, genuinely moved.

"These missionaries here," said Dick, indicating the valley. "Of course, they are mostly dissenters, and don't understand. They seem to turn all their attention to education, hygiene, medicine or social problems—as though teaching English, or preventing consumption, or running hospitals and Rescue Homes could take the place of the Faith—faith in His Name—faith in His Sacrament. The Christian Faith is the Mass."

Dick was trembling with an emotion which could hardly fail to be contagious. Viola Tyrwhitt had always regarded religion with a calm certitude. Such excitement seemed to border on irreverence; but it was very delightful, too. It was like having a real musician playing his heart out, all to oneself.

She was disappointed when Dick rose from the log and looked round him, like a man awakened from a dream.

"Where are the others?" he asked.

The others, with elaborate tact, had gone on ahead. The pair turned down the winding mountain-path which led towards the valley. All of a sudden, Dick asked:

"Do you think missionaries ought to marry Japanese?"

Poor Viola! This question, after so much high thinking, was like a douche of cold water.

"I think it would be horrible!" she exclaimed.

"Don't say that, please; because I think I shall marry a Japanese—one day."

It was a shock to Viola, who, woman-like, had begun unconsciously to regard this charming young man as her private property.

"How can you talk like that after all the beautiful things you have been saying?" she asked in a tone of virtuous reproof.

"Because if a man is going to live and work among these people all his life, I think it is his duty."

"But one does not marry for duty; one marries for—love!"

The girl's voice fell almost to inaudibility, as though the last word were an immodest avowal. Dick, however, answered at once:

"But I *love* the Japanese!"

The mountain-wall to Westward shut out the sunset; and wave after wave of fiery cloud had flung its line across the sky, as though the blazing heart of Asama were yielding up its secret. The cool evening wind rippled across the rice-plants.

Dick Aylmer was still in love with his idea; and he had little use for mere facts or for mere persons. But the sight of his missionary colleagues *en masse* was most dispiriting—the elderly men bearded and uncouth, the younger men lank and angular, and the monstrous regiment of women, mostly of the old maid type—whether young or old—scraggy in appearance and slovenly in dress. The majority were Americans,

desperately earnest and garrulous. They seemed to belong to a class which we associate, perhaps unjustly, with the minor suburbs—with Tooting, Peckham or Leytonstone; but they were more self-assertive than our modest suburbanites. They lived in swarms in the hive-like chalets of the hill-station. They would emerge in the early morning, primed with griddle-cakes and treacle, for the first round of chatter. They would assemble in clusters, insatiably talkative; and so pass on their way to church, tennis, or working-party; to long "hikes" across the mountains; to lectures given by themselves for themselves on "uplift," on civic science, on town-planning, on theosophy, or on prohibition; to concerts and tea-parties; to more lectures and more services. A veritable busman's holiday!

Dick could appreciate the earnestness and self-sacrifice of these people. There was more push and life in them, too, than among the gentle, ineffective Anglicans. But he regretted their obvious incapacity to understand the beauty, the refinement and the strength of the old Oriental civilisation, which they were attacking in the names of Christ and Progress. These crude enthusiasts must appear very comic in the eyes of the sensitive and humorous Japanese.

One day Dick had noticed a stout, red-faced dame, obviously from the Western prairies, who behind her large horn-rimmed goggles looked something like a diver, trying to romp with some Japanese children in the village street of Karuizawa. She caught one little girl in a fat embrace. The others promptly fled; and in a scared and silent group watched from a distance what their companion's fate might be. The little victim began at once to cry out:

"*Iya! Iya!* (Don't, Don't!)"

"My, my! Don't cry, honey," exclaimed the muscular evangelist. "Sure I wouldn't harm you!"

She had sat down on a boulder at the side of the road, and was bumping the child up and down on

her broad knee. All of a sudden, she jumped up with a cry; and the little girl, dropping to the ground, scuttled away as fast as her big wooden *geta* would allow her.

"Sakes alive!" yelled the missionary dame. "She's bit my finger—the little Injun!"

No wonder they bite, thought Dick. These preachers of Christ's gospel call the gentle Buddhas "images," the tradition of a great religion "idolatry," and the children of a mighty nation "heathen" and "barbarians." It is we who are the barbarians, we, the rough, incursive, piratical nations of the West.

And yet!—Dick stayed on for a week beyond his holiday period in order to be present at a great missionary gathering, held in the open air in the garden of one of the hotels. Men and women from all over the East, evangelists of every shade of doctrine, spoke in turn about their various endeavours to spread Christian truth and faith in the lands of the unbelievers. The speeches varied in quality and interest and audibility, as could be easily gauged by the attention of the listeners. A dull speaker was quickly drowned in that hum of conversation, which seemed to be the constant undertone of Karuizawa life. Suddenly, after a long interlude of this kind, there was a complete silence. Some one near Dick said:

"Why! I guess it's Bibleman Baxter."

A tall figure had mounted the temporary rostrum—a grey-haired, grey-bearded man, with a lined and weather-beaten face, and the pellucid blue eyes of a sailor. He wore a double-breasted reefer jacket, stained and worn, and he was fumbling in his pocket for some notes for his address. A subdued clapping arose among the more enthusiastic members of the audience, only to be hushed down by those who considered that although in fact they were out of doors, yet in spirit they were in church.

"You know I can't talk fine," announced Bibleman Baxter abruptly; "so that's why you shove me up

here. Social conditions in Japanese villages, you tell me to talk about that. Very well. Full steam ahead. I've been cruising in the *Seisho Maru* round a part of the Inland Sea lying S.S.W. from the port of Kobé. I put in one evening at a small harbour called Kobama, but the fishermen call it '*onna-machi*' (woman-town)."

The speaker here referred to his notes, and then continued :

"I found in that small village ten licensed houses of ill fame, thirteen unlicensed, twelve tea-houses, and six hotels no better than the rest. As soon as we set foot ashore, they began to cry after us—you know their way,—'*Irasshai ! Irasshai ! Danna San !* (Come, come ! Master !).' We spoke to the brothel keepers. They said that women were dirt cheap this year. There have been hard times in the farming districts inland. Farmers are selling daughters and even wives to make both ends meet. But the fishermen along the coasts are rich. A steamer calls now and sells their surplus fish at Kobé at a high price. So the fishermen are rich, and they spend all their money on women and *saké*. The upland farmers are very poor. If they can get their food and two hundred *yen* (£20) in a year from their land, they say 'We have done well.' If there is a bad season, then they must sell their women; or the family would come to ruin.

"We spoke to the women. We asked them, 'Why do you wish to live a shameful life?' They all said, 'We don't wish to; there is poverty at home; *kawaiso*, *kawaiso* (pitiful, pitiful) !' I can see one of them now, a gentle little lass, sixteen or seventeen at most, and a smile and dimple like my own little girl, long, long ago. She had nothing as yet of the hard vulgar ways of her trade. 'Why have you chosen this life?' I asked. 'It is poverty,' she said. She was promised as a bride. Father owed money to the landlord. The landlord was too cruel. He said, 'Pay now or go out !' There were two little brothers,—too young to work. There was no other way. She said she wished to marry—a

neighbour's boy when he came back from his soldiering. But the priest and the *soncho* (village headman) came and said, 'There is no hope for you to marry now; for the family's sake you must become *joro*. Then your father can pay the debt, and have some money over to start again.' Afterwards, when she came home from *onna-machi*, all people would praise her as a dutiful daughter, and she would find a good husband. Her father, her mother and her little brothers prayed her to go. *Kawaiso, kawaiso!* There was no choice. She smiled as Japanese do when they tell their troubles. 'And now?' I asked. 'This life is torture,' she said. . . ."

The speaker passed from fact to anecdote and from anecdote to fact in his curious jerky style. He laid before Dick's eyes a picture of rural life in Japan—its poverty, its Spartan endurance, its hard virtues, and its coarse vices—life beneath the margin of subsistence—the struggle with the soil, which is the base of all our civilisations. How can these people be won for Christ? How can Christ help them, when *Bimbogami* (the God of Poverty) comes scratching at the patched and tattered *shoji*?

"These are the people we've got to get at," cried Bibleman Baxter at the close of his address; "not the city highbrows. They don't count. The farmers and the fishermen are the fellows who've made Japan!"

There was a burst of applause, again stifled by a "S-s-sh!" of protest, when Baxter had finished his speech.

"Who is he?" Dick asked the Bishop.

"Bibleman Baxter is a great character," the Bishop answered. "Years ago he was a blackbirding captain in the South Seas, and known far and wide by the expressive name of Bloody Baxter. All of a sudden he found religion, as some of those chaps do. He runs a little mission sailing ship round the ports and islands of the Inland Sea, and he does an immense amount of good. He's always worth listening to."

"He's not an Anglican?"

"Oh, no, I wish he were. He's some kind of Methodist."

To the encouragement of a wheezy harmonium, the first lines of a hymn were being sung :

*" Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war."*

It was a favourite hymn; and all the representatives of all the different sects were joining in it—Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Plymouth Brethren, soldiers of the Salvation Army, and even the peaceful fraternity of the Quakers.

*" Christ, the Royal Master,
Leads against the foe.
Forward into battle
See his banners go."*

Men and women from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and from the cities and villages of the British Isles, all joined in the refrain of the Church Militant, which floated across the sunlit valley of Karuizawa, to the mountain-wall of Shinshu, to the covered fires of Asama, and to the vast plain of Nagano—downward and onward to the Sea of Japan.

*" Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before."*

CHAPTER XI

KATO CONVERTS HIMSELF

UNDOUBTEDLY Kato San was responsible for Dick's marriage.

Dick had been continuing his course of instruction in Japanese at the hands of the two masters, whom he called respectively "Ancient and Modern." Every morning, Mikami would arrive at the little villa in Kamiyama, dressed in his stained *kimono*, and wearing his old curly-brimmed bowler-hat with a return tram-ticket tucked into the band. But Dick did not feel the same romantic interest in the old *samurai*, whose faith was so firm and so unreasonable, as he did in young Kato, who was his type of New Japan—intelligent, inquisitive, conceited and blindly grasping for truth.

Kato fancied himself as a philosopher; and would quote from Nietzsche, Bergson and Eucken, who were at that time the fashionable nutriment for the Japanese *esprit fort*. Yet he was interested in Christianity, and—in a condescending way—sympathetic to its ideals. But he did not keep appointments with the undeviating regularity of Mikami. During the day he was employed in a business firm; in the evening he often had other engagements. He was a very popular young man, and had a large following among his fellow clerks. He was a member of dining clubs and of debating clubs which constantly demanded his presence. Unlike most Japanese, he appeared to have no family; and he lived in some obscure lodging-house with two other young men.

"I am *ronin* (masterless samurai)," he would

exclaim, inspired by self-esteem and Kirin Beer. "I am free lance. I am the superman, also blonde beast. I am Will to Power."

Nevertheless, Dick offered this formidable incarnation a room in his own house; but Kato had, most unexpectedly, declined.

"He wants to be free to run after women," the Reverend Mr. Porter of St. George's had suggested. He, too, had had some experience of Kato San and his likes, and had formed a poor opinion of them.

"No," Dick expostulated. "He's not that sort. He's a serious-minded fellow; and I think one day he will come to Christ."

"His edgication's all wrong," said Porter. "Such men as he sow tares in the Lord's field."

In order to convince his patron of the honesty of his nightly avocations, Kato invited Dick one evening to attend a *conversazione* at the Lofty Mountain Club, a barn-like building which might have been an abandoned work-shop, in the slums of Shinagawa. A debate on religious subjects was to be held. An atheist, an agnostic, a pragmatist, a utilitarian, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, a Shintoist, a Confucianist and a Christian were all to speak in defence of their respective points of view. Kato, though not wholly converted, was to speak on behalf of Christianity.

"Good!" said Dick; "God will help you;" and he accepted the invitation with alacrity.

The entertainment was somewhat of an ordeal. The hall was draughty and ill-lit. There was no flooring; but some rough straw mats were thrown down over the bare ground; and upon these the patient audience had to squat through hours of eloquence. The fluency of these young men knew no bounds. There was nothing of the self-depreciatory attitude of British youths. One after another they sprang on to the dais with evident joy; and, after a preliminary flourish of the *kimono* sleeves, embarked in a harangue which appeared to have neither pause nor punctuation.

"*Ware-ware wa . . .*" The oratorical "we" seemed to pursue this tireless rhetoric down vistas of interminable declamation. The curious up-and-down intonation of Japanese elocution and the profuse employment of scientific terms prevented Dick from catching any phrase familiar to his inexperienced ear, except that incessant "*ware-ware wa.*" Hour after hour dragged by, while the squatting attitude of attention which was expected of the audience became increasingly painful to unpractised European legs.

Some time about eleven—the meeting had opened sat six—Kato San mounted the platform. He was more ostentatiously dressed than most of his fellows; for he sported white flannel trousers and a blue coat with a rose in the buttonhole, while most of the other speakers had been dressed in *kimono* or in students' uniform.

He was evidently regarded as a star turn. There was a movement of attention, as he removed his panama hat from his glistening head, placed it on the green baize table beside him, and gripped the lapels of his coat. He was undoubtedly an able speaker. His voice was well modulated, and lacked that harsh monotony which had spoiled most of the evening's oratory. He made use of illustration and anecdote; and his audience followed his points with interest, and laughed readily at his jokes. At times they would applaud with clapping of hands and cry:

"*Sansei! Sansei!*"

Dick asked a student beside him what was the line of his argument.

"God—is—love," replied the youth in halting English; and then added in Japanese:

"*Kato Kun* is famous, eh? He believes in principle of wide love."

"Far and wide he seeks love experience," added another student; and the two Japanese laughed at the joke and its implication.

"Kato Kun is great orator," explained Dick's neighbour; "but he is not grave or honest fellow. I think one day he become Member of Parliament, perhaps."

But Kato himself was overcome by the beauty of his own eloquence. By the end of his speech, tears of real emotion were streaming down his cheeks; and many of his excitable hearers were weeping with him.

"*Sansei! Sansei!*"

They applauded him with redoubled zest when at last he resumed his seat at Dick's side. He was overjoyed at his success; but a preternatural gravity had descended upon him. He took no notice of the congratulatory remarks of his companions, nor of their parting salutations. He walked in silence at the priest's side, as they climbed up the dark hill homeward between the shuttered shops and the barred gateways. Suddenly, he paused, and turned to Dick.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "I am now at last Christian. This night God speak to me—with my own voice."

It was true. Kato had converted himself. His logic had been so convincing, and his eloquence so touching, that to remain an unbeliever would be an insult to his own talents.

"Thank God, Kato San," said Dick. "I have prayed for this moment for months and months. I shall baptise you myself."

Kato thrust his hands into his pocket and stared up at the starry sky. He was feeling intensely the weight of his own importance.

"I think baptism mere symbol for babes," he answered; "but for smart man of superior brain, how so?"

"You forget it is the doorway to the sacramental life," said Dick reproachfully.

The self-convert, however, appeared to be in no hurry to pass through the door. Days passed, and weeks; and Dick still waited in vain for a declaration of his friend's intentions. The only visible sign of

grace was that Kato began to attend the Sunday evening services at St. George's, where he distressed the almost entirely British congregation by joining lustily in the hymns to tunes of his own composing.

With September came the chrysanthemum season, which closes the yearly cycle of Japan's classic flowers; and with October the maple leaves turned red, and the cold winds began to blow the dust of the Tokyo streets into whirls and vortices. Fresh snow fell upon the peak of Fujiyama, and the season for climbing the mountain closed.

Dick, returning one evening from exercise on the tennis courts, found lying on his table an envelope addressed in Kato's florid hand. He opened it, and read:—

"DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,—To-night I visit at your home for last time, perhaps. In thrilling speech of H.M. Prince Hamlet, To be or not to be that is question. Later course more noble, I think, in present miserable condition. For positively last time I cry my friend's noble heart to save distressed pauper floting in wave of calamity and beat by storm.

"Your obedient servant,

"G. KATO."

Dick was familiar by now with this remarkable epistolary style. It was by no means the first of these curious effusions, which the payment of some petty debt usually sufficed to obliterate. So Dick awaited his teacher's arrival with equanimity, and ate his dinner with unimpaired appetite.

A few minutes after O Katsu had cleared away, he heard a low whistle from the direction of his garden, followed by two taps on the wooden verandah.

"Who is there?" he called out in Japanese.

"Kato," came the reply in a penetrating whisper.

Dick pushed the *shoji* aside.

"Come in quickly," he said.

The Pride of the Lofty Mountain Club was evidently in dire distress. His face was livid; and his staring eyes were rimmed with dark shadows. His white trousers were dirty, and the chrysanthemum in his buttonhole was dead. He had shuffled off his shoes—instinctively; but in his excitement he had forgotten to remove his imitation panama.

"Why, Kato San? Whatever is the matter?"

Kato put a finger to his lips, crossed the room with stealthy strides, opened the sliding door, and glanced out into the corridor and the hall. Then he returned into the sitting-room, and collapsed on Dick's long wicker chair with his legs astraddle across it, with his elbows propped on his knees and his face buried in his hands.

"Tell me, Kato San."

"Policeman in quick pursuit, I fear," groaned Kato.

"Why, whatever have you done?"

Dick was dressed in a brown wadded *kimono* with a grey silk sash knotted behind his back. But his room had become less Japanese than in the warm days of summer. It had been invaded by wicker furniture—the long chair upon which Kato was rocking his misery, to and fro, a smaller round chair, and a table.

"I am—a robber," the Japanese admitted.

"Why? How?"

"I rob my master—five hundred *yen*."

"O Kato San, what have you done that for?"

"Family distress. Noble inspiration of great heart but horrid act of shame. Sir, it is shame me to tell how low I sink from great Christian eminency."

In disconnected phrases, half English and half Japanese, and in a voice broken by sobs, Kato told his pitiful story. Shaken by the upheaval of his emotion, the panama hat fell from his head and settled on the floor—unnoticed. He told about his father, a rich man of Kwansai, hard of heart and addicted to degrading pleasures; about his mother, living in a lonely

country house, in estate little better than a peasant, although the true wife of a prosperous merchant; about his little sister and his little brother, living, or rather starving, in their mother's house. Little sister very sick; no money to buy milk and other invalid delicacies. Mother and little brother write to him, Kato Gintaro, far away in Tokyo. Send us some money, they implore; or little sister will die.

"How so? How so?" sobbed Kato. "Quick as thunder, I seduce a cheque."

"What?"

"I seduce a cheque. I write name of company president. I give to cashier. He pay."

"And the money?"

"I send to my mother. Mother never know; and little sister now can live."

"Does any one know yet at your office?"

"All is know. I am in sack."

"What?"

"I am in sack. I take the kick. Mr. Makino, company president, say, 'Shameful thief—you seduce my cheque—you hangdog.' He appeal the policeman. 'No, sir,'—I cry, I storm, I plead. 'Spare, spare; I take cash for family need, also good intention, though hellish act. I buy milk for little sister's stomach, or he die.' 'I never believe such tale,' retort Makino with proudish look. 'But to Monday I spare. On Monday, you restore my cash and never fail. See, I warn policeman. He dog you night and day. Monday no cash, he seize you for crime.' And so he dismiss me like blackguard."

This narrative in its broken staccato English could not fail to move the compassionate Dick. Japanese are generally silent about their personal affairs. Just as in England it is bad form to prate about religion, so in Japan it is ungentlemanly to talk about one's own family. Dick had never questioned Kato on the subject. He knew vaguely that his friend's original home was somewhere near Kyoto, and he had gathered that he was on bad terms with his father. The vision

of the abandoned mother with her two babes, eking out their existence in a lonely farmhouse, moved Dick almost to tears, and caused him to overlook the gravity of Kato's offence. This was a case which demanded help, prompt and effective.

He rose, and stood over the unhappy young man.

"Look here," he said. "You have done wrong; but you did it for some one else's sake, and not for your own. I shall go and see the president of your company to-morrow."

Kato started back and looked up at Dick. His hair was tousled, and his salmon pink tie disarranged.

"Oh, no, sir," he exclaimed. "I thank you; but I do not wish. In the company they speak bad things of me. Far better I die."

"That would be a much more wicked thing—to kill yourself."

"In Japan, we say not so. If one is shame, then he kill himself and take away all shame. They say, He is good man; he kill himself. There are many noble examples in history of my country."

"But you are a Christian," argued Dick. "Christ has said that God is Judge of life and death. To kill ourselves is to usurp God's prerogative. It is treason."

The stimulus of argument was acting as a tonic on Kato. In the interest of the discussion, he was beginning to forget his sorrows.

"But, sir," he observed, "if soul is immortal, then death is no matter—self-death no matter also. I think in Heaven I pay Mr. Makino more easy than here. In Heaven are many good people. They surely lend me cash. How so?"

He rose and moved towards the door.

"I go now, dear Christian friend," he said. "I never see more your face. I go to find eternal truth. I never fear. Good-bye, sir. Adieu."

His hand was on the latch of the door, but Dick stopped him.

"No, Kato San, you are not going. You will stay

with me to-night and for as long as you like. To-morrow I shall see Mr. Makino. Kato San, you mustn't disappoint me. I have had such faith in you. I believed that God had promised you to me and that I would one day stand beside you at the font. And now—and now—if all this ends in tragedy—I should feel that my work was cursed—that it was waste of time my ever coming to Japan. Kato San, can't you see what hope, what faith I have had in you?"

The suddenness and the sincerity of this appeal touched Kato. In spite of his panama hat and his pink tie, the young *esprit fort* was very sick at heart. He was a superman no longer. He was a miserable and conscience-stricken creature, yearning for sympathy and help. He could not go to his fellows, whom he had alienated by his airs of superiority and his conceited talk. They would be gloating over his fall. But here was this foreigner with the fair hair and blue eyes, which are so disconcerting to the Japanese, offering him Friendship—that precious gift for which there is no adequate translation in the Japanese dictionary, but for which there is a great longing, at times, in the Japanese heart. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man should lay down his life for his friend." Kato turned back from the corridor, and faced Dick Aylmer.

"Then, I stay to-night," he said. "I am your friend. How so?"

"Thank God," said Dick simply, and he seized the outstretched hands.

Next morning Dick went down to Tokyo city to interview Mr. Makino. He found the Rising Sun Import and Export Company in a side street off the Ginza, which is the principal thoroughfare of the capital. It was an ostentatiously modern concern, housed in an infant sky-scraper. The clerks sat at desks, writing vigorously, and were clearly too up-to-date to be polite. Mr. Makino, however, received his guest with smug affability, and seated him in a stylish chair covered

with green plush. He pushed a box of cigars across his gleaming mahogany table. For Mr. Makino had studied in America—yes, sir, Michigan University, Ann Harbour—and knew how to behave in foreign society. He crossed his fat legs, and stuck his thumbs into the arm-holes of his flowered waistcoat. But at the mention of Kato's name he shook his head.

"No, sir," he said. "I am sorry for you. I have finished—absolutely finished—with that young man."

"I have come to suggest, Mr. Makino," Dick pleaded, "that if the five hundred yen are repaid to you, you might take Kato San back?"

"No, sir, never!" Makino answered. "He's a dud, a bum, a deadbeat. He is what we call *yajiuma*."

Yajiuma in Japanese is a busybody who makes trouble himself, and stirs up discontent among others.

"He's always starting something or other," Makino continued, "whispering to the other clerks, telling them they don't get enough, telling them to work slow till I pay more, borrowing their money, teaching them to play poker, boasting about *geisha*; and I think"—here Makino dropped his tone until he was almost inaudible—"I think even he is socialist!"

"If the five hundred yen are paid, you will at least drop legal proceedings?" Dick urged.

"That—I agree," said the merchant.

"Then here is your money."

The missionary opened his pocket-book and handed over a packet of notes, bound together with a twist of paper string, as the way is in Japan. Makino counted the notes, and placed them in a drawer.

"I thank you, sir. I write you a receipt," he said; and then added:

"I see, sir, you are a gentleman of benevolent principles. So am I; and let me say, sir, that I admire your heart. But Kato"—here he shook his round head sapiently—"You cannot cut silk dress from dog's ear. Good-bye, sir. My compliments to you."

"Thank you, Mr. Makino."

"You're very welcome, sir."

Dick returned to Kamiyama, glowing with self-approbation and the joy of charity. He had saved his friend from prison and from inevitable degradation. He had preserved his palladium. For if Kato could not be won for Christ, then the new Jerusalem would never be built among the rice fields of Yamato.

On his return, he found Kato in the sitting-room, reading Smiles' *Self-Help*. He was lolling in the easy chair with a rug over his knees. At his side was the long *hibachi*, the firebox like a plate-chest full of ashes, in the middle of which an iron kettle simmered over a handful of glowing charcoal. He had been sipping green tea, and smoking innumerable cigarettes, whose twisted holders littered the firebox.

Seeing his host, he started to his feet, and laid down his book with a sheepish air. Dick recounted some part of his interview with Makino.

"Often I hear Christian sentiment," said Kato, with genuine emotion. "Never before I see so Christian act. If Christian ideal make so virtuous heart, then Kato become also Christian. In a hundred lives and in a thousand worlds I never forget this day. I am more than friend; I am lost sheep found by Good Shepherd. I take baptism on Christmas Day."

Dick pushed the *shoji* aside, and, arm in arm with his friend, stepped out on to the verandah. It was a day of bright sunshine, though the wind was cold and wintry. Westwards, in the inaccessible regions of the middle heaven, hovered the spotless purity of Fujiyama. The white wings of the fishing boats starred the blue waters of Tokyo Bay. The long dark roofs of the Shinagawa pleasure houses slumbered sullenly until nightfall.

CHAPTER XII

THE WHITE-NECKED WOMEN

KATO GINTARO was received into the Church of Christ after morning service on Christmas Day. Mr. Mikami and Mr. Porter were sponsors. Dick conducted the service.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Kato was baptised under the name of Peter; a suitable choice, thought Dick—the name of the first Apostle. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." He referred Porter to this text; but his red-faced colleague shook his head, and observed:

"H'm! Rock perhaps, but sand more likely!"

Dick, however, was as proud as a young mother at the baptism of her first-born. Ever since his expulsion from the Rising Sun Import and Export Company Kato had been living in the little house in Kamiyama. Every evening O Katsu spread his *futon* on the floor of the downstairs sitting-room, while his host slept in the bedroom upstairs. But Kato was not loafing. He had embarked upon a new profession, more suited to his histrionic genius. He was a *katsuben*.

Every day from 11 in the morning until 11 at night he was in attendance at a cinema palace in the Asakusa theatre district. From the front of the stage at the side of the screen he would expound the subject matter of the film—sometimes merely as a lecturer, but sometimes entering into the action of the play and reciting

the supposed dialogue with stomachic bellowings on the hero's part and a squeaky falsetto for the heroine. For this service he was paid, but not paid over well, for the "movie" industry was still in its infancy in Japan; and the *katsuben* had not yet come into his kingdom.

His friend's new profession gave Dick some insight into the Bohemian world which pullulates round the famous temple of Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy, in the crowded Asakusa quarter. On two or three occasions he had visited the Kaminari-za (Hall of Thunder), as Kato's theatre was called.

It takes a good hour to reach Asakusa from the suburb in which Dick was living; for it is situated at the opposite corner of the city. After disentangling himself from the crowded tram, Dick passed up the line of shops, which lead to the principal gate of the temple. They are booths, rather than shops; and their wares are mostly of the *o miyagé* type, such as serve for presents for those who visit the temple to take back to friends and relatives left at home. Toys, especially, abound; dolls, games, miniature weapons and armour, balls, trains and toy animals—the thousand and one fascinating objects, which an ingenious and children-loving people have invented for the delectation of their little ones. But there are combs and hair-ornaments for the ladies, too; and pipes and tobacco-pouches for the men.

Up and down this open arcade, the slow, deliberate crowds were shuffling. Children in bright garments, like dolls who had strayed out of their boxes, were darting from side to side and gazing with envy at the lavish variety of the toy shops. As soon as Dick entered the confines of this bazaar, he was surrounded by a gaping crowd of all ages; for a foreigner was still something of a novelty, and the lounging crowds of Asakusa, many of them country people up in Tokyo to see the sights, are grateful for any curiosity to stare at.

But Dick passed straight through this clattering corridor to where at the end of the vista the great portal itself, a red stained tower with a gateway through it, opened into the comparative peace of the temple precinct. There beneath the gigantic presence of the temple roof, which seemed to slope up to heaven like the side of a pyramid, the pigeons wheeled to and fro and the shuffling crowds paid their devotions, clapping their hands and tossing their pennies into the huge alms-trough beneath the immense lantern of rosy parchment, which is one of the treasures of Asakusa.

The majority of these supplicants seemed offhand and careless in their demeanour towards their gods; but they were happy withal, in holiday mood, and not oppressed by that sham solemnity which haunts our sacred buildings. Some of the more devout would purchase charms and amulets from a kind of bookstall inside the temple hall, where two or three white-robed priests were driving a busy trade. Some would pause at the top of the flight of temple steps to touch a statue placed outside the shrine and garbed in a bib of red and white, like some peasant Madonna in a Catholic country. It was the image of Binzuru, that companion of Buddha, who in a sermon—alas! too topical—praised the supple beauty of a Tamil girl as she crossed the market place with her pitcher on her shoulder, and for this indiscretion was forbidden to enter into the bliss of Nirvana until a thousand thousand ages had passed. Instead, he became the particular and intimate comforter and healer of the sores of suffering humanity.

Behind the temple Dick crossed a dingy park. Winter had stripped the trees of their foliage; and a cold wind swept the fallen leaves and the dusty paths. Loafers and vagabonds were huddled on the infrequent benches; and, on a rustic bridge over a narrow lake, a few country people with their children grouped around them were staring at the enormous golden carp, and were feeding them with morsels of biscuit. Beyond the bridge, Dick came to the entrance of a

mangy Zoo, where a man dressed as a bear stood in front of the ticket-office, balancing first on one foot and then on the other, and growling to attract the attention of the passers-by. He, at least, was warm in his fur disguise.

A mist had fallen with the oncoming evening. Dick turned up the collar of his coat and shivered. He was not sure of his way. He passed a cinema theatre—but it was not Kato's—and a high pagoda-like tower which is one of the city's famous landmarks. Then he emerged from the park and crossed a crowded street. He made an inquiry at a dry-goods shop, and continued on his way down a narrower side street. This alley ended in an abrupt turn to the left, and the way between the two parallel rows of buildings became narrower still. It was like the way down a rabbit burrow. There was just room for a man's shoulders to pass. By the blurred light of the round electric lamps in their frosted globes, Dick stumbled on his way.

At the corner turning, under a lamp-post, a girl spoke to him. There was no mistaking her intention. Her face, too, was whitened and painted, so that, in the dim light, it looked like a mask of clay. Never before had Dick been accosted in a public street in Tokyo. The Japanese system of vice-control has at least rid their thoroughfares of the street-walker nuisance.

Dick turned away hurriedly down the narrow lane. His rambles through Tokyo had led him into many strange and unexpected places, but he had never been anywhere quite so odd as this. The houses between which he passed were small even for Japanese dwellings. They mostly had a lower and an upper window; but even so, by jumping, Dick could have touched the eaves of the roofs.

He heard sounds around him, like whispering and twittering. There were people in the alley. Two or three young men of a gross hooligan type were staring into the windows of the houses. Further down, a girl

backed out of a doorway, slipped her white-socked feet into a pair of *geta*, and scuttered away to a neighbour's house. But the whispering as of many voices came from both sides of the path; and over the whole quarter hung a pungent odour, repellant and sinister—a mixed and suffocating reek of kitchens, cosmetics, overcrowding, tobacco, *saké* and sex.

Little white fingers were tapping at one of the windows near Dick's elbow. The window was of the ordinary Japanese *shoji* type, opaque and of a dirty cream-colour; but across it, from side to side, ran a band of clear glass. Curiosity overcoming his disgust, Dick stooped down to see who or what might be inside this peculiar dwelling. The interior was brightly lighted; and he saw on a line with his own face five pairs of liquid brown eyes, staring at him through their almond-shaped slits; five little white faces, pinched and anxious, daubed with paint and rouge and crowned with coarse and greasy hair; and five starved-looking girls in blue *kimono* with coloured *obi* (sash), green, gold, brown, red, and grey. They looked like little frightened animals, imprisoned in a packing case.

But, seeing the stranger, the girls began to laugh, and the five pairs of eyes moved nearer together. The whispering and tittering recommenced. Tiny hands, like little white mice, scabbled on the glass of the windows.

"*Ingiris! Ingiris!*" came a chorus of squeaky voices. "I love you."

Dick turned away in horror. He had never been at such close quarters with the commercialised vice of the Japanese capital. He hurried down the narrow alley. The roughs, whom he had to squeeze past, laughed uncouthly at him and jostled him. The burrow ended in an abrupt turn into another passage equally dark and confined. On either side were the *shoji*, glowing from within, the band of glass, the peering, blinking eyes, the pinched white faces, and the pathetic little

hands. On either side the twitterings and whisperings continued—" *Ingiris! Ingiris!* I love you!"

Dick fled, as one flies in a dream down an interminable vista. In the distance he could see the glare of the main street, and hear the clatter of the traffic; but around him he could discern nothing but the sibilant voices and the peering eyes. He was grateful to escape from that maze of furtive mystery into the hustle of the high-way, with its familiar sights and sounds and odours. He could see the row of cinema theatres now, pretentious stucco buildings, like the shell of a seedy exhibition, a *White City in extremis*. From the upper storeys long banners were trailing almost to the ground inscribed with the names of actors famous in the history of the Japanese stage. The entrances were panelled with gaudy signboards. "The Female Devil-Heart," "The Blood-sucking Ghost," "The Phantom Aeroplane," "The Priest of Hell River," "Storm and Suicide"—such was the fare provided for the Tokyo groundlings, and advertised with suitable illustrations. Commissionaires in uniform, or dressed in odd fancy-costume more or less corresponding with their respective entertainments, proclaimed to the multitudes the excellence of the show within. Rival orchestras played—not to charm the ear but to rivet the attention. In and out among the crowds ran the newspaper-boys, the *gogaiya*, selling the latest evening extra. They wore short blue coats, and pants like a Boy Scout's, and a bunch of bells was knotted to the hip, so that they jangled with each swing of the limb. The din of the drums and cymbals, the yells of the brazen-lunged touts, and the clatter and chatter of the holiday crowds confused Dick. He felt that he had escaped from an evil dream into a crazy one; and he wondered if he would ever find Kato in this pandemonium.

There he was!—garbed in a black *kimono*, and holding a fan in his hand, the *katsuben's* wand of office. He was standing outside the *Kaminari-za*, chaffing the

girl in the ticket bureau—a coy damsel, dressed for some obscure reason as a red-cross nurse; but he deserted her as soon as he saw Dick approaching.

"Most glad you come, dear sir," he cried, with fluttering fan.

"I've got here at last," Dick answered; "but I lost my way—over there."

He pointed across the street, and asked:

"What is that place?"

"The *shirokubi*?"

"What is that?"

"White neck. We call such woman white neck, because he use very much white powder, so we cannot see how unbeautiful he is underneath!"

Kato, like many Japanese, was never very sure of his masculine and feminine pronouns, and often got lost in the strangest confusion.

"Is—that—the—Yoshiwara?" Dick asked again in hushed and awe-struck tones.

"No, sir," the Japanese replied. "Yoshiwara quite different; but all same thing. Asakusa *onna-machi* is not public institution and famous place of Tokyo like Yoshiwara. Here is more secret, and, therefore, more respectable and romantic, I think. How so?"

"It's absolutely horrible," said Dick.

He accompanied his friend into the narrow corridors of the theatre, feeling sick at heart. This traffic of women's bodies, this wastage of men's souls had been presented to his eyes more crudely since his sojourn in Japan. At home such matters were never allowed to obtrude their unhallowed existence. Books which dealt with lust and passion were suppressed. Acquaintances, suspected of unseemly conduct, were dropped. But here in Japan the fact of commercialised vice was advertised around him. The great fortresses of the *demi-monde*—Yoshiwara, Susaki, Shinjuku, Shinagawa—stood like outposts of the city—North, South, East and West. Here dwelt the licensed prostitutes under governmental sanction. Then there were the

geisha quarters, scattered about Tokyo at Shimbashi, Tameike and elsewhere, where the professional entertainers dwell beneath the laws proper to the sisterhood under the code of the *kenban*, which is the head-office of each *geisha* district. There were the restaurants and *machiai* (assignment houses) which batten on the *geisha* system—so charmingly constructed with their irregular roofs and so discreetly hidden behind their high fences of bamboo. All these were manifestations of a life very different from anything that Dick had ever known or dreamed of. At first, he was shocked at the existence of such an obvious cult of immorality. Then he attempted to ignore it, as though it were a matter of local custom only. But he could not escape from the obsession. The prominence given to the *oiran* (courtesans) in the art and drama of the country, the preoccupation of missionary circles with rescue work and sexual morality, the consequent outspokenness concerning subjects of which in England he had hardly heard the mention, the spectre of disease which stalks in the train of pleasure so unhesitatingly advertised on doctors' signposts, on the walls of the trams and on the pages of magazines—all these things were manifestations of the same unwelcome problem, which, like the irritation of a mosquito bite, would never leave him in peace. Besides, deep down in his heart there was that other Dick Aylmer—that unspeakable Dick, so long repressed and hidden—who now kept on prompting him to learn from personal experience what all this fuss was about. What kind of thing was this love or lust for which men were so ready to risk their fortunes, their health, their honesty and their lives?

A seat had been found for Dick in the packed gallery of the theatre. Around him, Japanese of all ages were huddled together. Female attendants in white caps and aprons—their expression obliterated by paint and powder—passed up and down, selling cigarettes and oranges, confections of rice and seaweed

in neat wooden boxes, tea in earthenware pots, and bowls of a kind of insipid rice-broth, called *shiruko*. A heavy pungent odour exuded from the crowd—that composite aroma of fish, *saké*, *daikon* (pickled radish) and humanity, to which Dick was by now accustomed. The gallery, which occupied the position of the dress circle, was provided with benches as in a European theatre; but in the stalls and pit there were no seats. The floor was marked out in squares like a chess-board with low wooden rails about a foot from the ground. Within these pens, the audience were squatting in family groups, with clothes and parcels stacked around them, and as often as not with a tea-pot in their midst.

On the screen, a Japanese tragedy was flickering to its close in an orgy of blood and suicide. The voice of the *katsuben* was intoning the last words of the dying hero in that curious conventional stage recitative, which to the ears of the uninitiated is but a series of growls and howls. The audience were watching attentively. Ladies were mopping their eyes with their *kimono* sleeves, as their favourite hero expired for some punctilio of *samurai* honour; and even the men were not unmoved.

The play ended. Pitch darkness fell for a moment. A hidden orchestra made discordant sounds. Then the title of the next item was flashed on the screen—"Camellia Girl; a Tragedy of the Flowery Life in Western countries," by Alexandre Dumas. Dick could hear the voice of Kato, commencing the pathetic tale of Marguérite Gautier, as the first episode of the film was jerked into motion.

The audience were interested in this story, too, but unsympathetic. At Dick's side, a middle-aged shopkeeper was sitting with his stout wife. She chewed incessantly at a rubber-like leaf, which gave out an irritating wheeze at the impact of her black-lacquered teeth.

"*Domo!*" ejaculated the husband. "Western ocean people—eh!—excessively dissolute fellows—ha!—

always stories of love relationships and unchaste wives."

"Yes, our Japan is a better country," agreed the old woman. Her spouse continued:

"We Japanese have noble ideals of loyalty, love for parents, duty, patriotism. But over there it is different—eh? They follow their desires like beasts. See, they ruin the family for the sake of a woman of shameful life—and think that is a grand act."

The old woman chewed yet more sonorously to express her disapproval of Western standards of morality.

Meanwhile, Kato, the *katsuben*, was rendering his part of the performance with creditable gusto. A falsetto pipe for the voice of Marguérite; a guttural thunder for her lover's tones; and, at intervals, a resounding smack of the lips, which was intended to indicate a kiss. This was considered by the audience to be very advanced and suggestive; and many evidently thought that the *katsuben* was really going too far in realism.

"*Domo!* That is an awful thing!" commented Dick's neighbour. "That is the thing called a kiss. Such exhibition should not be allowed in public—ha! It is the destruction of national morality. See! He defies even his father. He will not give up that woman!"

"Her throat and breast also are bare," added the wife, shocked at Marguérite's *décolleté*.

"If our Japan follows such customs, certainly she will become a weak and contemptible country—eh? There is great danger from the rapid spread of foreign thoughts."

Which was the more unhealthy symptom, wondered Dick—the luxury of Marguérite Gautier's installation in Paris, or the squalor of the miserable human insects into whose hive he had that evening unwittingly strayed? But this at least was certain. He must not judge Japan merely from one set of phenomena,

since it was so easy for the Japanese to retort, "First cast the beam out of thine own eye!"

The evening's performance was over. At about 11.30 p.m., on a cold misty night, Dick and Kato were hanging by the bamboo straps of one of the last of the overcrowded trams, which jolted its way across the shadowy city.

"How you like love story as cinema drama?" asked Kato by way of conversation; for the Englishman was silent.

"No," was the reply; for Dick was pondering on the comments which he had overheard. "I think such stories are dangerous. They mislead people."

"You, sir, are acquainted with meaning of love?" Kato asked again.

"Oh, no! Of course not!" gasped Dick. "Not in that way. I'm not married."

"H'm! That I do not understand. You are not so young, yet you do not know love."

"Love unsanctified is lust," said Dick.

"But love is sweet experiment," replied the Japanese. "Tell me, sir, how love morality have so great say in Christian faith? If I lie with sweet woman, I do not, therefore, deny faith in the Lord."

"Men ought to wait until they marry," answered Dick, with due severity.

"Marriage in Japan is family affair," said Kato. "But love is different, also grand sensation. How so? How then you say, God is Love?"

CHAPTER XIII

MISSIONARIES AT SURUNA

DURING the week before Holy Week, Dick took his second examination in Japanese and passed with great *éclat*. As a result, he approached his bishop about his desire to get to work as soon as possible.

"I am tired of this schoolboy existence," he said; "and I want to get away from Tokyo."

"Not home-sick, by any chance?" asked the Bishop.

Dick made an indignant denial; and the Bishop changed the subject.

"And how's Peter Kato?" he asked.

"He's very keen," Dick answered. "He is reading Von Hügel, and he has asked my advice about wearing a hair shirt."

"Yes, and what was your advice?"

"I warned him against spiritual pride. I was afraid that his real motive might be a desire to show off."

"Well done, Dick," smiled the Bishop. "You are beginning to understand your flock. After Easter—we must see."

So Dick left St. George's full of hope, and in a mood attuned to the warm spring weather which was awakening the earth's beauty around him. Kamiyama, at this season, was a bower of cherry-blossom. An avenue of the famous trees led up to the shrine of Inari, and encompassed the dwelling of the god with a cloud of the palest coralline pink. The little deserted temple was livelier than its wont; for the cherry-grove of Kamiyama becomes for a short week or so one of the

popular resorts of the capital. Children were playing in the roadway, or gazing solemnly in imitation of their elders. Girls in blue *kimono*—blue as the Mediterranean waters, or as the Japanese waves in Hiroshige's prints—passed up and down in giggling, whispering, fluttering groups. Young men in European suits glanced furtively at the girls. Elderly married couples of the shopkeeper class and the lower *bourgeoisie* sat on the benches behind the temple and stared across the plain towards the forts in the bay, and the ships moored off Yokohama, towards the Hakoné mountains and the white dome of Fujiyama.

Some of these holiday makers were smoking their long thin pipes. Some were drinking *saké* out of gourd-shaped flasks. Some were gossiping. Some were quoting trite verses appropriate to the season. Some were simply gazing with expressions of vacuous content.

Just in front of Dick's gateway, a young man in spotless *kimono*, with plastered hair and sheepish manner, was being introduced to a girl arrayed in her very best robes, with her hair dressed in the *shimada* style, which is the sign of maidenhood. The two young people bowed to each other three times, murmuring remarks about the weather and a conventional inquiry concerning mutual health. Then they spoke no more; and, after a time, the young man with his companions moved away. Dick knew that this little ceremony had betokened a *mi-ai*, a "looking at each other," which is a necessary stage in Japanese courtship. The marriage is, of course, arranged by mutual acquaintances. The parents then agree as to its suitability. After this comes the "*mi-ai*." The young people meet in a quasi-accidental manner; and, if this casual inspection is satisfactory, the preparations for the marriage can then go forward.

"Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet."

Bonds are loosed in the cherry-season. A spirit of saturnalia is abroad, surprising in a land where natural ebullience falls under the censure of the respectable and under the ban of the police. By the shores of Mukojima, boatloads of *geisha* float down the river to the sound of the twanging *samisen* and of sentimental songs piped in high, cracked voices. In the suburbs of Akabané and Koganei, students and clerks have gone out in masquerade, as clowns or priests or ancient warriors. For it is the cherry-season, *hanazakari*, the time to make merry and to fling aside care; for the cherry-flowers have returned to earth once more, and the cherry-flower is the type of Japanese chivalry.

*"Do you ask what is the soul of Yamato?
Look at the mountain cherry bloom in the morning
sunshine."*

When Peter Kato came to confession on Good Friday evening he told a tale so similar to the adventures of the Cambridge clerks in the Canterbury Tales that his spiritual adviser was shocked and grieved. It appeared that he and a kindred spirit had betaken themselves to some æsthetic resort in the outer suburbs in order to view the blossoms; that there they had seen not only the cherries, but a certain widow who kept a shop in the Asakusa quarter with her pretty daughter—who was not entirely unknown to Kato, since the family frequented the entertainments of the Kaminari-za; that, at the local hostelry, where they had all put up for the night, Kato's friend, being an electrical expert in the stage-carpentering line of business, had succeeded in fusing the main current of the electric light; and that, profiting by the darkness and the confusion, Kato had taken the young girl under his protection, while his friend had consoled the mother's anxiety with satisfactory proofs of his devotion.

Kato told this adventure with more pride than contrition; and Dick expostulated.

"Ah! But it is cherry-season," pleaded the convert. "It is Japanese custom. Naturally such jolly thing occur about now."

As though in confirmation of his statement, a loud burst of song and laughter floated upwards from the pleasure quarter of Shinagawa. The pseudo-Dick—he of the licentious dreams and the wanton curiosities—began to stir once more at the roots of the young priest's consciousness. *Vade retro, Satanas!*

Soon after Easter, Dick was directed to assist his colleague, the Reverend Mr. Porter, in a mission to an inland town in the mountain district beyond Fujiyama. This was to be Dick's first experience of active missionary work; and he was as full of zeal and excitement as a young officer who starts on his first campaign.

The town of Suruna is a comparatively new creation of the silk industry. A few years ago, there was in that remote spot only a straggling village, where a few farmers gained a bare living from the sterile mountain soil. The very name, Suruna—"Don't do it!"—conveyed a deterrent note to the Japanese ear. But near by there is a lake which provides water power. So, one day a great silk-spinning concern established a filature in Suruna, and other companies followed suit. Above the low trees on the bank of the lake, tall iron chimneys, like isolated organ pipes, rose aloft into the air. The forests were falling to provide workshops and lodging houses for the factory hands' accommodation. The new town of Suruna was springing up.

These silk cities of Japan have a curious habit of hibernating during the winter. Their population melts away, and their machinery goes to sleep. But with the warm season and the new cocoons they awake to life again. Night and day, the whirr of the winding-wheels sets the tune for the activities of Suruna; and in the long factory aisles the patient work-girls watch

the cocoons bobbing up and down in the water basins, and guide with deft fingers the golden threads on to the wheel.

A new city of this kind is a land of promise to the missionary. The young men and the young women who form the bulk of its inhabitants are, for the most part, the sons and daughters of tenant farmers in overcrowded districts. Separated from their home surroundings, from the conservative ceremonial of the Japanese family, alone and helpless in the bustle of factory life, wearied by long hours of labour and crowded together in unsanitary dormitories, the workers of the young industrialism of Japan are more responsive than their elders to the appeal of Him who said: "Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!"

A series of missions to the silk filatures and the cotton spinneries had been discussed at the Karuizawa missionary congress during the foregoing summer; and Suruna was allotted to the Anglican clergy. Bishop Blackett was anxious to show that the quiet influence and authority of his compatriots was as effective in its way as the hustle and boost of his American colleagues. He was determined, therefore, that the Suruna mission should be a success; and he delegated to the task Porter, his most reliable lieutenant. Dick Aylmer was a mere afterthought. His youth and enthusiasm appealed to the Bishop; but his lack of balance and of common sense distressed him. They were faults of his age, no doubt; and he would grow out of them. So the Bishop informed Porter that he intended to attach Aylmer to the mission, and warned him to keep a severe eye on the young man.

"He is at the age when he might do anything," said the Bishop. "He has already proposed that he, you and even I, I think, ought all to marry Japanese girls. The age of Innocence—which is apt to do so much harm!"

"Leave him behind, my lord," answered Porter.

"We must take no risks. His edgication's all right; but his head's all wrong."

The Bishop, however, was not to be dissuaded. Meanwhile, at Kamiyama, Dick, the supercargo, was planning out a campaign for the conquest of heathendom. Kato had at once appointed himself as Chief of Staff; and Dick, who had been startled at first, had ended by acquiescing and even by congratulating himself upon the acquisition of such remarkable native talent. Kato had volunteered to accompany the crusade to Suruna. He would take a holiday from the cinema palace. *Katsuben*, such as he, were few and far between; he would have no difficulty in getting a job on his return. Dick knew that Porter, whose estimate of the convert was a low one, would object. He therefore did not mention the question of Kato until the party had assembled in a second-class carriage on the Nakasendo railway line. Then, as Porter looked inquiringly at the Japanese, Dick explained:

"Kato San is kindly going to help me with my language. I am not very self-confident yet."

"Oh, indeed," grunted Porter; and he shook Kato's hand with a singular lack of grace.

It was a wearisome journey of five to six hours, past the fertile plain of Kofu, on and up into the mountains. Tunnel succeeded tunnel. The compartment was crowded. Children played and fidgeted unchecked. Tea was spilled on the floor. Porter complained of headache and of rheumatic pains in his arms and legs.

On their arrival at Suruna station after dusk, the missionaries were welcomed by a reception committee of local Christians, and escorted by them to their hotel in a cortège of swaying rickshaws. The mountain air was cold, and the hotel food indifferent—tough meat fried in fat in a gallant endeavour to cater for European tastes. After supper, three *futon* with bed-clothes were laid out side by side on the *tatami* of the large upper room, which had been assigned to the evangelists.

Dick could not close his eyes. The excitement of his first plunge into active work; the southing of the wind in the pine-branches; the lapping of the lake waters against the pebble shore close beneath the inn windows; the bright moonlight; the moaning of Porter as he tossed from side to side of his narrow mat in a restless, painful sleep; the chatter and the scuffling of other guests in the next room; and the general strangeness of the situation—all contributed to banish slumber.

He said his prayers once again, adding petitions for God's blessing on the mission; for gifts of eloquence and conviction; for faith and responsiveness on the part of those among whom he had come to labour. What gift, he asked himself, had he to offer to the toiling myriads of Japan? The Mass! How the excellent Porter would recoil at the very word! But to Dick that word contained the whole of the inner meaning of his religion. What was the use of mere exhortation to faith in Christ, to good works, to prayer, to Bible reading, to church attendance—if the authentic gift of the Lord were to be neglected or merely classed as one of several alternative religious exercises? "This is My Body; this is My Blood. Whoso drinketh shall never thirst!" In this mystery, the human heart could know the supernatural, the mortal could touch the fringes of immortality and could return from this immense experience, satisfied and convinced. What need was there for further argument? God—Christ—the Holy Spirit—the Church—the Christian life—the abnegation of self and the practice of virtue, all follow in due sequence like the beads of a rosary, necessarily and without further difficulty, when once the Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered and accepted.

All the dissenting missionaries and most of the Anglicans, thought Dick, have begun at the wrong end. They have tried to build up to God on a foundation of ethics and argument. Reason is too destructive a tool for the architects of God's sanctuary. Reason must

always lead to agnosticism in the end. But there is another sense—the heart, the emotions, the intuition—call it what you will. Reason jibes at its equal claim to consideration, but fears its rivalry all the same. *Ego dormio, sed cor meum vigilat!*

Dick looked at his two companions as they lay asleep in the pale moonlight. Give the Mass to the Japanese! To this people so young and so naïve, so emotional and so instinctive. Three hundred and fifty years ago, Saint Francis Xavier had preached the Mass in Japan, and had converted millions. Give them faith and enthusiasm! Here, even here in Suruna, these three evangelists might light such a candle as would dazzle the whole world, and lead on to a religious revival such as Christendom had never known. Give them the Mass! "You cannot give strong meat to babes," the cautious Bishop had said. But the Bishop himself was only a half-believer. He believed in Christ, perhaps, but not in His Sacraments.

The wind had dropped; and, with the wind, the lake, too, was still. Dick rose from his bed, yawned, stretched himself and walked lightly across the *tatami* to where a round window, like a large port-hole, let a flood of moonlight pour into the room. Outside; he could see the dark limbs of the trees, the indistinct shapes of the hill-sides, and the silver ribbon of the moon's pathway across the lake.

"Thou art the charm of women, lovely Moon!"

Whence did that unexpected and disquieting line of poetry spring up into his memory? From some forgotten effort at Latin verses, probably. But why did the uncontrollable goblin within him whisper such a suggestion at so solemn a moment? Dick turned away from the window. From the middle mattress the heavy form of Porter started up to elbow height.

"The pains!" cried his harsh voice. "The pains of Hell!"

Then he sunk back on to his *futon* again.

Kato slumbered undisturbed.

Porter's outburst must have awakened the guests next door. The voices began again—the thick voice of a man, and a woman's high squeaky tones. There followed the sound of a struggle—the woman's giggle, the panting and grunting of the man, a cry of mock reluctance—" *Iya ! Iya !* (Don't ! Don't !)"—and then silence again.

But still Dick could not sleep. Outside the house a watchman passed on his rounds, beating his staff against the soil and jangling its metal rings.

CHAPTER XIV

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!

"REVEREND PORTER not so well, I think!"

Dick, as he awoke after an hour or two of troubled sleep, was aware that something was wrong and that Kato was asking for his advice and assistance.

Porter complained of pains in his limbs and throat; but he swallowed his tea and one or two of the small salted plums which accompany every Japanese breakfast. Then he announced that he felt better. He dressed in his black parsonic clothes, complete with frock coat, and insisted on going out to the introductory meeting of the mission. This took place in an iron room, usually a young men's club, lent through the kind offices of the management of one of the silk factories. The meeting was well attended, both by men and women, in spite of the early hour. Porter said a few prayers. One of the leading Christians of Suruna then made a short speech introducing the missionaries. Porter replied briefly, explaining the hopes and objects of the mission. He spoke with difficulty; and after the meeting he had to be helped back to the hotel. In the afternoon he was delirious and clearly in great pain. The local doctor, who was attending him, pronounced that the patient was suffering from *kaké* or *beri-beri*—a disease very prevalent in Japan—and that he would require most careful nursing. If the diagnosis were correct, his recovery might be a matter of months.

In these circumstances either the mission must be abandoned, or else Dick must carry on alone. It was

a wonderful opportunity—perhaps a direct intervention of Heaven? But the Bishop might not see it in that light. Would he sanction Dick's authority? Anyhow, the young missionary decided to send a telegram, and to risk the consequences.

"Porter seriously ill—probably beri-beri. Am proceeding with mission.

"AYLMER."

This he addressed to the Bishop in Tokyo, knowing that he was absent in a distant part of the country. He could rely on the Japanese posts for at least three or four days' delay. During that time he intended to reveal to the people of Suruna something of "the Mass" and its meaning. He unbosomed his plan to Kato, whom he found to be no less enthusiastic than himself.

Just outside the town, so Kato had discovered, there was a derelict Buddhist temple—Myohoji, the Temple of the Wonderful Law. It could be leased from the town council for a nominal rent. There were dwelling rooms, habitable, though in bad repair; and a central hall, stripped of its images and furniture, where an altar could be erected to the True God. It was an ideal site for a simple Catholic ritual—not in a poky mission room redolent of imported ideas, but in the staging proper to religion in Japan, guarded by a grove of cryptomeria trees and graced by the sanctity of the past.

That evening, in the iron room, Dick explained to a sympathetic audience the sad and sudden illness of his colleague. He apologised for his own youth and inexperience, but announced that with God's help he would do his best to declare the Christian message to the people of Suruna.

"There is one God," he continued, "who watches over us Japanese and English or whoever we may be. He is not a God of the *Seiyojin* only. He is not imported in the ships which come over the sea, like

bicycles and sewing-machines and kerosene oil. Through the past centuries of Japanese history, through the deeds of your famous men, it is God,—your God,—our God, who has been guiding the destiny of your land in His own way and for His own purpose."

Dick, speaking in broken Japanese, as he became more enthusiastic became also more unintelligible. But there was conviction in his tones; and it was his manner rather than his message which thrilled his audience and left them eager to hear more. When he sat down there was a murmur of approval.

Then Kato Gintaro stood up. This was an unrehearsed effect, and filled Dick with some alarm.

"*Ware ware wa . . .*!" The speech began with the formal "we" of the oratorical platform; but this was no ordinary exhortation. Kato spoke for nearly an hour; and not for one moment did he allow the attention of his audience to flag. Dick could barely follow the drift of the discourse; but he realised once again, as he had in the Tokyo debating society, that his disciple was a speaker of no mean ability, a chosen vessel, perhaps, for the propagation of the faith. Exhortation, autobiography, comic anecdote, local allusion, appeal to history and to patriotism, prayer, praise and pathos were all blended in that remarkable appeal, which concluded with the verse of a hymn:

*"Christ's Body slain for me,
Shall I eat, shall I not eat?
Christ's Blood poured for me,
Shall I drink, shall I not drink?
Thus eating, there are no hungry ones;
Thus drinking, there are none that thirst."*

This hymn he chanted, unaccompanied, in a fine, clear voice to one of those fragmentary Japanese sing-songs, with its abrupt intervals and its inconclusive ending. Then syllable by syllable and note by note, he rehearsed his audience, chaffing them at their timidity

and their mistakes—as a comedian will make his theatre sing the chorus of his song. At last, the whole gathering joined together in a final effort, which rattled the iron roofing of the room and attracted all the unemployed of Suruna and several auxiliary policemen to the scene of the mission.

As Dick and Kato emerged into the darkness, they could distinguish dimly a large crowd around them—silent for the most part, respectful and friendly. There were murmurs of "*Ma! Erai da!* (Well, that's fine!)" "Please, speak to us again!" "I could not enter, there was such a crowd!"

Thus, they were escorted to the door of their hotel, where poor Porter lay unconscious, moaning with pain and tossing to and fro. A trained nurse, strangely European-looking in her apron and high white cap, was in attendance on him. She had been lent by one of the factory hospitals.

"Noise!" said Kato reflectively, as he and his superior officer squatted together over their evening meal. "Noise has more power than argument, perhaps. These country people surely very simple and silly, so uncapacious for thought. We must have loud noise all the time; or they never hear. I think more better—*ongakutai*. How so?"

"What's that?" asked Dick.

"Loud noise of orchestra, like Salvation Army."

Twenty-four hours ago Dick would have recoiled at the very idea of such a vulgarity; but the ability with which Kato had handled the meeting had impressed him. This professional *katsuben* must understand the psychology of his own people; and the emergency was one which demanded bold measures. At any moment a telegram of recall might arrive from Tokyo; and the opportunity for a second Xavier would be nipped in the bud.

Tacitly, Dick accepted the "noise of orchestra."

He slept soundly that night; and neither the moonlight, nor Porter's moaning, nor the whispering

of the other guests, nor his own thoughts disturbed him.

Next day the temple of Myohoji was acquired. Its dusty floors were swept and garnished. The services of an old woman were obtained who would come in each day to cook and clean. Some cheap bedding was purchased for Dick and Kato, and a few necessary utensils. On the third day, early in the morning Dick celebrated "Mass" at a makeshift altar, where once the statue of Buddha had gazed down upon his shaven priests. Kato acted as server.

"Therefore with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most High."

The red sun rose above the mountains as Dick offered the Prayer of Consecration, and Peter Kato tinkled his sanctus bell in the silence of the sacred grove.

"Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

The light of the new day shone on the bare hill slopes, and on the glass-like surface of the lake. Thin spirals of smoke began to ascend from the houses of Shimosaki across the water.

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen."

Some children playing in the courtyard gathered for a few minutes to stare at the evolutions of the priest, and to listen to the unfamiliar tones of the ritual. When he turned from the altar with bowed head, and passed along the covered corridor, holding the sacred vessels in front of him, they fled, fearing enchantment.

The evening, as Kato had declared, was the best time for evangelistic work. The cares of the day were over by then. The factories were half-closed; and for an hour or two men and women and children sauntered about the streets, staring at the shops and chattering with one another. Some were on their way to the public baths, where all the gossip of the day is interchanged amid a din like that of the frogs in the rice-fields. Some would wander along the shores of the lake, tasting the sweetness of the evening cool after the stifling atmosphere of the workshops. Some—the "*sukébeiren*," or lewd fellows—would cross by boat or would follow the shore road to the town of Shimosaki on the opposite side of the lake, where there was a pleasure quarter and where women could be bought. The richer class, which consisted almost entirely of the administrative officials of the filatures, passed over the heads of this multitude in swift-gliding rickshaws on their way to their homes or to the restaurants where the local *geisha* made sport for them.

On the third evening of Dick's sojourn in Suruna, this crowd of local *boulevardiers* stopped for a moment in the course of their vague gyrations to stare at a strange and unfamiliar sight. Down the long street came a company of young men, dressed in the rough white clothes of mountain-pilgrims, and with white peaked caps on their heads. From shoulder to waist each wore a red sash, emblazoned with gold letters—"Company of the Living God." At the head of this regiment, and arrayed in similar uniform, marched Kato Gintaro, holding a banner, a kind of long pennant inscribed with a text. He was followed by the big drum, thundering and booming without respite.

Then came the cymbals, the cornet and the trombone. Finally, two more banner-bearers brought up the rear of this remarkable troop. At a short distance behind stalked a stout police officer, clad in his blue uniform and girt with a sword. He regarded the procession with manifest distrust, having been warned to be on the look out for socialist activities among the factory hands.

The band consisted of young men of Kato's age. They seemed to be supremely happy, and intoxicated with the din which they were making. There was no attempt at concerted music. It was, indeed, a "noise of orchestra." Each played as seemed good in his own ears; and the result was at least calculated to attract the attention of the bystanders.

It did. Where the main street of Suruna reaches the lake-side and the shore road, Kato stood up on a boundary stone, and addressed a concourse of some five or six hundred. His resonant voice carried his message to every one of them.

He told them of the English saint, who had come to preach the true *Christokyo* among them. This was no dull preacher with his Bible and black suit; but a powerful magician, whose prayer worked miracles. Listen! He, Kato, had dwelt in Tokyo with this singular man. He had no intercourse with women. He went for weeks and months without food. He slept on the bare floor. He could float in the air, and he could heal the sick. Listen! He had especial power against evil spirits. Did he not dwell in the Myohoji, which, as every one knows, is haunted by demon foxes? Well, that very night, he had ordered the reluctant Kato to stay awake and to watch with him in the haunted temple. At midnight, as is their wont, the ghost foxes had come up out of the waters of the lake and had approached the temple grove. There, the Saint in his white robes had met them—with hand uplifted—so! He had bade them "Begone, in the name of the Lord Christ;" and the huge animals had

slunk back into the lake again uttering ghastly howls. Had they not heard it? At about half-past twelve last night? It had been heard even in Shimosaki, more than two miles distant. Anyway, they must now follow him and see for themselves this wonderful man, who, if only they had faith, would answer all their prayers.

Some of the audience shrugged their shoulders, and said, "It is *yosé*," i.e. a music-hall stunt. Some were impressed. Many followed out of curiosity; and Kato, with his band at full blast, led them down to Myohoji, where Dick was awaiting his disciple's return before commencing evensong.

From afar, the waiting priest heard the boom of the drum, the blare of the cornet and the shuffle of many feet. Tales of the martyrs flashed to his mind. He prayed to God to give him courage to face whatever might befall. He was already wearing his cassock. Over this he slipped his surplice, and he placed his biretta on his head. Thus attired, in a garb which he considered suitable for martyrdom, he stood between the two stone lions, which formed the gateposts to the temple enclosure, and watched the oncoming multitude.

Then he recognised Kato with his band; and fear of torture and death gave way to another misgiving—lest he might not prove capable of dealing adequately with this great opportunity. The army halted at the entrance to the temple. For the most part, it consisted of factory employees, men and girls; but there were shopkeepers also, and people from the farms—old women with brown, wrinkled faces and men with the knarled hands and the slow gait of the rustic. Almost all wore cotton *kinono*, striped or spotted.

Dick spoke to them about Jesus Christ. How the Son of God came to earth long, long ago; and was born, as the child of poor people. How He lived and how He died, to give us an example, and to leave with us the certainty of God and of God's goodness.

He spoke in slow and halting Japanese; but his

message was a simple one, and it touched the hearts of the people, for it was what they wanted to hear. Still more his appearance, his youthfulness, the fairness of his complexion, his unexpected clothing—all confirmed that impression of the miraculous for which Kato had already prepared them. They surged into the temple court, as Dick with his chief apostle behind him led the way. In the rear of the crowd followed the policeman, more convinced than ever that this agitation must have some secret political significance.

At the end of the prayers, Kato spoke; and at the end of his speech he sang a hymn and persuaded his audience to sing with him. By that time night had fallen, and many of the crowd had melted away to their homes. Dick pronounced his blessing; and then withdrew to the priest's living-rooms, which were connected with the main hall of the temple by a kind of low covered wooden bridge. After a time Kato joined him.

"They still wait," he said.

Dick went out on to the balcony of his dwelling, and said "Good-night" to the people who were still standing patiently in the courtyard, staring at the spot where he had disappeared, and vaguely expecting some miracle. Dick bade them come again next evening and the evening after that, and to bring their friends with them. They would then talk again about these high matters.

Hands touched his feet, and caught at the skirts of his cassock. Around the temple, the cryptomeria trees, heightened by the darkness, rose like prayers towards heaven. The sky was deep blue, like lapis lazuli, and high above the lofty temple roof a star was shining—the Star of Bethlehem.

Dick said "Good-night" once more to his shadowy congregation.

"It is quite true," they murmured. "The evil feeling of this deserted Myohoji has disappeared. We are not afraid to stand here though it is already night. Truly this foreigner is a powerful magician."

"Perhaps he will cure my daughter," said one.

"Perhaps he will remove the curse from my rice-field," said another.

So they went on their way full of hope for the future.

Within doors, Kato had shaken out a kerchief full of coins on to the floor, which he was counting diligently.

"See, sir!" he exclaimed. "Fourteen yen and seventy-three sen. How good for beginning!"

Dick frowned.

"But I never told you to make a collection," he said.

"In religious matters," Kato answered, "cash collection always custom. If we do not ask money, then policeman and others suspect. They say, 'Why these gents come? Who pay them? There is secret.' But if we ask money, they say, 'Clearly he is priest, he is good man.' So to ask money is necessary, I think,—also to increase Christian virtue in other people who give though unwilling. Also we want money to pay noise of orchestra."

Dick owed so much of his success to Kato that he could not be severe with him that evening. But he had misgivings when he observed the zest with which his disciple was fingering the coins.

CHAPTER XV

THE BISHOP APPROVES

NEXT morning, even at early "Mass," there was a fair attendance of Japanese in the courtyard of Myohoji; and from breakfast time onwards Dick had a series of visitors—some to inquire further about *Christokyo*, some to ask for baptism, some to talk about their own affairs, some to discuss those of their neighbours, and some to test the foreigner's miraculous powers.

"If I become *Christokyo* believer," asked one farmer, "shall I know what my wife is doing when I am away from home?"

In the evening, Kato marshalled his band once more; and a greater crowd than ever assembled to hear the evening service. When the last visitor had departed and the last good-night had been said, Dick and the ex-*Katsuben* strolled down to the lake-side. After the dust and exertion of the day, the oily black waters looked mysterious and inviting.

"I'm going for a swim," said Dick. "You come, too?"

He began to loosen his cassock.

"I fear I cannot swim," answered the Japanese; "also they say lake have no bottom. He go straight down to hell, they say me. I very fear there is danger, sir."

"Oh, no," laughed Dick. "Then get me a towel from the house."

Dick was standing, naked, on the pebbly beach. If any of the superstitious country-people had been passing at that moment, he would have returned to his shack with a wondrous tale of having seen the lake

Spirit himself, the *Daimyōjin*, standing white and shining on the haunted beach below Myohoji.

Hidden behind the temple and the hills, the moon was rising. Its silver veil was trailing over a corner of the lake; and the stars were fading in the cloudless sky. Opposite the bathing beach, the lights of Shimosaki hung like a parure of diamonds across the shoulder of the hills. They were scattered and dimly visible on the slopes; but towards the lake-side they centred in a square block of illumination, which stood up over the water like a Tower of London on a gala night.

"It must be a factory," thought Dick; and he stepped down into the lake. The water was cold. The shore shelved abruptly, and he was soon out of his depth, swimming with swift, clean side-strokes out from the land. He was a good swimmer; and for a moment the ambitious thought came to him to swim over to Shimosaki, two miles away, and to solve for himself the mystery of the lighted building. But even in Japan an evangelist without clothing might attract undue notoriety.

No, better not adventure too far. It was his first swim in the cold mountain water. He might get cramp. Anyhow, Kato would be anxious. He halted, turned on his back, and floated for a minute or two, looking back to the shore which he had left. The two red lanterns which Kato had hung at either end of the temple building were glowing among the trees like two enormous red cherries. He could distinguish the lights of Suruna screened by a grove of pine-trees which ran along the lake shore. Their twisted branches seemed to be catching at the moon. At the further end of the town glimmered the windows of the hotel where poor Porter still lay, half-unconscious.

Poor Porter! It might have been God's Providence after all which had eliminated him so completely. Certainly, under his "edgicated" direction the Mission would never have advanced beyond the iron-room stage, and would never have attracted more than a

few cranks and idlers. But Dick had perhaps neglected his unfortunate colleague, and he felt a twinge of remorse. He had been so tremendously busy. It was true that each day he had called for a few minutes to see the sick man; but Porter had been too ill for ordinary conversation, and indeed too ill to recognise Dick completely. The fever had abated, however, and, as soon as possible, the patient would be removed to the missionary hospital in Tokyo.

The moonlight had caught up to the spot where Dick was floating. He lashed out with his legs, sending a column of silver liquescence high into the air above him. Then he turned back towards the shore where Kato was waving the towel.

"B-r-r-r! It's cold," he said, as he came to land. "But it's delicious. One seems to wash off all the dust and dirt of the day. It's like being born again."

"They say there lives one large fish in lake below," answered Kato. "When fish jump, there is *jishin* (earthquake). Most bull and cock tale, perhaps; but still——"

"Nonsense!" said Dick, as he rubbed himself vigorously. "But tell me, Kato San, what are those bright lights on the other side of the lake?"

"That is Shimosaki *kuruwa*," the Japanese answered promptly. "Fine progressive building in modern style."

"What? *kuruwa*?"

"Yes, sir. Shinagawa *yukwaku* near our Tokyo house—very like. Enclosed quarter for woman and jolly for loose man."

"What, right up here in this beautiful country! How horrible!"

"Yes, sir. Now much industry and progress in Suruna, so smart vicious life commence in country district also. There is, too, Shimosaki *onsen* (hot spring), so many visitors of rich class come to play in summer season."

"Oh, Kato San, and was nothing done to prevent

this devil's stronghold being built in this lovely spot?"

"How shame, I think!" replied Kato. "But cash also important point. Local persons rather rejoy. It is sign of prosperous condition to have fine *kuruwa*. How so?"

A cloud had fallen over the beauty of the night. Dick felt that he could indeed touch the hearts of these people whom he had been sent out to teach, and that he could make them understand that God was in their midst as a friend and a comforter. But could he inspire them with a sense of their own obligations to God—the obligation to live clean, decent lives, to tell the truth and to rebuke evil? Among a sophisticated people, he thought, morality is its own recommendation—in theory, at all events; and faith is the stumbling-block. Among naïve and simple people, such as these country Japanese, faith commends itself readily; but moral conduct does not necessarily follow in its train. He thought with grief of Kato's own lapse at the time of the cherry-blossoms; and he returned full of sorrow to the Spartan amenities of Myohoji.

Next day the Bishop arrived—unannounced. As Dick came out on to his verandah to say "*Sayonara!*" to a departing visitor, he saw the small familiar black figure, swathed in its ulster cloak, and looking more than ever like an ecclesiastical jackdaw. The Bishop was standing between the two stone lions, and was gazing up at the temple with a whimsical expression. At any rate, he did not seem to be actively displeased; but Dick felt ill at ease, all the same. His chief appeared to be summing up the situation; and Dick could not be sure that the verdict would be favourable. He had certainly exceeded his instructions.

"Well, Dick," croaked the little man, not unfriendly, "you are having the sublimest time."

"Yes," answered Dick hurriedly, "I would have come to the station, my lord, if you had let me know that you were on your way here."

"Yes, of course, Dick; but sometimes I like to come when people are not expecting me."

"I hope you will be satisfied, my lord. This is Myohoji, once a temple of the Nichiren sect——"

"Picturesque, certainly," the Bishop agreed. "Groves and high places—a typical Asherah! But it would shock most of your colleagues. Has Porter seen this place?"

"Poor Porter is too ill to know what is going on——"

"And poor Porter does not realise how Phaethon strives to drive his chariot?"

"But the people are coming," said Dick proudly.

"They do not count it as a sacrilege to see our altar in their temple? It was risky."

"I teach and I believe," maintained Dick, "that our gospel is a continuation of their old law."

"Your position is heterodox, and can easily be overthrown by argument. Paganism and Christianity are opposite poles."

"But they have had to compromise before now. The Christians took over the Temples of Jupiter and Apollo and Venus; and rededicated them and their images to St Joseph and St John and the Blessed Virgin."

"It is an experience and an experiment," said the Bishop, unheeding. "Too ingenious, I fear, to succeed. But the Anglican Church is very wide, and it hardly knows the meaning of the word unorthodoxy; so it will give you enough rope, I hope."

"To hang myself?" asked Dick, laughing.

"Possibly," said the Bishop.

At that moment he caught sight of Kato, crossing the bridge between the temple and the house, with the altar candlesticks, freshly polished, in his hands. He placed them in their position; and retired again, after making a genuflection.

"Can it be the man Kato?" the Bishop asked.

Dick assented.

"'G-r-r-r! My heart's abhorrence!' What did you want to bring him for?"

"He had been of the very greatest assistance," Dick answered. "He understands his countrymen, of course. He is very keen; and he is really a great orator in his way."

"You let him preach?"

"Not in the temple, but in the streets and open meetings."

"And you understand what he says?"

"Most of it," replied Dick, rather optimistically.

"Then, depend upon it," the Bishop continued, "everything you don't understand is mischievous. He is a dangerous type—a quack, a fraud, a charlatan, a mischief-maker, vain, dishonest, intelligent and unintelligible. We have had some experience of Kato and his like at St. George's; and you could not have a worse influence about you."

"I assure you, my lord, that Kato is not like that. It is unfair——"

But at that moment Kato himself approached and shook hands with the Bishop.

"Well, Kato San," said the latter. "How are you getting on?"

"We make fine progress, I and sir," he replied. "We strike oil."

The Bishop then announced his intention of visiting the unfortunate Porter. He would stay the night at the hotel, as he wished to attend the evening service, and to observe for himself the impression which the Mission was making on Suruna. Dick offered to accompany his superior officer, but the Bishop replied that he could find his own way. As soon as the small black figure had disappeared up the lane, Dick said to his disciple:

"The Bishop does not entirely approve of our methods, Kato San. This evening we must show him what we have done."

"Yes, sir," agreed Kato, "there must be very many people, also loud business."

"The Bishop will preach, of course," Dick continued; "and I shall take the prayers. So I do not think you need talk to the people this evening."

The Japanese drew back a step, his face flushing.

"How so?" he cried. "Because Bishop come, I am in sack. I lose face. I am nothing. I—Kato? I am spear-head point of this *Christokyo*, now; and you cry with false courteous manner, 'Because Bishop come, shut up, go to devil!' I go, sir. I never swallow snub. I have proud heart, also *Yamato damashii* (Japanese national spirit). I never bear that man spit on me. Either this night I preach before Bishop; or I go into enemy camp. I tell policeman, 'This is socialist meeting, dangerous to country.' Never—never Kato swallow snub!"

Dick was flabbergasted by this unexpected outburst. "Dear Kato San," he said, "don't be so—so—childish. Remember, it is only lately that you were baptised. You are not even confirmed yet. The Bishop thinks, perhaps, you have not enough experience yet to take a leading part in converting others. He is afraid—not unreasonably; but, of course, he does not know you as well as I do."

To Dick's still greater surprise, the Japanese was now weeping—large tears of mortification. He added at once:

"You shall speak, if you wish to, Kato San. I only thought—perhaps—to-night—it would be better not."

"I do not now wish to speak," sobbed Kato. "Now I swallow snub. It is bitter drug, also horrid purge. I have no faith now to speak; only—only—desperance!"

"Please don't be so foolish, Kato San. I want your help badly—more to-night than ever—especially with the band. It is your band which brings the people."

"The band will not fail, be sure, sir. I give command to Mister Saito. The band will blow—but not Kato! Kato is gone away—perhaps for long time."

The practised *katsuben* was working up a distinctly theatrical effect.

"Don't, Kato San. Don't do that," Dick pleaded. "Where would you go?"

Kato pointed across the lake, to where the grey mass of the pleasure quarter appeared on the opposite shore.

"Perhaps—to Shimosaki," he said. Then he added: "Adieu. God bless you, sir."

He turned down the courtyard with an air of inconsolable dejection. Dick watched him go, undecided whether he ought to follow him and plead with him to stay. But as soon as he turned up the lane and thought that he was out of sight of Myohoji, his manner changed entirely. One hand was thrust into his trouser pocket; and his step became jaunty and alert. Dick could even hear the distant burden of a popular song:

*"The faith of a geisha,
And the thong of my shoe!
While there's metal to hold them,
All goes merrily.
But when the metal is gone,
They tear and perish."*

That evening a crowd larger than ever assembled for evensong; and the band, under their deputy conductor, Mr. Saito, blew with laudable zeal. But though Dick prayed and though the Bishop preached, something of the first enthusiasm was lacking; nor did the congregation join in the hymn with the gusto which Kato's leadership inspired.

The Bishop, however, was clearly impressed by this manifestation of the mission's activities.

"I mistrust your corybantic methods, Dick," he said; "but you have certainly started a movement here. It will soon be more than you can manage alone. I shall send help."

"No, thank you, my lord," the missionary answered.

"This is my own experiment. I want to be alone responsible for its success or failure."

"Well, then, Dick, take care; and let me know as soon as there is any difficulty. This may be a great beginning—the beginning of what we have hoped and prayed might happen in Japan; or it may be just a wave of hysteria. Anyhow, I can tell you have done well, young man."

This was high praise from the Bishop; but although it gratified and comforted Dick, yet his heart was sick at Kato's defection. He knew now for certain how much he owed to the eloquence and organising power of his Japanese co-adjutor. If he, like Achilles, continued to hold aloof in dudgeon, the walls of the city of unbelief would never fall.

Very late that night Kato returned to the dwelling-house of Myohoji. Dick, half asleep on his quilt on the floor, could hear him stumbling about, and muttering to himself. He also thought that he could detect the pungent sickly odour of *saké*. But next morning the Japanese was awake betimes; and, though his eyes were puffy and bloodshot, he made no allusion to his doings overnight, and seemed ready enough to take his share of the day's labours.

In view of his sensitive and excitable nature, Dick refrained from scolding him. In fact, he did his best to encourage him and to praise his work.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LICENSED QUARTER

A WEEK of strenuous and increasing exertion began—with classes for those who wished to know about *Christo-kyo*, advanced classes for those who were already Christians, preparatory classes for those who were to be baptised, private interviews and interminable visits.

The stout policeman called. He took a cup of tea with Dick, listened with sympathetic interest to his schemes for promotion of morality in the district, reminded him that such work was supererogatory, since the police were officially appointed to supervise the people's good behaviour, and returned to his office to write a long report.

Kato was completely reconciled to the movement, for it brought him increasing fame, influence and profit. His band was the advance guard of the church militant in Suruna. Soon they began to organise raids into the surrounding country districts, and to preach to gaping rustics in remote mountain villages the gospel of the Myohoji and the coming of the Great Apostle from Tokyo. They visited the lake-side settlements, crossing the water in boats gay with many-coloured banners, and followed by a train of craft laden with sympathisers. A gallant sight they made for Dick, as he watched from the Myohoji beach the white-winged argosy afloat on the blue waters. They were on their way to Shimosaki—their first descent upon that important position; and Dick had conducted a short service of benediction, ere the boats pushed off upon their courageous enterprise. One day, thought Dick,

a Christian Japan will thus send forth her missionaries overseas to reclaim an unregenerate world.

Shimosaki is a long straggling town, two miles or more from one end to the other. The greatest afflux of population is to be found in the streets which approach the lake; but the houses stream away inland, following the line of one of the main Japanese high roads which winds upward among the hills. The town has long been famous for its hot springs. These attract a large number of visitors during the summer heat, when all Japanese who can afford the luxury escape from the low-lying commercial centres of the plains to enjoy the cool and bracing mountain air. There are many hotels, therefore—mostly tall three-storey buildings in Japanese style, with polished verandahs, carefully tended garden-courts, hosts of maidservants and a squadron of rickshawmen with their rickshaws, waiting for custom. Two or three of these hotels are themselves built over the springs; and the clean, warm water, yellow in colour and sulphurous in taste and smell, flows through a large shallow swimming-tank in which the visitors disport themselves. There is also a public bath where the water comes down in a cascade. At the foot of this waterfall is a kind of trough, which at any time during the season is brown with bodies, male and female, sweltering in the warm stream.

Sulphur and steam are the distinguishing features of Shimosaki; and it is impossible to escape from the heavy, acrid stench. The influx of tourists on pleasure bent makes business for a long street of little shops, where *kimono* may be purchased, and women's ornaments, and picture postcards, and cigarettes, and cakes and sweets, and little ornamental boxes and trays, made of inlaid wood work, called *Shimosaki-zaike*, or Shimosaki ware. There is a goodly proportion also of those discreet half-private restaurants and tea-houses, where *geisha* flutter in and out, and where gentlemen who wish to escape from loneliness can order congenial female company along with their rice and *saké*.

Shimosaki, too, is the pleasure suburb of Suruna; and since the rise of the latter to industrial prosperity the thoughtful local authorities and the enterprising capitalists of Shimosaki had obtained a licence to establish a *kurawa* for the benefit of those who were not rich enough to pay for a *geisha's* favours, or leisurely enough to abide by her whims and her convenience with the formality which that exacting profession expects. In the Shimosaki *kurawa* a man can buy what goods he wants, and the bargain is quickly settled.

Kato, with his minstrels and his attendant battalions, landed at a small beach opposite the railway station on the outskirts of the town. A few fishing boats were drawn up on the shore, and a few fishermen were mending their nets. With banners flying and with music at full blast, the evangelists marched down the principal streets. A number of loiterers joined in the procession. They advanced straight to the open gates of the *kurawa*, where the two sword-girt policemen who guard this Paradise stopped them and inquired their business.

Kato stepped forward and explained that they were a delegation from the Christian mission in Suruna. The policeman, with the polite expressions of Japanese intercourse, regretted that it was impossible for them to enter the *kurawa* enclosure. With even greater politeness, Kato inquired the reason for this prohibition of virtuous endeavour. Because, the policeman gave him to understand, he and his companions appeared likely to attract a crowd and to create a disturbance. Such persons were not permitted by the regulations to enter within the gates. Kato urged that he and his friends had not come to make a disturbance, but to advocate the Christian virtue of chastity. What place more suitable than the famous *kurawa* of Shimosaki? Was this not a virtuous and progressive object?

"Impossible," replied the policeman. "Without

doubt an excellent ideal, but contrary to regulations. It is permitted to hold a virtue-encouragement-meeting in some other place, but not within the *kurawa*."

So the meeting was held then and there on the broad dusty playground outside the pleasure quarter. Kato spoke with eloquence and feeling, the band played its loudest, and hymns were sung. But Shimosaki did not evince any general response to the call. Perhaps because it was too early in the day; perhaps because the people of the town were proud of their fine new *kurawa*, and loath to hinder the prosperity of a flourishing local industry. So the evangelists returned to Suruna with little ostensible result from their efforts, but with a pleasant feeling of having done their duty and of having thoroughly enjoyed themselves as well.

Only Kato remained behind in Shimosaki. He took a room for himself in the best hotel, ordered a luxurious meal—a succulent soup called *chawan-mushi*, eels, fried crayfish and mushrooms—and sent down a handsome tip with his order; for in Japan one tips the establishment, not the individual servant. Then he changed into Japanese garments as provided by the hotel, and descended to the bath-room to refresh himself after the labours of the day.

He found a long rectangular swimming-bath bisected by a curtain for the distinction of the two sexes. From beyond this partition could be heard the twittering of women. At the commencement of his bath Kato was alone in his section. First, he soaped his body, squatting on a kind of low milking-stool, and washing out of a wooden pail. Then one of the hotel maids, with her *kimono* skirts girt up and her red petticoat exposed, came in to assist by soaping the guest's back. This duty done, she retired, and Kato commenced to bail water out of the swimming-bath and to sluice it over his shoulders, whence it ran away in flakes of liquid over the wooden boards. Then he stepped down into the bath. He soaked in the hot sulphurous water for half an hour or more, during which time he was joined

by more bathers. The dark brown colour of the wood-work, the greenish, yellowish water, the light brown bodies of the men, the white cotton garments flung aside on benches against the wall, and the red-petti-coated maids who kept on coming in and out of the room with soap and towels, made a pleasing picture of a scene which may be observed on any summer evening at any of the countless watering-places of Japan, from Yunokawa in cold Hokkaido to Shimabara in tropical Kyushu.

Kato dressed again and returned to his room. There he ate his supper and drank his wine, and learned some of the local gossip from the plump girl who waited on him.

"Suruna people say," she remarked, "that a Christian magician is come to live at Myohoji temple, and that he can cure evil diseases by blowing with his breath."

Respect and attention were paid to the guest, for he had given a rich man's tip, and had allowed it to be understood that he was a considerable merchant from Kwansai.

By the time the meal was ended the sun was setting beneath a sheet of golden light behind the pine-trees of Hamadera. Kato descended from his room, slipped on a pair of *geta* at the front entry and sauntered off down the main street in the direction of the *kurawa*.

From the pleasure quarter a drum was sounding. Two taps were followed by one longer beat—*pa! pa! Pom! pa! pa! Pom!*—like the pulsation of the heart excited by some false stimulant. The street was brilliantly lit with electricity; a good many people were abroad; and many faces were set in the same direction as Kato's.

Pa—pa—pom! Pa—pa—pom!

This time Kato strode unimpeded past the blue uniformed policemen, and down the principal highway of the licensed quarter. It was a broad road recently planted with a avenue of young cherry-trees. At the

entrance on either hand there was a row of shops, dry-good stores, curtained with deep blue hangings on which signs and characters were inscribed in white, shops selling biscuits and a kind of hard crisp rusk called *senbei*, *saké* shops, restaurants and cook shops, and *keshomonoya*—which sell the trinkets and ornaments that women love, combs, rings, artificial flowers, brooches, ribands, *eri* (embroidered or coloured collars), and *obidomé* (tapes and elastic for holding the great sash in its place).

Roads opened at right angles on either hand; but round the whole *kuruwa* ran the high forbidding wall like the wall of a convict prison, which has only one entrance, lest the wretched inmates should try to escape from their gilded misery. At the end of the main street stood a large new *torii* of white wood, and beyond that a russet lantern glowed in front of a chûlet-like Shinto shrine. In providing for the coarser pleasures, the gods are not forgotten in Japan.

Pa—pa—pom! Pa—pa—pom!

Before reaching either the shrine or the *torii*, Kato turned to the right down a narrower street. He walked as though with a purpose, not lounging about like the majority of the crowd or wavering from side to side of the road in order to stare at the girls.

The Japanese *kuruwa* is an institution which is entirely antagonistic to our ideals and our hypocrisies. We prefer to daub our vices with a camouflage of romance. We prefer the casual encounter at the street corner or in the café, the pretence of love, the illusory self-congratulation which would fain believe that the purchase is a conquest, and the spurious coquetry of our *demi-monde*. But it is otherwise in Japan. There you buy a girl as you buy bread when you are hungry. There is no mistaking the market or its purpose. It is advertised clearly by its solid architecture and by its beating drums. It appears to be—and it is—a public building of municipal importance, like a school, a library or a town hall. You enter;

and you see the wares which you have come to buy clearly displayed in wide-fronted houses, as in shop windows. There they squat, those small painted women, in long bare artistic galleries, on a line with the gaze of the passers-by outside. They are dressed in gorgeous *kimono*—red, blue, grey, gold,—embroidered with flowers and birds and butterflies. It is exactly like a scene in a Japanese print. In the foreground are the bars of this cage of human parakeets. In the background are gold screens, or an expanse of white wood-work. High on the wall hangs an appropriate poem, or a text from the Chinese classics.

In this clean and charming setting, kneel a row of nine or ten girls, looking out upon the idlers of Shimosaki. One of them has unloosed a lock of long, oily hair, and is combing it back into position on her head. Twisted round her small waxen fingers, it resembles strands of liquorice. Another is painting her lips in front of a small standing mirror. Two have come to the window bars and are chatting with men outside. A tiny arm stretched through an aperture catches monkey-like at a youth's collar.

"*Iya! Kusomē!*" He tears himself away from her with a curse. He is a penniless student who has not come for business, but for *hiyakashi*—to chatter and chaffer and waste the girls' time.

Two more ornaments of the establishment are puffing at their long pipes; and two stare vacantly in front of them with faces devoid of all expression. Another has just risen from her square cushion, and is hurrying across the room to some business at the back of the house.

At this moment Kato Gintaro appeared on the scene. He approached the wide entrance to this human aviary, and spoke to the cross-eyed pimp who did duty as a porter.

"*O Yuki wa?*" he asked.

"*O Yuki has a visitor,*" was the reply, "*but if danna san will step up into the house, and rest for a few minutes, she will soon be disengaged.*"

Kato shuffled off his *geta*, and slipped his feet into the straw-soled *zori*, which are the regular indoor footwear. Preceded by two women servants, he passed down a polished corridor to a square waiting-room, which looked out into a small enclosed courtyard garden, with a stone lantern in it, two pine-trees and a rockery.

"Is there beer?" he asked, as he squatted down in front of a low table.

"Hai: Ebisu Biiru!"

"Ebisu Beer, then, one bottle; and a packet of Shikishima cigarettes."

After a time the girl brought what had been ordered; and another damsel, who was no maidservant but was dressed in the gorgeous scarlet raiment of her calling, followed with a tray upon which stood a tea-pot and cups and a plate of sticky cakes made of ground rice. These she placed on the table in front of Kato. Then she made a low obeisance with her hands palm downward on the floor and with her forehead lowered until it touched the hands.

The servant withdrew; it was not for her to enter into competition with the ladies of the house.

"Please," said the scarlet girl—her voice was high and cracked; "my name is Setsu (Chastity). I am O Yuki San's friend. Please, from henceforward I implore your friendship."

Kato nodded a condescending acceptance of this formal compliment. He pinched the cardboard mouth-piece of his cigarette; and, lowering his face towards the small square *hibachi*, lit his "Shikishima" against the glowing charcoal. An intermittent conversation began.

After a time, on the pretext of refilling his glass with beer, O Setsu crept close up to Kato and laid her small hand on his.

"Kato San," she whispered, "if you take O Yuki away from this place, please take me, too."

She glanced round her as though afraid lest some one might be listening.

"Be quiet!" said Kato. "These things are secret. If they hear you, you will be beaten as Yuchan was beaten."

The girl began to wipe her eyes with the long sleeves of her *kimono*.

"If Yuchan goes away, I die!" she sobbed. "She is my friend. I can be her maid."

Kato shook his head dubiously. Voices were heard in the corridor outside.

"Settchan, Settchan. A visitor has come. He is asking for you."

"Who is it?" whispered the girl, clinging to one of the corner-posts of the room as though she would have to be torn away by force. Two servant girls and one of the brightly robed *joro* (courtesans) appeared at the open *fusuma*, the sliding partition between the room and the passage outside. One of them answered:

"It is Tanaka San, the fat one."

"Then I refuse. He hurts me!"

"Refuse? What is this?"

An old woman, dressed in grey, scattered the little group like a whirlwind. "*Ara!* You lazy thing! 'Refuse' is a word which is not spoken here!"

She slipped her hand into the girl's *kimono* sleeve, and, gripping her high up the arm, dragged her into the corridor.

"*Sa!* Now, go and treat kindly Tanaka San. He is a rich man; and it is a compliment that he chooses you, and that he comes back to you a second time. Go, you fool. If you don't—"

At this dread aposiopesis the girl shuffled away whimpering down the corridor. The old woman entered the waiting-room, and made obeisance to Kato.

"Your children are unruly," he observed.

"*Ma!* But they are selfish," said the old woman. "A *joro* has no right to know the meaning of the word 'Self.' In my day we had to work—for our parents and our masters and the pleasure of the men; but now, with this socialism and everything, the girls are

spoiled. A *joro* who says 'No' is like a soldier who runs away. She deserves to be shot!"

The hard-lipped duenna embarked upon a long narrative about the difficulty of maintaining discipline in a well-conducted house of ill-fame, and about the ingratitude of the girls, who owed so much to her teachings and advice. At last Kato interrupted her:

And O Yuki?"

"O Yuki San is upstairs. If Kato San wishes——"

Kato rose, and followed the old woman out of the room, along the corridor and up a steep staircase. There, in a small square room, overlooking the inner courtyard, the girl O Yuki (Snow) was squatting in front of her mirror. She was not dressed in the gorgeous embroidered livery of the show-window, but in a plain summer *kimono* of blue and white cotton. Her hair was elaborately arranged in the style which the *joro* have affected through centuries of inherited tradition. It formed an overwhelming *coiffure*, puffed and padded, braided with gold and silver, chained with coral loops, and skewered with yellow tortoiseshell pins. It looked like a knight's battle helmet fitted above the face of a child. Indeed, she was little more than a child—sixteen years or seventeen at most.

Yuki affected for a moment not to hear Kato's approach. She was combing back some truant side-locks over her ear. Then she looked up with a smile.

That smile was a pleasure to see. It was natural and unaffected, like the glance of a sunbeam or the blossoming of a flower. It lit up an otherwise expressionless face, and endowed it at once with a kind of transient personality. Apart from her smile, O Yuki was an ordinary little Japanese girl of the working classes, short in stature, and with rough hands, oval face, flattish nose, pink-tipped ears, soft brown eyes in oblique up-curving slits, artificial eyebrows shaven and arched, and a low forehead. But the smile gave character and charm to the little figure. It brought a dimple to the chin. It relaxed the pinched lines of the

painted mouth; and it revealed a perfect row of teeth, white, pearly, even and wholesome.

She turned away from the mirror, and prostrated herself on the floor.

"Kato San is welcome! His honourable health remaining unchanged, that also is good! Gradually the weather has become warmer!"

The usual compliments were exchanged, and the usual formality; and Kato made suitable replies. But when he had squatted down on the *zabuton*, and the old woman had withdrawn, the girl, with surprising alacrity, scuttled to the open *fusuma*, and peered into the corridor so as to make quite certain that the duenna was not lingering somewhere within earshot.

Satisfied on this score, she returned to her lover, snuggled up close to him, and linked her pudgy hands across his forehead. This gesture evidently pleased Kato, for gradually he let his head sink down until it was reclining in the girl's lap. A beatific grin spread across his face.

"Until to-morrow only——" whispered O Yuki.

"Until to-morrow," the man answered.

"And then all my life I shall be with you?"

"Until death, little sister."

"Ah! Happy death!" O Yuki sighed. Silence fell upon the little room and upon the group of lovers. The hard electric light which hung from the middle of the ceiling beat down upon them.

"And to-night?" whispered O Yuki. "You will stay to-night."

"That, *kimi* (you), is impossible. But I will stay until late. No other shall come to you to-night; and then to-morrow?——"

"Yes, to-morrow?"

"You have the clothes I gave you?"

"Yes."

"And the *furoshiki* (kerchief) to wrap up your things in? And the old umbrella?"

"Yes."

"Then you will look just like a country-woman come up to town. But you must alter your hair. It is too smart."

O Yuki smiled her pretty smile again.

"I shall put a grey hood over my head, just like an old nun," she answered.

"That's right. Then in the afternoon you will go out to the *yashiro* (shrine). They will trust you to go so far alone?"

"Oh, yes, I have several times been to pray to the *o kami sama* alone."

"Behind *o kami sama* there is always a quiet place. You can change your clothes there. You will come away from the temple, *chara chara to* (clatter, clatter), nursing your *furoshiki* and your umbrella—so!—just like an old woman from a farm."

"But the policeman at the gate. How shall I ever get past?"

"It is easy. They do not take much notice. When some party of people are going out you will join with them, and so pass through safe."

"*Ma!* But I am afraid. Cannot you come to meet me near *o kami sama*?"

"It is too dangerous for me. The policemen know me. They might try to arrest me. But outside the *kuruwa*, I shall wait, near the corner shop, the *Tanabéya*."

"Yes?"

"I wait until I see you come out. Then I follow some way down the street. When no one is looking I speak to you. If you do not see me, go straight on down the street to the beach near the railway station. My boat is there. Ask for Kato of Suruna. Then we get into the boat, and sail across the lake to Myohoji, to the house of the English missionary. He is a good man and a great saint. He believes everything I say. He will baptise you and make you Christian. Then nobody can touch you—not the policemen nor the *joro-nushi* (proprietors of the *joro*)—nobody!"

"And I shall always be with Kato San?"

"Until death, Yuchan!"

The girl rose and turned out the light, so that only the pale moonbeams might illumine the little room—the light most appropriate to that lovers' litany which is identical in strophe and antistrophe from London to Tokyo. The drums of the *kuruma* were silenced. From the distance, beyond the prison walls, came the piping notes of a student's flute, a tune full of melancholy and solitude, like the shepherd's melody at the beginning of the last Act of "Tristan." Nestling in each other's arms, Kato and O Yuki took up their tiny share in the myriad-voiced love drama of the universe. Their gestures and their phrases were much the same as ours. The same dreamy intoxication wafted them heavenward above and beyond the pains and worries of everyday life. Heart to beating heart, they murmured the same ineptitudes, the same wild promises, the same eternal vows, the same futile hopes and ideals.

"If I were to fall ill, little sister?"

"I would nurse you day and night. I would never leave you."

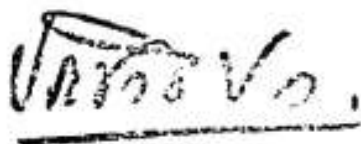
"And if I were to die, Yuchan?"

"I would die, too, and I would follow my master out into the Dark World."

He loosened her *kimono*, until her breasts were bare, and he could press their soft resilience against his own bosom. O Yuki looked up into his face, smiling and content.

"*Anata* (you!)" she whispered, "in the room next door . . . it is softer . . . and nicer . . . there is a big bed made. . . ."

Unresisting, she dragged him by the *kimono* sleeve through the open *fusuma*.



CHAPTER XVII

O YUKI'S ESCAPE

NEXT morning it was raining.

Kato had returned to Myohoji during the small hours of the night; and Dick was rather anxious as to what his lieutenant might have been doing. However, Kato assured him that important progress had been made at Shimosaki, that the crusade against the pleasure quarter was now well under way, that several of the poor girls imprisoned there were now hoping to escape from their captivity and to learn more about *Christokyo*, and that the people of Shimosaki themselves would in the end be shamed into abolishing this citadel of vice.

"This afternoon I return Shimosaki. I have important matter," he declared.

He spoke with his usual energy and conviction; but his eyes were bloodshot, and his eyelids looked heavy and tired.

"Better not," said Dick. He crossed the bare room to where his friend was squatting at the open doorway of the priests' dwelling. Outside, the slanting shafts of rain were striking across the dark cryptomeria grove down upon the uneven flagstones of the temple court.

"I go. I am employee of God," answered the Japanese; and in his excited, egotistic, antinomian mind he believed that his claim was true.

So, at Shimosaki, that same evening, at dusk, Kato Gintaro was waiting at the corner of the Tanabeya soup kitchen, opposite the great gates of the *kurawa*. The rain had fallen all day, and was still falling. In

the indistinct light the high walls of the licensed quarter with the pointed eaves of the still higher houses within towered up through the mist like one of those embattled cities in Dürer's pictures, outside which Kato, in his character of Saint George, was awaiting his princess.

She came. Her head was wrapped in a close grey hood, such as Buddhist nuns and old-fashioned country-women wear, and she was still further hidden by the large black oil-paper umbrella which she held over her head. She emerged all alone from her prison gateway; for on that wet, inclement night there were no crowds abroad in which she could sink her identity. But the police were sheltering in their sentry-boxes, paying scant attention as to who might come or go.

O Yuki, her shoulders bent against the rain and her skirts over her red petticoat held high out of the mud, paddled on her way down the main street, with now and then a glance to right or left. Kato turned to follow her with a careless and unconcerned air; but gradually he came up with her.

"Yuchan!" he whispered.

She slackened her pace.

"*Anata*," she answered without turning round. "I am afraid!"

"No, little sister," replied Kato; "there is no danger. We shall soon find the boat."

They turned down the station road. The rain was falling like a sheet of water; and not a soul was out of doors. On their right was the lake—a world of mist. Opposite the station some boats were drawn up on the beach. In the distance they looked like the carcasses of stranded water monsters. Kato gave a shout. "*Oi! Oi!*" Two boatmen came stumbling out of a rickety tea-house, where they had been sheltering from the storm and filling themselves with green tea and a kind of macaroni.

"We go across the lake?" asked O Yuki anxiously.

"It is necessary, but——" answered Kato.

"But, look! the waves!"

The lake was swathed in a curtain of rain-cloud, and the surface of the water was agitated with a swell which would have done credit to the ocean itself.

"There is no danger?" Kato asked the boatmen, who were busy setting the mast upright and arranging with straw mats a lean-to shed in the stern for their passengers.

"Ah, no," they grinned. They had often crossed the lake in such weather. It was nothing. If the honourable passengers would now kindly step up into the boat?—

O Yuki was assisted to her place in the stern, where she lay down at full length, wrapped her face in her cloak, and gave herself up to the miseries of imaginary sea-sickness.

"Indeed, woman is a poor-spirited creature," one of the boatmen commented. "If they do but see a boat, at once they are sea-drunk!"

The vessel rolled alarmingly; and at times its shallow keel came down with a resounding thud on the crest of a wave, so that the whole fabric—including Kato—shivered. But the two fishermen, bare to the waist—their breasts and shoulders gleaming under the oily streaks of rain—showed no anxiety. They knew by the feel of the water, so they said, just exactly in what portion of the lake they might be. As they approached the opposite shore they lowered the sail and started to row, one at the bow and one in the stern, intoning in turns an exclamation which was almost a chant. *Wa-sho! Wa-sho!*

"Already we have arrived," said Kato to his companion; but O Yuki only groaned and turned as in a restless dream.

At last the keel scraped along the shingles of the bay of Myohoji. O Yuki unwrapped herself; and her white face peered out into the new world.

"Where are we, elder brother?" she whispered.

"This is the temple of Myohoji at Suruna. Here the English missionary lives. Do not be afraid, little sister. He is a great saint, like Kobo Daishi. He will do anything you ask him."

They crept across the courtyard, and entered the house very quietly by the sliding partition of Kato's own room. O Yuki went straight to a small mirror which stood in a corner of the bare apartment.

"*Ara!* But my face has become green!" she exclaimed.

"Hush!" Kato warned. "He must not hear you—not yet! You must change clothes at once. To-night you will wear a man's *yukata*. That will look funny—but, still—"

Yuki turned towards her lover, and smiled that pretty smile of hers for the first time that day. He brought a change of clothing, a towel and some water in a basin. O Yuki stripped herself stark naked without further embarrassment, and commenced a careful toilette. Squatting like a large brown frog in a corner of the room, she unwrapped the square kerchief which was her only article of luggage and which contained her treasures—cosmetics, a bottle of cheap scent, a needle and thread, a pair of scissors, a ring thimble, a razor and other more inexplicable objects.

"And we sleep together, *neé*—here to-night?" she asked, wiping her shoulders with the towel and looking round and up at Kato.

"*Domo!*" he ejaculated. "That is difficult. Perhaps *sensei* (the master) will not approve. He is a very strict man. Besides, we are all priests here!"

"And Yuki, too," laughed the girl. "I shall have to shave my hair—so." Still naked, she made a gesture of obliterating her thick black locks. "And I shall go round with the begging bowl."

"I shall sleep with *sensei*, I think," said Kato seriously. "You will sleep here, near by."

"Sleep all alone in this old place!" exclaimed O

Yuki, changing quickly from gay to grave. "I am afraid. It smells of ghosts. These old temples are always full of ghosts."

"There are no ghosts here now," Kato assured her. "Not since *sensei* came. He is a great saint. He lifted up his hand—so——"

But in the middle of the speaker's gesture the partition slid open, and Dick himself stood in the space between the two rooms. At first he did not see O Yuki.

"So you're back, Kato San? What horrible weather. Nobody for evensong to-night. You had a wet walk to Shimosaki."

Then suddenly he saw the girl. She was trying to hide—most inadequately—behind a towel about one foot square. He saw the rounded ivory-smooth back, the wayward strands at the nape of the neck, and, resting on the line of her forearm, a velvety breast, with the purple nipple embossed upon it like a cabochon stone on a rare vellum binding. This was what Dick saw—this and a smile and a dimple.

He drew back quickly into his own room and called Kato. Then he closed the *fusuma*—a merely symbolical act of secrecy, for any sound whispered in one room could be heard just as plainly in the other.

"Kato San," said Dick. "Who is this?"

"He is most hopeful candidate of Christian Salvation," answered Kato. He was slowly breathing in and out through his nostrils, a Japanese specific for moments of excitability. After a pause, he added: "I think he expose most sign of grace."

"Perhaps," said the young priest dryly. The vision of that purple blossom of femininity still floated before his eyes. "Who is she?"

"He is like Rahab of Jericho. He is on city wall of Shimosaki."

"You mean," exclaimed Dick, aghast, "that she is an immoral woman?"

"Not so fault to her," answered Kato. "I am sorry for her. He have pure soul in dirty body, perhaps."

"I am sorry for her, too," said Dick, relenting. "But she can't stay here."

"Then you throw her, sir, to shameful life?"

"Heaven forbid, Kato San. Only she can't stay here."

"Where, then, he go? Policeman take her. That is certain. Sir, you do not think Japanese law how strong. Without doubt he sell herself. Her parent also take money. He is article of *Kuruma*. He must not run away go. He is like dog and cat. *Kuruma* speak policeman. Our girl make French leave. Quick, they hunt."

"And if they come here, what are we to say?"

Dick was beginning to give way. Indeed, he was deeply moved at the thought of this unhappy little slave of the Japanese vice system throwing herself upon his protection. The appeal touched his chivalry, his compassion and his sense of fair play. It seemed monstrous that regiments of sword-girt police should be scouring the country-side in search of one feeble, trembling mortal, whose only crime was that she had sought to escape from such degrading servitude. Why? She had not even chosen the life of her own free will. Her parents' indigence and callousness had sold her into it.

Then another possibility occurred to him. He remembered Kato's recital of his Rabelaisian adventures during the cherry blossom holiday.

"Kato San," he asked. "Tell me honestly. What exactly is this girl to you?"

"He is like my little sister. I wish to unbind her, to save her from hell. I have to her quixotish passion."

"And that is all?"

"That is all."

Kato could lie without a tremor of an eyelid or a quaver in his voice; and Dick accepted his assurance.

"What is her name?"

"O Yuki."

"Miss Snow—snow-white—the snow-child. The name is the symbol of purity. It is sad, Kato San. The snow-girl shall stay with us; and we will put up a

fight for her liberty, if we must. But if the law would take her back again, then it is a bad law."

Kato hung his head down as though in shame for his country's sake, and replied :

"Indeed, there is much most untrue civilisation in Japan."

A light tap was heard on the sliding partition.

"O *hairi*," said Dick.

The *fusuma* spread apart; and O Yuki appeared, dressed in one of Kato's *yukata*, several sizes too large for her. She was crouching on the floor with the evening supper on its lacquer tray in front of her. She flattened her face to the ground in the most abject abasement, and murmured some unintelligible apology for her existence.

"O *hairi*," Dick repeated. He was standing by the closed *shoji*, and looked tall in the low room. Kato went out for a moment, and then returned with a mean kerosene lamp, which he proceeded to hang on a nail against the wall. The girl placed the supper on the low table in the middle of the room. There was soup in lacquer bowls, a plate of pickles and another dish of raw fish cut in slices.

"Be welcome, O Yuki San," said Dick in Japanese; "please use this house without embarrassment."

O Yuki was flattered by the polite expression which Dick employed, and by the honorific language which is seldom used in speaking to dependents. During the men's meal she sat in the background near the wall, with her hands folded in her lap, as she had seen the maids sit when serving food in the *kuruwa*.

That night Dick and Kato slept together in the principal living room, while O Yuki had Kato's former room all to herself. She did not appear to be troubled after all by the demon foxes; and the first sound which aroused Dick next morning was the clatter of the *amado*, the wooden shutters which closed the house during the night-time. This sound was followed by the swish of the broom on the wooden flooring, and the flick of

the paper duster against the walls. Clearly, O Yuki was taking her duties seriously, and was anxious to give satisfaction.

At breakfast the police called—two of them, the one tall and thin and the other short and stout. Dick knew the stouter officer well. He was a *jussa* of Suruna, a kindly soul. His lean companion was introduced as a member of the Shimosaki force. After a few common-places about the weather, the Suruna *jussa* observed:

"At Shimosaki last evening a troublesome thing has occurred."

"Yes?" queried Dick.

"A girl called Hirata Yuki has fled from the *kuruma*. This gentleman,"—he indicated the second policeman,— "has been sent to find her."

"She is quite safe," answered Dick.

"She escaped in the company of her lover, one Kato Gintaro," the thin policeman here intervened in rasping and offensive tones. He was consulting his notes in a small black pocket book. "This Kato lives at the Myohoji; so it is believed she may be here."

"That is quite true. She is here. But it is not true that Kato San is her lover. She wishes to become a Christian"—Dick was anticipating somewhat, but this seemed to be a satisfactory way for accounting for her presence—"and to escape from her shameful life."

The thin policeman shook his head.

"*Jibojiki*," he said, meaning that she had gone to the dogs of her own free will. "She has sold her body. It belongs to herself no longer. It belongs to others, and she has done great wrong in trying to escape. However, it is not desired to make further trouble, if she will now return quietly to Shimosaki."

"What! Back to the *kuruma*?"

"I think that would be better."

For a few minutes the two policemen sucked in silence at the cigarettes which Dick had offered them.

"And if I refuse to give her up?" The Englishman's voice was beginning to tremble with emotion.

"That would be against the law."

"I don't believe it. I don't believe the law of any civilised country can compel a girl to return to a shameful life if she really wishes to escape."

"Money has been paid," the policeman replied obstinately. "She has sold herself. There is a debt."

At this point Kato broke in on the conversation. He and the weeping O Yuki had been listening behind the *jusuma* in the neighbouring room. They judged that Dick was getting the worst of the debate; and that his magical powers, however potent against spirit foxes, were less effective against the officers of the law.

An interminable discussion commenced, during which Dick gradually dropped into the background. Kato was no less powerful as an advocate than as a preacher. He persuaded the policeman—and a man who can persuade a *junsu* of anything contrary to his first hypothesis is a master of persuasion—that they were under no obligation to carry off O Yuki San then and there and that their only duty at present was to ascertain her whereabouts. This they had done. O Yuki had no intention of quitting Myohoji. He himself would be her guarantor. The English missionary was a man of wealth. The matter was one which could be settled probably by friendly compromise. Let them only wait two or three days! All would be well!

So the two policemen left Myohoji with their sabres dragging and rattling across the stones of the temple courtyard, and returned to their office to write their report.

"Sir!" exclaimed Kato, as he and Dick were returning from bidding them "*Sayonara*" at the doorway. "These *junsu* more obstinacious than stone or mud. I fear now commence great fight for O Yuki San—plenty lawbreak."

"I shall never give her up," answered Dick, bringing his fist down on the verandah railing to mark his determination, "unless it be to her parents. There must be no surrender. We must show these people that we not

only preach Christianity, but that we are Christians indeed. I would rather go myself to prison, and shame the Japanese for having such unjust and tyrannous laws. Why, if they can compel her to go back to Shimosaki, then the girl is no more than a slave, and the worst kind of slave!"

"They cannot compel, I think," Kato replied. "But they can make a press on her father, so he is ruinous man again if daughter not return to *kurawa*. Such is their cunning politics, I think."

Meanwhile, the story of O Yuki's escape from the pleasure quarter had spread like wildfire through Suruna. Some people shook their heads, regretting that such lawlessness could occur in a civilised country. Others said that the foreign *senkyoshi* was too idealistic; he gave people ideas outside the ordinary course of affairs; his teaching was too good for this world, and was in conflict with old-established institutions such as the *kurawa*. Others laughed and said that *senkyoshi san* was just like other men; he liked to have a pretty girl about the house. But, on the whole, public opinion, on this side of the water at any rate, was favourably disposed towards Dick and O Yuki. For there was rivalry between Suruna and Shimosaki. The new town of industry despised the old town of leisure. Ah! Shimosaki people are mean and grasping, ran the comment. Even their *joro* run away from them. If we had been allowed to have the *kurawa* here in Suruna, which would have been very much better for all concerned, we would have treated our girls kindly. They would not wish to run away.

The matter was debated in the factories amidst the whirr of the busy winding-wheels, at the bath-houses amidst the splashings and puffings of the bathers, and in the cautious restaurants where the *geisha* regaled their guests with the latest local gossip. The rickshawmen repeated the story as they sat waiting on the shafts of their little cars; and the barbers and blind masseurs retailed it to the worthy matrons of the *bourgeoisie* as

they waxed their truant locks or rubbed their rheumatic joints. The general verdict was that, since the Shimosaki people were concerned, the Shimosaki people must be wrong; and, therefore, the action of the *senkyoshi san* in sheltering the runaway was laudable and courageous and should be supported.

O Yuki San's evasion was the text of Kato's address to a record congregation that evening. He flayed the vices of the town across the water with vivid realism and merciless denunciation. He exhorted the people of Suruna to defend to the death the innocent girl who had taken refuge in their midst. He appealed to their chivalry, to the spirit of the *otokodaté*—that favourite stage character who is for ever interfering with other people's business and rescuing the oppressed from the oppressors. He appealed to local patriotism, and to the truculence and the emotionalism of the Japanese character. The Christian message of love was shelved until less stirring times. In fact, it was a fine fighting speech; and, by the time the orator had concluded, half his audience were ready to follow his leadership to the assault of the Scarlet City.

Dick was alarmed and distressed. The current of popular excitement was sweeping his "movement" onwards at an alarming rate towards a doubtful future. For the first time he began to have misgivings as to the wisdom of Kato's methods and the influence of his fiery oratory.

"Kato San," he expostulated after the service was over. "it won't do."

"How, sir? You throw back O Yuki into viceful life?"

"No, not that; but trying to preach a crusade against Shimosaki, and stirring up the multitude. Remember, they who take the sword will perish by the sword."

"Sir," said the apostle, "you misknow people of Japan. We must now make bold face of brave; or they say, 'He fear; he soon give away O Yuki.'"

The cause of all this tumult was serving their dinners

on the lacquer trays. She glanced up at the Englishman shyly; but she did not speak. From behind the *shoji* she had listened to Kato's sermon, and she was overcome at the importance attributed to her. She was not built to scale for the rôle of Helen.

Next day a new complication arose. O Yuki's father and mother arrived from a remote mountain village beyond Fujiyama. Mr. Hirata was somewhat obese. His egg-shaped face was adorned with a small moustache and a short beard of thin hairs. Another bunch of hair sprouted at random from a kind of wart in the middle of his cheek. His skin was very brown. The hair on the crown of his head was scanty, and the brown scalp was visible beneath its threads. His manner was bland, and he had an unctuous smile. His old wife was bent with much toil in the rice-fields. Her forehead and cheeks were lined and furrowed. It seemed incredible that such a shrivelled witch should be the parent of the smiling, dimpled Yuki; or that Yuki herself might one day, through toil, exposure and poverty, be withered to her mother's likeness.

After a preliminary exchange of compliments with Dick, Kato took charge of the Hiratas for the discussion of business. No! They had not come to Suruna in order to assist their daughter or to look after her wants. Not exactly. The truth was that they were very poor people. They could not even afford the journey, only the *kusawa* had promised to pay, if O Yuki could be persuaded to return. Once upon a time the Hirata family had owned the largest house in their village of Ako; but they had been reduced by adverse circumstances, until they had only half a *cho* of rice-land left to them. That, too, was mortgaged, and the mortgagees had now foreclosed. They were trying to subsist on the profits of a little shop stocked at the price of their daughter's virtue. Yes, they had been proud of Yuki. She had been a dutiful daughter; and all the village had spoken well of her determination to sacrifice herself. But now, it seemed, her mind had

changed. She had gone back upon her honourable resolution. Why was this? She had fled from the *kuruwa*. She had added still further to the debts of the family. The *joro-nushi* would demand from them the money which had been paid. They had no means of raising it. The Hirata family was now utterly ruined—all through the selfishness of a mere girl.

The father paused, in order to give his listener time to absorb a due sense of a parent's responsibilities and disappointments. His wife had accompanied his recitative with a continual nodding of the head and sucking of the tooth.

"Indeed I am sorry for you," Kato replied, "but there is no help for it. The honourable daughter was unhappy. She does not wish to return to Shimosaki."

"She must go back to the *kuruwa* at once!" The old man's manner was now far from bland. He was trembling with grievance; and he had worked himself up into a passion of outraged paternity. "This is shameful selfishness. Filial respect, what is that? Do young people of Japan no longer understand? It is the ruin of our country, if our daughters no more obey our commands."

Kato consoled with them once more. Then they asked to see O Yuki herself.

"To-morrow, perhaps, would be better," Kato temporised.

"Then we go to the police," retorted Hirata San with umbrage. "In our Japan a daughter must obey her parents. The police will make her obey."

"Perhaps the money may be found," Kato suggested. "*Senkyoshi San* has money; but whether he gives or does not give there is no knowing."

This was a new light. The two Hiratas exchanged glances.

"*Ma! Naruhodo!*"

The brown head slowly rose and fell. Finally, after the customary phrases and salutations, the parents of O Yuki San at last withdrew.

Meanwhile, Dick Aylmer had been closeted with their daughter in the adjoining room. O Yuki was wearing a blue and white cotton *kimono*, with a pattern of bamboo stalks and leaves. She had made this garment herself from some material which Dick had bought for her. She looked distinctly ornamental; and she smiled from embarrassment whenever her new master spoke to her.

"Does your heart feel good now?" Dick inquired in Japanese.

"Oh, yes; I am happy. My heart is easy."

"But to go home with father and mother, that would be better?"

"Yes, but—they do not want me. They would cause me to go back—over there!"

The girl shuddered.

"No, impossible," Dick assured her. "They will take you home again."

She inclined her head on one side and reflected. The colour of her cheeks was like that of a ripe apricot, for she had washed away the white paint of the *kurutaba*. Dick had never conversed *tête-à-tête* with a young Japanese girl before; and he was not unmoved. She resembled in no way the Scarlet Woman of the lupanar, who figured in sermons and warnings to the young. She was transparently innocent and unspoiled—a flower which had fallen ere its blossoming through ill chance of wind and weather.

"There is poverty at home," said O Yuki. "My father is retired, so he does not work; and my elder brother is head of the family. He has to keep the accounts, so he does not work. My brother Atsushi works hard; but he is only a *hyakusho* (farm labourer). He cannot earn much."

"And little brothers and little sisters, O Yuki San?"

"One little sister. She goes to school. She cannot help much. What is there to do? Poverty is a cruel thing."

Dick searched for words of consolation, but he could

not find them so easily. The poverty of the Japanese countryside he was beginning to know; it is one of the ultimate things of human life. He was deeply moved by the distress which lay so heavy on such young shoulders. He longed to protect and to comfort; but what could he say? He was unaccustomed to girls even of his own race.

"Has *danna san* honourable wife and children?" Yuki asked. For it is rude in Japan to monopolise conversation with the recital of one's own pains and worries.

Dick shook his head.

"There are not," he replied.

"But father and mother?"

"Yes, in England."

"*Ma!* That is far away! Lonely, is it not?"

Dick drew from an inside pocket of his cassock a case containing photographs of his mother, his father and Grace. In order to show these to the Japanese girl he approached closer to her and squatted on the floor by her side. The cheap scent which enveloped her was the first displeasing impression. She gazed at the pictures, holding them at first upside down.

"*Ma!* *Haikara* (chic or smart), *nd!* This is honourable father? This is honourable mother?"

She pointed to Grace's picture. So Dick had to indicate exactly who was who; and in doing so his fingers touched hers, and a ripple as of electricity passed through his body, and—perhaps—through hers also. A sense of familiarity and propinquity increased within him, and, with it, a yet stronger protective instinct. God had sent this girl for him to save, as he had saved Kato. He must fight her battle to the end—against the influence of the *kurawa*, against the forces of the law, and against the hardness of her parents' hearts.

At this moment the *fusuma* slid open, and Kato stepped into the room. He had just bidden farewell to Ō Yuki's parents. A curious expression crossed his face as he watched the attitude of his two companions.

They seemed to be getting on together remarkably well.

"Honourable parents have gone away," he said in Japanese.

"For good?" Dick asked.

"Oh, no, sir. They go for *sodan* (consultation) with policeman. To him they talk. Then, they arrive again and talk. Then they talk with themselves. Everywhere very much talk in Japan."

He laughed.

"Much better O Yuki stay with us. She cook well, and she become *Christokyo-shinja-neé*, Yuki San? *Sensei* will baptise you at the big *mitarai* in the court of Myohoji. He will give you a new *haikara* name. Then the policeman can never take you any more."

O Yuki smiled, and the dimple quivered in her chin.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARMAGEDDON

AT evensong that day strange things befell.

As soon as the service had begun, Dick noticed a group of unfamiliar figures gathered round the foot of the temple steps. They were tall, rough fellows of the vagrant ne'er-do-well student type. They wore torn *hakama* over dirty *kimono*. Their bare feet were thrust into *geta* of the heaviest pattern; and they were carrying formidable clubs. There were ten or twelve of them at least.

"*Gorotsuki!*" whispered Kato; "I fear."

A *gorotsuki* is a kind of professional vagabond, who can be hired for desperate and blackguardly work.

There were loud murmurings among the crowd during the opening prayers. When Kato advanced to the balcony of the temple to give his address, there were cries of "*Uso*" (lies), "*Sukébei*" (lewd fellow) and "*Damaré*" (be silent!).

The *gorotsuki* were gripping their clubs and apparently awaiting some signal. The members of Kato's orchestra, still dressed in their white pilgrims' clothes, had collected in a rival phalanx at a corner of the building.

The leader of the *gorotsuki* advanced one or two steps upwards towards the sanctuary. Instantly, Saito of the band rushed forward and caught him by the sleeves. This was the sign for the commencement of pandemonium. Clubs rose and fell—thwack!—on heads and shoulders. *Geta* hurtled through the air. There were cries and shouts and imprecations, and the panting gasps of a multitude which is struggling within a confined space.

From the candle-lit obscurity of the inner shrine Dick emerged. With his white surplice and his fair hair, he looked like an Angel of Peace, pleading in vain above an unheeding world intent on self-destruction. A burly ruffian hustled him aside; and, penetrating into the depths of the temple, began to tear down the altar, ripping the frontal across and hurling the brass candlesticks and the fragments of the wooden cross out into the *melée*.

The toughs had come from Shimosaki in large numbers, and they were well organised. The gallant orchestra fought like *samurai* in defence of the Myohoji. But the odds were against them, and they were soon overpowered. Kato had vanished. A pock-marked orator was standing in his place on the temple balcony, and was adjuring the scared multitude to be faithful to its ancient faith, and to reject everything that came from overseas. The Suruna people themselves were beginning to turn against the missionaries. Angry hands were pulling Dick down from his own temple steps. His surplice was rent. He struggled and expostulated—but in vain. He was at the mercy of a vast and hostile sea of humanity. One of his own converts—he knew the face well—came up and struck him in the face with his shoe, shouting, "*Ara! Baleren-bo*"—a very ancient sneer at foreign priests. A heavier blow from some unknown assailant fell on the back of his head and half stunned him. After that, his impressions became blurred, though his consciousness never completely deserted him. The crowds seemed to be running up and down with curious mechanical regularity. Bells were jangling in the middle heaven; and out of the darkness of the hill-side appeared the sudden light of a great dawn. They had fired the Myohoji.

The stout policeman had rescued Dick. Bruised and dazed, he was sitting with his back propped against a tree trunk on the opposite side of the road, near the lake. He could hear the crackle of woodwork and the

crash of falling beams. The crowd had dispersed at the advent of the police.

Then the fire brigade had arrived with their ladders and axes and pumps—lithe, dark, tightly clad men of astonishing agility, who seemed to spring like monkeys through the air. They had sunk one end of their tubing into the lake and were pumping vigorously. The fount of water showed like silver against the smoke and glare of the conflagration; and it hissed and spluttered in its attack on the flames.

"How are you, sir?" asked the stout Suruna *junsa*, in the laborious English of the police school.

"Thanks to your honourable protection, I am quite well," Dick answered in Japanese. He struggled to his feet. Except for a few shrewd bumps and a dull pain in his head, he was intact.

"Where is Kato San?" he asked, "and O Yuki?"

The *junsa* did not know. The priests' house, however, had escaped the flames. The firemen had at once demolished the wooden bridge which linked its verandah to that of the temple itself, so that the flames should not spread. The only danger now was from sparks flying off the temple roof.

Dick made his way to the back entrance through the rough and primitive kitchen, where a few vestiges of the evening meal still remained. "Yuki San! Yuki San!" he cried, but there was no reply. The two dwelling rooms were strangely still. O Yuki's coloured wrapper which contained her few possessions stood in the corner of her room near the cheap standing mirror which Dick had given her. Kato's things, packed in his wicker *hori*, were untouched; so was Dick's trunk. But the room was warm with the heat of the fire outside, and puffs of acrid smoke entered through a rent in the *shoji*.

Suddenly, there was a terrific din, as though all the gods of the Buddhist Pantheon were descending for vengeance upon their renegade shrine. Dick pushed the *shoji* aside and was met by dense clouds of smoke

and by the clamour of voices in the darkness. "The roof has fallen! The roof has fallen!" they were shouting.

The fall of the temple roof removed the danger of the flying sparks, and the dwelling-house at least was now quite safe. Dick threw his torn surplice aside; and, dressed in his black cassock only, he went out again by the kitchen doorway. This time he took the mountain path which led upwards away from the lake. From here he could look down upon the courtyard of the Myohoji. It was like the infernal pit—full of smoke and darts of flame and sudden cries.

So this was the end of the Suruna mission—strife and fire and destruction. Dick foresaw endless complications with the landlords, with the police, with the local Christians, with the Bishop and with the authorities in Tokyo. Success alone could have justified his unusual methods; and success had seemed so close and so certain. Now—within a few hours, all his achievement had been swept away. His own converts had struck him in the face. His temple, which had been the symbol of his teaching, would soon be a mass of charred cinders. Black against the deep blue sky and against the still deeper blue of the lake, the priest stood at the edge of the cliff above Myohoji, gazing in bitter contemplation at the ruin of his hopes.

"*Danna San des' ka?*"

A small voice whispered from a clump of bushes near by. Dick had forgotten O Yuki, and what might have become of her.

"O Yuki," he answered, "where is Kato San?"

He could not see the girl, but a little hand caught at the skirt of his cassock. He took it in his own and raised her, so that she stood by his side.

"Where is Kato San?" he asked again.

"I do not know," O Yuki answered.

"Who brought you here?"

"I ran away. I was afraid. I thought they might kill me or—or—take me back to that place."

"Come back with me now," said Dick, "back to the house. It is all right."

"I am afraid," answered O Yuki.

So, instead, they walked upwards along the scrambling mountain path, which in the darkness was clearer to the feet than to the eyes. O Yuki still clung to her master's hand, and seemed to be dragging him upwards in her anxiety to get away from Myohoji. It was cold; and drops of rain were beginning to fall.

"There is a hut higher up," said Dick. "We can shelter there."

The ache in his head was increasing with the effort of the uphill climb; and his thoughts were once again becoming hazy and confused. He was glad to have O Yuki's companionship; but he kept on mixing up her identity with that of other people—some of them far away.

The darkness seemed to treble the distance, and the fear of pursuit—pursuit by some evil and hostile power dimly comprehended—began to gain upon Dick. Around him, the trunks of the trees made an interminable crypt, and the thick undergrowth was a sea of menace. He began to fear that they were lost.

No! There was the building just a few yards in front of them in a clearing of the forest. It was a rough hut, which woodcutters had built as a temporary shelter in winter time. It did not even have paper windows, merely a wooden doorway on a rough hinge which could be closed or pushed open. There was a flooring of rough boards, strewn with a few *mushiro*, or coarse straw mats.

"Sa! It is a dirty place," exclaimed O Yuki, "but it cannot be helped."

With some soft paper which she produced from her *kimono* sleeve, she dusted the middle of the floor. Dick sat down listlessly on the edge of the boarding, his feet protruding from the doorway. He was utterly exhausted, and the pain in his head was intense. The rain was falling faster now, and was beating on the

roof of the hut with the din of kettle-drums. It seemed that O Yuki came close to him, and nestled by his side; that he put his arm round her, being glad of her company; that, after a time, they lay down together across the floor of the hut, for they were both very tired; that O Yuki rolled up her *kimono* to make a pillow; and that he had wrapped her in the folds of his cassock, holding her close to his breast.

Dick started out of a strange dream into a reality yet stranger. The door of the shack had been pushed open; and Kato was standing between him and the early sunlight. Dick felt a weight upon one side of himself, which prevented him from rising. He made another effort, and O Yuki came tumbling out of his black cassock like a sleepy kitten. Her hips were wrapped in a kind of red petticoat; but beneath her loose white *juban* (shirt) her breasts were bare, and she made no attempt to hide them, as with pudgy fists she rubbed the sleep out of her eyes. Kato stared from Dick to his companion with surprise, and even, it seemed, with a glitter of amusement.

"Pray excuse me, sir," he said at last. "I search you high and low; but you are not."

Dick's thoughts were still vague and scattered; and his head was paining him. But he felt that the predicament was peculiar, and that some excuse was necessary.

"O Yuki San was frightened," he said. "She was afraid those people would take her away. Then it began to rain; and we took shelter here."

"Very rude place, I fear," answered Kato politely, "for sweet sleep."

By this time, O Yuki had set her tangled garments right, and had resumed her crumpled *kimono*. She came forward and bowed to Kato, exchanging the customary compliments. She did not seem in any way embarrassed by the compromising circumstances of her night out.

"Perhaps we shall now return," proposed Kato,

"and celebrate the Mass. I made in our house all necessary preparations for homesome service."

Single file—with Kato at the head of the procession and O Yuki bringing up the rear—the evangelists descended the hill to Myohoji. The bamboo grasses sprayed them from the knees downwards with copious water-showers; and the air was heavy with the delicious scent of wet pine-woods. The sun had risen; and away over the lake two or three fleecy clouds were still rosy with memories of the dawn.

Dick wanted to ask a hundred questions about the events of the night before; but that solid block of pain in his head seemed to obstruct his speech. He could answer Kato's talk, but he could not frame a sentence on his own initiative.

"Now you know well O Yuki San," Kato asked suddenly. "How he please you, sir?"

It was embarrassing to reply to such a leading question with the subject of conversation within earshot, even though she understood no English.

"She is a very brave girl," Dick answered.

"H'm!" said Kato; then, after a time, he added, with no apparent connection:

"You know Suruna *junsa*, the fat? He very favour our *Christokyo*."

Dick listened with interest, but his comments could not pass over that lump of pain. They were shying away from it, like a jibbing horse. Kato continued:

"*Junsa o kami san* (wife) is very true *Christokyo-shinja*. He boast that *Christokyo* heal his womb. How so? Perhaps. *Keishicho* (chief of local police) say he no permit *Christokyo* in Suruna, too troublesome also foreign matter and disturb. Suruna *junsa* speak loud to your favour, sir. He say it is low-class rogue of Shimosaki make trouble for love of *kuruwa*; but *Christokyo* is teaching of superior gent, also make bad man good, sick man cure. He instance with favour his wife's womb. So, at the end, *Keishicho*, like Pontius Pilate, announce judgeness, 'All morning service

of *Christokyo*, he say, 'may continue now as always; but afternoon and evening it is not so. Then drunkish people and idle are many, and trouble may be. Better keep quiet all evening time,' he say. How you think, sir? Better half loaf than no meat, say I, recalling proverbitude."

Dick considered that his henchman had done well thus to appease the authorities; but he could only nod his head as a sign of approval. Kato went on:

"This Suruna *junsa*, though very fattish, is smart fellow. After, I inquire him, 'And Yuki San, how so?' He say, 'Her parent Hirata send quick back to *kurawa*.' 'That is shame,' I say, 'also foul parent. He is good girl.' 'I agree you,' *junsa* say. Then he set finger on face like famous writing Shakespeare and say, 'If he marry Englishman, he become more free, I think.' Sir, I appeal you, how so?"

"Yes, yes," replied Dick jerkily. He felt like a man blindfolded, who for a time has lost direction of his movements and is being led on by others along unfamiliar paths.

"Now, sir, it is good thing you sleep with this Yuki," Kato went on remorselessly. "Now you know without fail if you like or not like. Like—I think. How so?"

"O Yuki is a very brave girl," Dick kept on repeating.

They had reached the bottom of the slope, and saw before them the ruins of the Myohoji, which filled the further end of the pit in the hill-side where the temple had been built. The rain had quenched the conflagration and had saved much of the stouter woodwork. Three or four of the upright pillars were still standing; but the roof had crashed inwards, cumbering the centre of the building with a heap of rubble, cinders, splinters and tiles. So, at first sight, the Myohoji looked like a large table inverted with its legs in the air. The priests' dwelling was, however, quite intact, though woodwork and *shoji* had been scorched and browned by the fire.

The indomitable Kato had transformed the outer room of this dwelling—the room which Dick had ordinarily used—into a temporary chapel. He had rigged up an altar, using Dick's travelling trunk, and had made a cross out of two charred fragments of the ancient shrine. There were no candlesticks as yet; but two china vases, holding a few yellow hedge flowers and some early blades of rice, had been placed on each side of the cross.

Children and country people were loitering in the courtyard inspecting the ruins; and the Suruna *jūnsa* stood on guard. Dick washed and put on a clean surplice; and after his change he felt better. O Yuki was in the kitchen preparing the breakfast. Clearly, the little world of Myōhoji was already recovering from its catastrophe.

Dick entered his new sanctuary, and began the murmur of the Lord's Prayer. Just before the Prayer of Consecration, Kato fetched O Yuki from the kitchen, and made her kneel opposite to him on the verandah. So, when the priest turned from the altar, he saw her kneeling there on the threshold of the Holiest. A sudden revelation broke down the barriers of pain in his bruised head. The voice of God seemed to be audible in the atmosphere around him. It spoke to him from the altar and the Sacrament, from the temple ruins, from the tall cryptomeria trees and from the distant sunlight on the lake. "This is thy woman," the voice seemed to be saying. "Take her for thy wife. Love her and cherish her and lead her to Me."

Was this Love? Dick wondered. No; it seemed to be something even higher and holier than Love. It was the Will of God.

When the girl brought the breakfast trays in from the kitchen Dick felt a new sense of embarrassment in her presence different from that which he had experienced before. He felt that he had a secret, and that she shared it. He glanced up at her shyly. The girl's instinct at once divined the unconscious message

of his eye. The dish which she was carrying trembled in her hand, and would have fallen to the floor had not Kato caught it. Then she fled back to the kitchen in the utmost confusion. Kato smiled.

After breakfast, Dick accompanied the blue-uniformed *junsu* to the Police Station, and to the *machi-yakuba*, the office of the town administration. He had a personal interview with the *keishicho*, and gave his account of the riot and of the burning of the Myohoji. He found the authorities surprisingly lenient and friendly; for they were determined to get satisfaction from the Shimosaki people, and were disposed to exculpate Dick and the Christians entirely. It was again suggested to the young man that, if he were to marry O Yuki the position as against Shimosaki would be immensely strengthened. It was made clear to him that the marriage need not be of a very permanent character, if O Yuki did not give satisfaction; but that for the moment it was important in the interests of local politics. Would he not help his friends—they were all his friends in Suruna—by this trifling commitment? He had only to enter the girl's name as being that of his wife, in the register kept at the *machi-yakuba*, and the deed would be done. Hirata Yuki would be a subject of His Majesty the King of England.

But what about the bride? As soon as Dick had departed, Kato had clapped his hands, thereby summoning the girl into his presence in the improvised chapel. She entered and bowed submissively. She was no longer Kato's mistress. She assumed the attitude of a servant or housewife, receiving her lord's commands. She squatted demurely at a respectful distance with her hands folded in her lap.

"Last night you slept alone together with *danna san*—in that hut," Kato began. His tones were severe and unfriendly.

"It is so," the girl answered.

"Did something then take place?"

O Yuki shook her head, and turned her face aside.

She began to pick at the matting on the floor, with her finger, nervously.

"But yet—you do not dislike *danna san*?"

"He is a foreigner and strange. He has blue eyes; but still he is a kind man."

"He would treat you well, Yuchan. He would not beat you. He would give you nice *kimono*, and he would restore the prosperity of your family."

The scratching at the floor redoubled in energy; but O Yuki did not answer.

"It is difficult," Kato agreed; "but what do you think?"

"A foreigner—it is an unpleasant thing—*nd!*"

"But to return to the *kurawa*, and to sell your body, and to be beaten by *o kami san*, and to become ill and perhaps to die, and to be buried in an unclean place—that, too, is an unpleasant thing."

"Either way is unpleasant. It is a bad choice. What shall I do—*anata*?"

With the personal pronoun humanity invaded this frigid scene. Kato rose from his knees and strode about the room. He had a certain passionate affection for this girl, which had not yet cooled. He knew that it would not last; but it was hard to give her up until his love had run its course. He felt that, in thus choosing the advantageous way for her, he was performing a noble and chivalrous action—worthy of the sterner saints of Bushido.

"*I-i-yé, kimi!*" He shook his head. "It is duty. It is *giri* towards your father and mother. It is true, he is a foreigner; but he speaks Japanese well, and he is used to our customs. He is rich and kind and gentle. He has a good heart and he is a great saint. Just think one thought. He has never had any love relation with any woman before. He will be a great honour to you and to your family."

He was standing close to her now; and she clung to his knees, sobbing.

"*Anata*," she pleaded, "it is hard to part——"

"There is no talk of parting," her lover replied.

"You, too—?" asked O Yuki, smiling through her tears.

"But I am a loyal friend," said Kato, crossing his arms and looking the part.

"You will go away and forget Yuchan?"

"No—never in this life. You are to me Komurasaki; I am Gompachi." He mentioned a famous pair of lovers from the history of the Yedo *demi-monde*. Then he dropped to his knees at O Yuki's side. Silence fell.

"It is sweet—to be thus—alone, *nd!*" the girl murmured.

Kato hugged her in his arms. For a moment a vision of Japanese domesticity floated before his eyes—a neat little house in the suburbs of Tokyo, with his own name on door-post and lantern, a little garden courtyard with clean, broad stepping-stones, gleaming wooden steps rising beneath a curved and tasteful porch, the family collection of *geta* and umbrellas resting beside the steps, and at the open *shoji*—O Yuki, his wife, with her crowd of jolly children around her, kneeling at the entrance to welcome him home from his work.

He passed his hand across his eyes, and sighed.

"In this life, it is no good," he observed; "but in the next life—perhaps!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE MARRIAGE OF DICK AYLNER

THERE was no time to lose. Preparations for the wedding were at once put in hand; and the ceremony took place next morning in that same upper room of the lakeside hotel, where Dick, with Porter and Kato, had spent his first restless night in Suruna.

Everything seemed to be taken for granted, so much so that Dick never actually made any proposal of marriage either to O Yuki or to her parents. The *fiancée* did her house work at Myohoji all through the day. Kato, laughing, addressed her as "*okusan*" (missis); but otherwise no reference seemed to be made to her future status. Certainly her accredited husband scarcely spoke two words with her, until he found himself awaiting his bride in that familiar room, now decked for the occasion.

The *tokonoma*—the alcove which is the place of honour in a Japanese apartment—was adorned with a hanging picture of a stork and a rising sun. Beneath stood a tasteful arrangement of *chochikubai*—the pine, bamboo and plum foliage, cunningly constructed out of wood and paper—which is the inevitable decoration of Japanese weddings.

A company of Japanese men and a few women were assembled—some twenty or thirty persons in all. The men wore sombre coloured *kimono* with the *haori* (cloak) and *hakama* (skirt), which are significant of an occasion of special solemnity. A few, including the stout Suruna *jūnsa* in his blue uniform, wore dress of a European style. Kato, for instance, was garbed in a frockcoat, borrowed from the local Clarkson. It was, too short in

the sleeves, and too tight about the waist and hips, and it gave to the wearer the look of an indifferent waxwork. The trousers were of white flannel; and from a collar of prodigious height descended the trickle of a ruby-coloured tie. Kato was in charge of the bridegroom, who was very pale and had something unearthly in his aspect. He was dressed in his priest's cassock, a garment in keeping with the *kimono* around him; but, among the black-haired, brown-skinned Japanese, his pallor and his fair complexion invested him with a radiant unreality as of the spirit world.

Dick greeted some of the people present, and an exchange of stilted conventionalities took place, with much bowing and sucking in of the breath. But there was no general hum of conversation; and an agonising pause of almost an hour ensued. Japanese are used to these interludes, however; and the slow drip of the empty minutes does not seem to distress them.

At the end of this waiting Kato went to see how O Yuki's preparations were progressing; and Dick was left alone to stare at the wedding-guests and at the two cushions placed opposite each other in the centre of the room for the use of bride and bridegroom, at the ceremonial lacquer kettle warming over its charcoal embers, and at the triple set of china *saké* cups.

The sliding *fusuma* opened. Was it O Yuki at last? No; a servant of the hotel had brought Dick a pink telegram form. From his parents, perhaps, whom he had notified the day before? No; there was not time enough yet to get an answer. Dick opened the gay-coloured missive mechanically. It was from his bishop, a notice of recall:—

"Return Tokyo immediately."

Dick had been so stunned by the series of events which had been crowded upon him that his first instinct was to obey.

"I must go back to Tokyo now," he said vaguely to an unknown person with a thin beard who happened to be standing next to him. The beard oscillated, as the man wagged his head, uncomprehending.

"But the wedding?" asked the stranger.

Dick felt himself jolted back into the centre of the scene around him. He was at his own wedding. He must see it through—bishop or no bishop.

"After the wedding," he explained to his neighbour.

"But the wedding-feast?"

The beard trembled with anxiety once more. Dick knew nothing of any feast. He looked anxiously round at the assembled guests. Were they all waiting to be fed?

At that moment Kato returned.

"Miss come now," he whispered to Dick. Then he requested the company to be seated; and he led the bridegroom forward to his cushion. At the last moment he pressed between Dick's chilly fingers a small folded fan. Dick had no notion what to do with it, or whether it had to fulfil any function in the ceremony; but he clutched it desperately—a weak straw for a drowning man.

The *fusuma* slid open once more; and the bride stood on the threshold. Dick had never expected anything like this. The girl's head was completely covered with a light cap or hood made of a sort of white felt. It looked like the head of a snow-man whose features were already melted. Nothing was to be seen of O Yuki's face, except where, at the lower fringe of this curious head-dress, her little chin was trembling with nervousness. What if it were not O Yuki at all? What if Dick were being treated like the patriarch Jacob?

The bride, whoever she might be, was wrapped in a many-coloured *kimono*, very long in the sleeves and in the skirt, and embroidered with all manner of creatures—storks and phoenixes and long-tailed tortoises. This trailing garment swept the flooring with its thick red

hem. Her parents followed behind her; they were the old Hiratas right enough—the father with his oily face and his disconcerting tufts of hair, and the aged crumpled mother, still sucking at her hollow tooth.

Kato, as *nakando* or middle man, was leading the bride. He guided her shuffling steps and assisted her to kneel down on the cushion opposite her future lord. She bowed in his direction two or three times; and Dick responded. Then Kato poured the warm *saké* into the smallest of the white china dishes. This he handed to Dick, instructing him to present it first of all to his bride. O Yuki raised it to her lips and affected to drink. Then she returned it to Dick, who actually tasted a drop, and found it sickly and unpleasant. This ceremony was repeated three times with the first cup, and three times each with the two succeeding cups, forming in all the "*san-san-ku-do*," the "Three-three-nine-times," which is the Japanese marriage ceremony.

Meanwhile, one of the guests was intoning the chant of "*Takasago*," the Japanese wedding-song, without which the espousal would have been incomplete and open to the onslaught of evil influences. Dick then thanked the assembly for having been so kind as to attend the wedding; and he asked for their prayers, "whether you be Christians or not," that God might bless his marriage and make it a happy one.

After that the bride retired; and Dick was left to the congratulations of the guests, and the inquisition of the newspaper reporters. For he now discovered that many of the unknown faces around him were those of the representatives of the Press, not only of local papers but of the great Tokyo and Osaka dailies as well. In the dearth of news of greater consequence, the papers had grasped at this tale of the girl who had eloped from the lakeside licensed quarter with a foreign missionary, of the attack on the Myohoji by the hired ruffians of the *kuruma*, and of the romantic marriage

of East and West. Already, although the hero was blissfully ignorant of the fact, his exploit had become a nine days' wonder throughout Japan.

The *kishadan*, or squadron of reporters, had been in Suruna since the preceding day. They had obtained a dramatic narrative from Kato—just the sort of copy they wanted; but now they had an opportunity to cross-examine the protagonist, and to invite themselves to his wedding banquet. A cataract of questions poured over him, and quickly submerged his floundering intelligence. Notebooks were snapping in his ear, and pencils were flicking like knitting-needles. One aggressive pimply youth, with a toothpick firmly lodged between gold-bound teeth, was asking him for a complete pedigree of his family, and for a précis of his opinions upon every possible subject. Was he noble? Was he graduate of university? What was his opinion of Japanese women? What was his opinion of Buddhism? What was his opinion of the question of the Japanese in California? Did he consider Japan to be a first-class country? Did he prefer mountain or seaside scenery? Did Jesus Christ have a wife?

Then, in the midst of this pandemonium, a vivid flash. The dreamlike marriage ceremony, which had faded into blatant nightmare, had evidently reached its only possible conclusion—the end of the world! No; it was the magnesium light of a flash photograph.

Some one was scattering the swarm of journalists. The youth with the toothpick murmured a farewell, and fled round the flapping coat-tails of Kato. Bowing and hissing recommenced, and a murmur of "*Sayonara!*" The first act of Dick's wedding was at an end.

The next act was to be the banquet, the details of which he now learned for the first time. He accepted without protest the large number of hungry guests, for whose entertainment he would himself eventually have to pay. But he drew the line at *geisha*. This was a disappointment to Kato; for a wedding feast without *geisha* would be like spring-time without

cherry-blossoms; and it would give an impression of stinginess desolating to his vanity.

"But it is quite general custom in noble marriage style," he had urged.

"No, it is impossible," Dick had answered. "I am a Christian priest and a missionary. I cannot hire these dancing-women to perform at my marriage."

Still, except for the *geisha*, he had allowed Kato *carte blanche*; and a prolonged supper was served from 5 p.m. onwards in the same upper room where the wedding ceremony had taken place. There were more than twenty guests; and the Mayor of Suruna and the Chief of Police honoured the occasion with their presence. There were some six or seven journalists and several persons of consequence in the town whom Dick seemed to be meeting for the first time. He had to stand with his bride in a kind of ante-room on the way to the banquet. O Yuki was still dressed in her ornate *kimono*, but, instead of that obliterating hood, she wore round her forehead a crown of white paper, something like one of those "caps" which come out of Christmas crackers. In Japanese, this is called *tsuno-kakushi* or horn-hider; for the Buddhists teach that all women are devils, and may be known by the appropriate feature, which should, therefore, be kept hidden so far as possible.

The guests filed past the newly married pair. O Yuki showed no awkwardness and no embarrassment now. She seemed to have been trained to her little part, or to have picked it up by the instinct of generations of Japanese women. She bowed to each guest in turn, and murmured a reply to their congratulations. Then she retired, while her husband took up his place at the banquet. There were, of course, no ladies invited.

In the absence of the *geisha*, the maids of the hotel had to serve the repast. They were somewhat overcome at this unexpected honour; and they would giggle and hide their faces behind their sleeves, when

the facetious guests addressed them as *geisha*, and inquired what songs they were going to sing, and what dances they were going to perform.

The banquet was not without a certain liveliness, for the Japanese had come with a conscientious resolve to be festive, and at any rate to drink copiously. The jokes ran along well-worn lines; and each man knew exactly when to laugh and when to feign anger. Only at the farther end of the table, among the journalists, a ribald element prevailed. Faces became flushed earlier in the evening, and the giggle of the waitresses more loud.

Proceedings opened with speeches, to which Dick had to reply. They closed with a conjuring entertainment by local talent, to which nobody paid much attention. After this there was no more formality; but drinking and laughing and singing continued with no sign of ever coming to an end. The bride had to make one more appearance, and healths were drunk—noisily. Then Kato whispered to Dick that he and O Yuki need not stay any longer, that the feast was progressing satisfactorily, and that soon many of the guests would be very "drunkish."

Indeed, the stiffness of Japanese ceremonial seemed to have melted completely under the influence of the *saké*. There was much chattering with the waitresses. Cloaks were all laid aside, for the evening was warm; and some of the gentlemen had even turned down the upper part of their *kimono* and bared their breasts, as though preparing for a wash; and the girls were fanning their perspiring nudity. One member of the "*kishadan*" had unearthed a *samisen*. He was handling it not unskilfully; and one of his colleagues was improvising a clownish dance, out of time with the measure.

It was a strange and barbaric scene. Sprawling on the golden *tatami*, the company looked like an assembly of fowls, scratching about for corn on the floor of a magnificent hen-house. Amid the sombre colouring of

the men's clothes, the bright *kimono* of the waitresses and their bulbous *obi* were glowing like tulips against a dark hedge.

As he stood at the entrance with his bride by his side—painted and bedizened, smiling and expressionless—Dick felt far from happy. It was his wedding night. He had linked himself by chains not easily severable to a people alien in their virtues as in their vices, in their customs as in their modes of thought. Perhaps the Bishop had been right after all.

He pushed aside the *fusuma*, and motioned to O Yuki to precede him out of the room. She did not understand his gesture; for in Japan a wife never walks in front of her husband.

"*Danna San*, please——" she whispered.

Dick remembered then, but he could not accept the privilege. He took the pudgy, lifeless little hand in his own; and together they left the feast. He led her in silence as far as the room where her parents were lodging. Her mother was squatting there, gossiping with the landlord's wife and sucking tea and puffing at her long pipe. O Yuki said nothing. She did not put up her face to her husband for a kiss, or open her arms for an embrace. She moved like a sleep-walker into her mother's room.

"Good-night, Yuki San," Dick murmured, and beat an awkward retreat. There was no response from his bride.

He could not face his guests again. He had a feeling of hollow emptiness in his chest such as he had felt when as a little boy he had been summoned to the headmaster's presence. He must be alone. So he found his way to his own room, where, beneath the green mosquito curtains, the flat beds had been laid for Kato and himself. They looked like the lower layer of two large sandwiches.

He changed into his *yukata* of white striped cotton. Then he pushed the shutter open and stepped out on to the verandah. The night was dark, and the summer

breeze was warm, so warm that it seemed as though the fires of the Myohoji were still alive. A few lights were visible in Shimosaki across the water; but the challenging illumination of the *kuruma* was extinguished. The noise of the riot of the wedding-feast still continued—the harsh laughter, the singing and the spasmodic twanging of the *samisen*.

Dick gazed out into the darkness of the night. What had he done? His head was still aching a little from the blows which he had received; and his brain was not quite clear. Had he indeed chosen this destiny for himself? Or had he been the sport of circumstances all along? What had he in common with this girl whom he had chosen to be his life-companion? He had saved her from a bitter fate. He was guiding her along the path to Christ. But if marriage were to be the seal of every conversion, the stock of eligible missionaries would soon be exhausted.

Had he, like Kato, converted himself to a faith in which, perhaps, he did not really believe? He had wished to marry. He had been fighting for months against the promptings of the flesh, and against the confused obsessions of his subconscious self. Both mind and body were now in full revolt against the repressions and the obscurantism of his youth. But he still cloaked his desires beneath the disguise of altruism and religiosity. He believed that he could chain his nature to the service of his vocation; and so he had wished to marry a Japanese girl. This wish had now incarnated itself in O Yuki. He had married a symbol—the symbol of his work in Japan.

Dick did not think quite so clearly as this; but some such misgivings cast their shadows across his mind. He stared round him in the darkness, and there was no landmark in sight. The lights of Shimosaki were far away; and he could just distinguish the lapping of the lake against the pebbles beneath him. He seemed to be afloat on an unknown sea.

He turned back to the bedroom, and crept beneath

the mosquito-curtain. But he could not sleep. He was lonely and nervous. He wished Kato would come.

He was still lying sleepless with closed eyes when he heard a tap outside his room. "Kato San!" he cried out. The wall behind him slid open, and a woman prostrated herself on the floor. It was old Mrs. Hirata, O Yuki's mother.

"Please excuse, *danna san*," she murmured.

Dick started up. Within the sieve-like walls of the green curtain he looked like a man in a cage.

"What is it—mother?" he asked in Japanese.

"Yuki has changed her clothes. Does *danna san* wish her to come now?"

"No, not yet; it is impossible," exclaimed Dick.

The old woman bowed.

"Since I am Yuki's mother, please, if there is a reason of health, explain freely. Since it is the first night, it is strange to refuse."

"There is the Christian marriage ceremony also; so it is necessary to wait."

The old woman seemed satisfied with this explanation and withdrew. But Dick was left with a sense of ridicule added to his perplexity. He had been married that morning—the domestic marriage recognised by the Japanese family. Next day he must register his marriage at the town office. This would legitimise the relationship under Japanese law. Then, as a Christian, he must be married by a priest in an Anglican church. Finally he must notify his marriage at a British Consulate, forwarding a copy of the Japanese registration certificate; for the English church marriage in Japan is not legally valid. So, in all, he had to be married four times.

The *fusuma* was pushed open again, this time without any warning knock; and Kato lurched into the room. He was very "drunkish." Dick was shocked, but not altogether surprised. He emerged from his bed, and led his friend out on to the balcony to try the

effect of the fresh air. There, Kato clung to the verandah railing, and gasped, "Ah, God! Ah, God! Ah, God! Ah, God!" five or six times.

Dick helped him to change out of his absurd frock coat, and urged him to lie down and rest.

"I wait my wife," declared the Japanese with great solemnity, squatting bolt upright on his mattress, and fanning himself.

"Lie down, Kato San, and sleep. You have been drinking too much."

"Too much, too much," echoed Kato, grinning vacuously. "But I wait my wife."

Then he began to croon a melancholy tune, as he rocked himself to and fro:—

*"Body of Christ, given for me,
Shall I eat, shall I not eat?"*

He was singing the Christian hymn which he had popularised all over Suruna.

"Be quiet, Kato San," said Dick, more and more disgusted. "You are disturbing people."

"But I wait my wife," answered the drunken man, conclusively.

Then all of a sudden his rigid bearing collapsed; and as he sunk into ungainly repose behind the green curtain he murmured in Japanese:

"Yuchan! Yuchan! Over three thousand worlds—you and I—together, little sister!"

For four or five minutes this lover's babble continued; but Dick paid little attention. He knew his wife as Yuki, O Yuki, or—more formally—as O Yuki San. The soft Japanese diminutive was unfamiliar to him; and the names were as different as "Mary" and "Molly" might sound to a Japanese ear. So he never for one moment connected the "Yuchan" of Kato's delirium with his own newly married bride.

CHAPTER XX

THE RETURN TO TOKYO

DICK wrote to his sister from Kofu, a country town of some importance where the party had broken their journey to the capital. By that time he was in a more optimistic mood. His headache was wearing off; and O Yuki was clearly happy to have escaped from Suruna and anxious to please her husband.

"DEAREST GRACE"—so the letter ran—"I am married; by Japanese law and ceremonial, that is to say. We are now on our way to Tokyo to find a church and a priest who will make us one in the sight of God. As you know, I have for long been contemplating this step; but it is only within the last few days that God has shown me unquestionably in what direction my duty lay. My little wife's name is O Yuki, which means 'Snow.' She is sweet and gentle and grateful, as only a Japanese can be, for what I have been able to do for her. It will seem strange to you, I suppose, to feel that you have a Japanese sister-in-law. But with God all things are possible; and if you saw her and knew her history you could not help being sorry for her and loving her. She came to me for protection, when her soul and body were in extreme danger; and I only did what any Christian ought to have done in the circumstances.

"I have written to mother. I am afraid she and father will be rather at a loss what to think of this; but you must tell them that I have dedicated my life to this country, and that my marriage is just part of the work which God has given me to

do. An English wife would have been worse than useless to me. She would have come between me and my work; she would have hindered me even from learning the language; and, as the Bishop pointed out to me, the time would come when she would be wanting to get home to England. And please don't reproach me about the old Aylmers. They made greater mistakes—if, indeed, this is a mistake—in their time than anything I am doing now.

"I am writing this letter at the window of a room in a Japanese country inn. In a bright blue sky the wings of Fujiyama are spread above us. 'God's in His Heaven, All's right with the world!'—to quote my Bishop's favourite poet. The mountain peak itself is framed between the red shafts of two mighty cryptomeria trees, which are the pride of the hotel. Great statesmen and generals and even Imperial Personages have written poems about them which are preserved in the hotel album. My little O Yuki is unpacking the wicker *kori* which contains our luggage; and Kato San is talking to her and encouraging her, telling her that I am not a bad sort of chap in spite of my queer fair hair and cruel blue eyes.

"When are you coming to see us? You write all the time about your visit to Japan; but you never come. I would take a holiday and guide you, better than any man from Cook's, round the many beauty spots of this beautiful country. I want to show you everything; O Yuki, too. *Do, please, come soon.*

I think a time of great happiness is beginning for me. So, if you don't quite understand yet, please be patient, Grace, dearest. I tell O Yuki that I am writing to my big sister in England; and she asks, will I please add '*yoroshiku*' (good wishes) from her to you. God bless you always,

"Your loving

"DICK."

"P.S.—Grace, dearest, please be kind to us. Think kindly and write kindly. I have a sort of fear that father and mother won't. Try to persuade them that they can trust me. From the garden of Hernwood Rectory you cannot judge the Far East and its ways. They have petted me, and spoiled me, and amused themselves with me; let us see now if they can love me. I cannot explain all the circumstances which led up to my marriage. Only people who have been in Japan would understand. To you it would seem strange. But in the chain of events, it was not merely the right thing to do, but the only thing. It was a vindication of the Christian point of view—charity, liberty, pity and purity; and as a practical lesson it will have more effect on the Japanese, I think, than many sermons. Details, more or less accurate, have appeared in the Press; and I am glad of it."

It was not until Dick was seated anxiously on the horsehair sofa of Bishop Blackett's study in Tokyo that he began to realise the depth of his disaster.

"You must have been mad," the bishop was repeating with one of his exasperating jingles, "Mad, mad, bad and sad!"

The little gnomish man, with his very beard a-quiver, was looking down at Dick from in front of the fireplace. His hands were folded behind him and beneath the back of his coat. It was a position and an attitude which he inevitably assumed at the commencement of a difficult interview. If things went well, he would subsequently subside on to one end of the sofa. But this morning there had been no subsidence.

Littered over the sofa at the young priest's side were a quantity of newspaper cuttings, both English and Japanese. They contained the story of the Suruna adventures, and a wealth of picturesque detail and an

acidity of comment and criticism, which dumbfounded the hero of the tale.

MISSIONARY'S LOVE ROMANCE.

THE SAINT AND THE SINNER: SENSATIONAL
GOSPEL ROMANCE OF SURUNA MISSION.

PRETTY O YUKI WINS HEART OF SURUNA
GOSPELLER.

LOVE-SLAVE ELOPES WITH BRITISH
MISSIONARY.

RACE-RIOTS FOLLOW MISSIONARY'S ESCAPE.
LOVE OR THE LORD?

Such were some of the headlines. With a growing nausea Dick turned over this revolting collection of rant, sentiment and scurrility, while from the direction of the fire-place his bishop glared down at him, murmuring:

"How sad and bad and mad it was!"

Every idle scribbler in Japan, it would seem, had pounced upon the story of O Yuki San and the missionary in order to illustrate some pet moral of his or her own. One of these controversialists would prove conclusively that missionaries should marry; another would prove equally conclusively that they should not. Another would have no missionaries at all; the money would be much better spent in buying food for people in the slums at home. Another used the story to advocate a complete suppression of the licensed quarters—indeed, of all vice, apparently, all over the world.

The Japanese Press was frankly indecent, and raucously abusive. Third page columns—for the third page is by ancient custom devoted to *chronique scandaleuse*—were full of the spicy adventures of the

English *senkyoshi*, of his feasts in the Shimosaki restaurants, and his orgies in the *kurtawa*. In Suruna he had posed as a saint and a miracle worker. He had crossed the water to Shimosaki, and had there become a famous "*debakame*" (Jap. Dict., "a lecher; a satyr"). How hypocritical, and how like these foreigners with their airs of superiority and their filthy vices!

Besides these sulphurous fumes from the public Press, the Bishop had received private letters from indignant persons, demanding Dick's instant execution, a public disavowal of his actions, or the withdrawal of all missionaries from Japan. But most galling of all was a note of regret from the Secretariat of the Joint Board of Protestant Missions in Japan.

"Disgrace!" barked the Bishop. "Disgrace to us all. A sordid intrigue with a public woman. You—you—you of all men!"

"I am not living in sin," Dick faltered. "This is all most unjust and most unfair. She is my wife in name only. I am married by Japanese law; but I want you or some one to marry us properly."

"What!" the Bishop's voice became almost inaudible with anguish. "Perpetuate the scandal and a handle for these vile insinuations. A missionary of the Church of England with a wife from the stews! I refuse. Such persons are not married even by Japanese. You will not marry her in any church under my control."

"My lord, you offer me a hard alternative," replied Dick, not without dignity. He rose from the sofa.

"You may resign," the Bishop added.

"I don't think that is possible," the young man answered. "I have done no wrong."

He turned to go; but at that moment the study door opened, and the Bishop's mother stood across his exit. She stretched out her hand to him.

"You poor young man!" she exclaimed in her curious masculine tones; then—turning to her son—"Hugh, what have you been saying to him?"

"I have told him the truth, mother. It is bitter, but better so."

"Your truth," the old lady retorted. "You—and these nass-ty newspapers."

Then she turned to Dick again.

"Don't go away yet, Mr. Aylmer. Tell me. You found this girl in a Yoshiwara. What were you doing there?"

"I was never there in my life, Mrs. Blackett. She ran away, and came to me because she was told that I would help her."

"And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone? Eh?"

"They sent hired ruffians out to attack us."

"And you thought—or you were told—that if she were your wife nobody could touch her."

"Roughly, that is what happened, Mrs. Blackett."

"And you, Hugh?"—the deep judicial voice was now turned in the direction of the bishop, and the lace cap on the top of the old lady's head rose and fell with increased emotion. "You, Hugh, who call yourself the Lord's representative—you would rebuke this young man—for sin?"

"The shame—the bad name—the scandal!" protested the Bishop, still jingling; but he had unfolded his hands and had taken up a position away from the fireplace, which was passing into his mother's occupation. He was dominant no longer.

"You're afraid, Hugh!" Mrs. Blackett continued. "Your whole church is afraid. That's what's wrong with it."

"Afraid—of what?"

"Of everything. Afraid of the Pope, afraid of Hell Fire, afraid of the Prime Minister, afraid of knowing your own mind, afraid of speaking your own thoughts. You sneer at the Nonconformist conscience. You have no conscience at all; you're afraid of it. Safety first; that's all you think of. Safety first never spread any faith. This young man has faith. He did not stop to

think of safety first. He is a missionary by the Lord's appointment. It is you who should resign, Hugh, not he!"

Silence fell after this torrent of unexpected invective. Dick and the Bishop seemed both to have shrivelled to the proportion of dwarfs in the presence of this powerful personality. Dick was embarrassed by the very weight of the legions who had come to his rescue. At last he said:

"Mrs. Blackett, could you persuade the Bishop to marry me? You see, we are only half married at present, and the whole position is very awkward."

"Of course, he will marry you. Hugh—you talk about disgrace and scandal; and yet you would refuse the remedy against sin which the Lord has ordained."

With a word of gratitude and of farewell, Dick left this valiant champion to plead his cause. He had been equally surprised by the narrow harshness of his chief, and by Mrs. Blackett's broadness of view. For the old lady was a Calvinist, nurtured in what he had been taught to believe was the most cramping and ruthless of creeds, while her son was a representative of Dick's own Anglican and Catholic Church. Was it possible that faiths and brands of faith did not matter so very much so long as a man's heart was honest and his mind was brave?

Dick returned by tram to Kamiyama. In the little house by the temple of the rice-god confusion reigned. No one met him at his porch. But three or four journalists had snapped him with their kodaks on the threshold of his garden gate. Within the house Kato was entertaining more journalists and was dispensing Dick's hospitality freely. The subject of discussion broke in upon this conference, wild-eyed and scowling.

"What is this, Kato San?" he cried. "These people have been writing pages of lies about me. It is too bad. Send them away."

"Mister, please, I am sorry for you—" one of the young men began in halting English.

"Sorry!—" shouted the exasperated Dick. "You are a lot of liars. Please leave my house at once."

The crestfallen journalists retired. They meant no harm. They had only been looking for copy. They went home to invent what they had not been able to find.

Dick ran upstairs to the bedroom. There he found O Yuki weeping bitterly. He sat down beside her and tried to comfort her, but she refused to be comforted. She mopped her eyes with her *kimono* sleeve, and apologised for her "narrowness of heart." But grief swallowed up the rest of her explanation. Her eyes and nose were puffy with tears, and her hair was all in disarray. Her husband put his arm about her and pointed to the blue sea and the silver-winged sailing-boats, as though he were trying to distract a sorrowing child. Like a child, she listened to his talk; and her tears began to dry.

"That ship with the tall mast," he was saying, "is bringing fowls and *shoyu* (sauce) from Chiba; and that long flat boat, which goes 'pff! pff!' is laden with rice. There is the little black steamer which crosses every day from Atami and Ito and the towns of Izu!"

The tears had ceased. The pleasant smile and the dimple had returned. Dick raised his wife by the hand, and led her unresisting out on to the balcony. There they leaned against the wooden rails, and stared in silence.

Click! An enterprising photographer had climbed a pine-tree in the garden next door, and had snapped an authentic picture of the erring missionary with his arm round the scarlet woman's waist. It was a great scoop.

Dick was aware of a straw boater being flourished at him from mid-air, and a husky voice croaking:

"Mister, please, one more. I am sorry for you——"

Yuki, thoroughly scared, had fled back under cover again. Dick followed her. She was not weeping this

time. But she seemed unnerved, distraught, unbalanced and suspicious. She would not listen to Dick's talk. She was sulky and silent—until Kato from below inquired whether he might come upstairs.

O Katsu San had left. Her mother had become ill, she had explained to Kato, and she must go at once to nurse her. In fact, her luggage seemed to be already packed in anticipation of the mother's illness. Dick was by now sufficiently intimate with Japanese etiquette to understand that this was merely a diplomatic way of giving notice. Either the new wife or the publicity had been too much for O Katsu.

The next shock was an intimation from the landlord that at the end of the next month he would require the house at Kamiyama for his own purposes. Dick would have to find another home.

The night brought troubles of its own. O Yuki, who had been in a state of coma all evening, declared that it would be impossible for her to sleep alone in the upper bedroom. She was afraid, she said. Perhaps the house was haunted; perhaps *dorobo* (robbers) would come. She was lonely, oh! so lonely. This Tokyo was such a big, noisy, cruel city. She longed for the familiar intimacy of village life, where neighbours knew their neighbours as their great-grandfathers had known their neighbours' great-grandfathers through generation after generation. Even the bondage of the *kuruma*, with its consoling chatter, was preferable to this dizzy freedom. She was used to being treated as a slave—a slave in her parents' house, a slave in the Shimosaki licensed quarter. Now, all of a sudden, her body was at her own disposal. She could go where she wished; she could do what she wished. And, behold, she did not know what she wished to do, or where she wished to go.

She wished to be alone with Kato, her lover. But this, she knew, she must not say. Kato had warned her that the old intimacy must cease, or she might lose him

altogether. He honestly intended to keep his resolution; but the girl's heart hungered for him. Her voice and her manner changed at his approach.

Dick refused to share her bedroom until the full marriage sanction had been granted. Kato, of course, could not sleep with her alone. So, perforce, she had to join the two men under their mosquito net in the downstairs room. To Japanese conventionality this arrangement would not have appeared even to be peculiar; for the two sexes often sleep thus promiscuously without any suggestion of wrongdoing. But it perplexed Dick; and he feared lest some enterprising journalist might be on his track even through the dark hours, and that the secrets of his domesticity might appear in the morning editions.

O Yuki slept between Dick and Kato. She slept soundly; for she felt secure. But during the night a little hand crept mouse-like across the light coverlet, and nestled in the sleeve of Kato's *yukata*.

Next day the services of a maid were obtained; and Dick was delivered from the compromising proximity. O Yuki agreed—reluctantly—to sleep with the servant in the upper room.

"*Danna san* is a little *henkutsu* (eccentric)", the young wife confided to Kato. "He is so polite to me, as though he were sneering. He uses such a respectful way of speaking—as though I were an eminent person."

"It is the foreign custom to be kind to wives," Kato answered. "You are fortunate, Yuchan, to have a foreign husband. It is a *haikara* thing, and honourable for your family."

"Thanks to your shadow," the girl replied. "To be sad is undutiful; but I cannot be happy. He is strange. He gives me a feeling like *o baké* (ghosts)."

O Yuki was silent for a moment, and then she added in a whisper:

"Tell me, please, Kato San; are foreign men just like Japanese men? Some person in our village said

that foreign men are made differently. They do not embrace their wives. They beget children by breathing on them, and their breath is cold as ice."

"That is all foolish superstition," Kato assured her.

O Yuki was silent for a minute or two, and then she said again:

"I am afraid. He has a strange look."

If Dick wore a strange look in those days it was hardly to be wondered at. He had gone up to the tennis-courts that afternoon, and, as soon as he swung the gate open, he was aware that faces were staring at him, and that tongues were whispering. Hitherto he had been one of the most inconspicuous members of the Club; but now it appeared that he was a subject of considerable interest even to Ambassadors. On the other hand, the few who had known him in the old days now seemed to know him no longer. It was curious.

He found Jackson, however; and the kind-hearted American expressed his loyalty in the vigour of his handshake.

"Glad to see you back again, old top; you're looking fine," was all he said, until after three sets of tennis had been lost and won. Then, as they sat on a bench and watched the other players, he remarked:

"I don't want to butt in round other men's doings, Aylmer. But if I can help any——?"

"No, thanks," Dick answered fiercely; "I don't want any one's help."

"Don't get sore, old man. I just thought it my dooty to hand you out some advice."

Dick nodded; he was trying very hard to keep his temper.

"Well, what is it, Jackson?"

"Cut her out!"

Dick stared. His friend went on:

"You're doing what a missionary can't do. Cut her out!"

"Why? What am I doing?"

"I heard you were keeping a Japanese tottie down in that shack of yours——"

"It's a lie,—a wicked lie!" cried Dick, starting up from his seat and brandishing his racquet against a whole host of calumniators. "She's my wife!"

"Your wife?"

But Dick had stalked away in high indignation; and Jackson commented in soliloquy:

"Poor guy! His wife! Worse'n I thought! A yellow woman! Gee—whizz! Poor slob!"

Every one in the foreign community of Tokyo had, of course, heard or read some wild, distorted version, of Dick's story. The anonymous letter writer, too, had been busy. She had sent cuttings from the newspapers to the Bishop, to the Ambassador, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and even to Canon Aylmer in peaceful Hernwood Rectory.

For the moment Mrs. Blackett saved the situation. She insisted that Dick and O Yuki must be married, since the bridegroom so clearly desired it, as soon as possible. So the Bishop consented that the church ceremony should take place—not in Tokyo, nor in Yokohama, but in the chapel of the leper settlement at Gotemba, high up among the mountains, where the railway ascends towards Fujiyama.

Dick's final wedding-day opened with a morning of warm sunshine, and advanced towards a noon of fiery heat. Against a background of unvarying blue, the dome of the sacred mountain dominated the whole landscape, and dwarfed the forests and moors and fields which draped its lower slopes. The little town of Gotemba was agog with excitement; for the pilgrim season was now at its height. Its hotels and its hotel waitresses were in great demand; and each train unloaded a company of white-clad, broad-batted mountain climbers.

But the three who alighted out of an early train from the capital that morning left the station in the direction opposite to that of the dusty town and the

clamorous hotel touts and the silent majesty of Fuji. Their strong-limbed rickshawmen conveyed them for two miles or more along the road which goes over the Maiden's Pass towards Hakoné and Miyanoshita. Half-way up the incline they halted at a trimly built settlement which lay aside from the road in an enclave of larch-trees and pines.

At the entrance to the hospital they were clothed in the white cloaks and mitres, in the high boots and long gauntlets, which visitors to leper colonies must wear for fear of the dire infection. They were greeted by the stout, bearded English priest who had devoted some twenty years of his life to care for these alien incurables, doomed to a living death. They were conducted by him to his private chapel—not to the church of the leper community where danger might have lurked, but to a room in the priest's house with an altar and a few chairs in it, which was used as an oratory for visitors.

An *ex tempore* font had been prepared, by means of a table and one of those gleaming brazen basins which the Japanese use for their ablutions. Here Hirata Yuki was baptised into the faith of Christ, and was given the name of "Mary." "Peter" Kato acted as godfather. Dick flattered himself that he had succeeded in explaining the meaning of the ceremony to his wife; for her attentive attitude during the times of instruction and the repeated nodding of her head had conveyed the impression that she was realising the significance of the occasion. But, in private, she had asked Kato whether it would hurt, and also whether this was the way that foreigners got their babies; for she had heard so much about being "born again." She was assured that the operation was quite painless, and would redound to the good fortune of her family.

After the baptism, Richard Aylmer and Mary Hirata were joined in Holy Matrimony, Kato giving the bride away. This ceremony also had no meaning for O

Yuki, but she liked her ring. Only, she wished it had had a diamond in it, like the ring which a certain O Kiku of the Shimosaki *kuruwa* had worn, to the envy of the other girls.

Unfortunately, the conviction that her husband was mad was slowly gaining possession of her small mind. Why had he acted in every way so differently from the customs and habits of her own country? Why had he wanted to marry her in the first instance? Why, after the marriage-feast in Suruna, had he not wished to sleep with her? Why had he taken her to Tokyo as a wife who was no wife? Why had everything in Tokyo been *yakamashii* (trouble-creating)? Why was he so polite to her, and yet so cold? Why, above all, had he chosen this ill-omened place, full of devils and infection, for the fulfilment of these dull and senseless ceremonies? What blessing could accrue to her from a brass *tarai*, such as they had used for their morning ablutions in her country home at Ako? What did "I will" signify and the other curious foreign words, which she had repeated parrot-like at the fat, bearded man's dictation? All foreigners were, of course, rather mad; but this foreign husband of hers was apparently madder than most.

Poor Dick! He was so full of courage and high resolves. The mountain air had braced his nerves, and the example of the leper colony had inspired him with heroism. He would have liked to have joined in some such task of self-immolation. But now he had undertaken another work, which perhaps required no less patience and devotion. He would shake off the dust of Tokyo. He would get away from those malicious tongues, from those narrow minds and hardened hearts. He would betake himself to his wife's country, to the mountain village which she loved. There he could devote himself to contemplation and worship. Perhaps his example would not be without influence on the simple-natured peasants. Perhaps this interlude might prove to be a time of preparation for that

great and important vocation which he still believed to be in store for him.

So the walls of the little chapel widened around him into a vast landscape, marked with all the mountains and all the valleys of Japan, with the smoky cities of Japanese trade and commerce, and with the industrious peace of the countryside; and the girl who stood behind him in her white cloak seemed to be bathed in a kind of heavenly radiance, like the figure of the great Sun-Goddess who is the ancestress of all the Japanese.

After the marriage, bride and bridegroom were escorted to an upstairs guest-room, while a modest meal was being laid downstairs. As soon as they were left alone, O Yuki felt her husband's arm about her waist, and his lips pressed to hers.

"My darling," he murmured in English, "I love you!"

O Yuki recognised this last phrase. It is familiar even in the Shimosaki *kurawa*; but the interpretation attached to it there is crude and literal. Japanese women, however, are trained to obedience to men's demands; and O Yuki at once proceeded to undress, shedding her white cloak and loosening her heavy *obi*. When her *kimono* hung open and the soft orbs of her breasts were half visible, she turned to Dick with a timid smile. He realised her intention; but her readiness was a shock to his propriety.

"*I-i-yé!* No!" he exclaimed in Japanese. "Not here! It is impossible!"

So poor Yuki commenced to dress again, more than ever convinced that her husband was mad.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE FEAST OF THE DEAD

THE Hirata family had been famous *shoya* (prosperous farmers) of Ako for many generations. In the old days of the *daimyo* they had held the position of superior serfs, bound to their forty or fifty acres of land and paying a tax in rice into their lord's treasury. But the great revolution of 1868 made them in their turn into landed proprietors. They became small yeomen farmers holding their land direct from the government.

Round the rural dwellings of the richer Japanese certain auspicious trees are planted to avert evil influences. That one which is placed at the north-east angle is supposed to protect the family from "the carnal temptations and from political ambition." The Hiratas must have neglected this important shrub; for the head of the family proceeded to let off his land to tenant farmers, and to live on his rents. Then he plunged into politics. He was eventually elected to the Provincial Assembly; and, as a distinguished visitor to the capital of the prefecture, he felt that it was obligatory upon him to patronise the *geisha* and *joro* for which the town was famous. What with legislation and the ladies, his private affairs fell into confusion. He raised money upon mortgage; and when he died a large portion of the family holding had to be sold.

Now, a farm house without land is a belly without members. The new laird, who was O Yuki's father, had always been a muddle-headed and lazy fellow. He had no head for business and no strength to labour. He preferred to spend his days playing *go*, a kind of

chequers, with the village priest. In order to follow this avocation he mortgaged his remaining property. For some time he paid interest on the mortgage out of the capital thus realised. But this financial manœuvre could not continue for ever. The day arrived when he could pay no longer, and the mortgagees foreclosed. Even the family cemetery passed into alien hands. The house of Hirata was completely ruined.

At the advice of the village elders, O Yuki, the eldest daughter, was sold to a *kurawa* sufficiently far away to avoid distressing encounters and coincidences. With the funds thus obtained a small shop was stocked—with paper and writing material, with string and rope and *waraji* (rope-sandals), and candles, and lanterns, and paper umbrellas, and the other simple requirements of Japanese country life. Mr. Hirata retired from the headship of the family. He became *inkyo*—a dweller in the shadow; and his elder son, Masuo, acted as regent in his stead. The younger son, Atsushi, who had disapproved of the sale of his sister for some fantastic reason of his own, had hired himself out as a farm labourer. The youngest child a daughter, O Haru, was still attending the village school. Mrs. Hirata, senior and Masuo's wife kept the shop. Masuo himself, a lean, hawk-faced, surly man, attended to the accounts and the correspondence and the family diary, to everything, in fact, which required the superior intelligence of an educated man. Kuma, a faithful menial, continued, as before, to do a little work for no pay; and Mr. Hirata was free to play *go* with *o tera san* (Mr. Temple, *i.e.*, the priest). So a daughter, who is a marketable commodity, is of some use to a family after all; and O Yuki's sacrifice saved the Hiratas for a time.

They must inevitably have found themselves on the rocks again. They were so shiftless and lazy. But then, all of a sudden, came another turn in fortune's wheel. O Yuki married Dick—a foreigner, true, but, still, an educated man and a rich one, and a credit

even to the family of the hereditary headman of Ako. What could the new son-in-law possibly desire more than the reconstruction of his wife's old home and the comfort of his wife's relatives? The original farmhouse was recovered at a very moderate price, for it was in indifferent repair. An acre or so of rice land was purchased in the narrow Ako valley, and some more land on the hillside for mulberries, barley, vegetables and millet. Some cards of silk worm "seed" were bought; the looms were set up again in the lofty hall; and the brass kettle was swung in chains from a cross-beam over the charcoal fire smouldering beneath the level of the floor. A pent-house linked this hall, which was the everyday living-room, to the stable and the farm sheds; and beneath the pent-house stood the square well with its wooden bucket swinging on a kind of yard arm which could be lowered and raised in and out of the shaft. Little white chickens with feathers so thin that they looked more like hair were already shuffling on invisible feet round the cavity beneath the house where they appeared to have their abode. A chestnut-coloured mongrel, who carried the family surname and was known in the village as Hirata no Aka (Hirata Red), scavenged round the yard, and barked and snarled at intruders.

Beyond the farm sheds stood the white mud walls of the *Kura*, a fireproof building in which the stores and treasures of the family were preserved. The dwelling-rooms were at the back of the house and looked out over a neglected garden, where hydrangea shrubs and convolvulus prevailed. At the end of the garden stood a ramshackle Shinto shrine, which looked more like a kennel for Aka than an abode of the gods.

Everything in and about the place spoke of decay. The *tatami* were torn and stained; the *shoji* were patched and brown; the warped panels wobbled and stuck in their grooves. The thatch of the high-pitched roof was mangy and overgrown with vegetation. It even sported a small myrtle tree perched on one side

like a cockade in a hat. All these signs of desolation bore eloquent testimony to the misfortunes of the Hirata family; but they were all as nothing compared with the joy of the inhabitants and the satisfaction of the whole village of Ako at finding this small domain once more in the hands of its historic owners.

A feast was at once given—to be paid for by Dick—to celebrate this auspicious event; and the *soncho*, the new village headman, who had been elected in Mr. Hirata's stead when his fortunes had fallen too low to support the position—the schoolmaster, the priest, the doctor, the policeman and a few neighbouring farmers were invited. It was much like Suruna on a small scale, Dick thought. He was allotted an inconspicuous place in the family circle; and he was given to understand that it was a great privilege for him, a *tanin* or outside person, to be allowed to contribute to the prosperity of the Hirata family and to the renown of the village of Ako.

Atsushi, the younger son, had been recalled to take over the management of the farm. The grim Masuo was busier than ever with his accounts; and the father of the family continued to play *go* in good fortune as in bad. The women attended to the kitchen and the housework, with occasional raids upon the paddy-fields at times of special pressure. There were four families in all living in the Hirata farmstead—the father and mother, Masuo with his wife and two children, Atsushi with his wife and one child, and, finally, Dick, with O Yuki. The children rolled and scrambled at their pleasure, tearing at the ragged *talami* and poking mischievous fingers through the wrecks of the paper walls. The faithful Kuma, with his foolish dog-like grin, maintained his post as factotum to the family, and special friend and butt of the little ones.

The whole family were as happy as exiles restored after captivity,—restored to their ancestral home, to the consideration of their neighbours and to their proper place in the community. The Midsummer festival,

therefore, the festival of O Bon, which falls towards the middle of August, was a time of especial rejoicing. On that day the dead were believed to return from the netherworld to rejoice with the living. The endless generations of past Hiratas, naturally, had special reason for revisiting the familiar scenes; so, early that morning, the whole family had adjourned to the Hirata cemetery, now once more in their possession, and had placed flowers and incense in front of the little grey tombs. The women and children added smooth white pebbles collected from the river-bed.

Polite calls were then paid to the burial places of other village families. Dick shared in these ceremonies, for it appeared that he was expected to do so; nor did he have any difficulty in reconciling the Japanese ancestor cult with the catholic doctrines of immortality and prayers for the dead. Dressed in *kimono*, *hakama* and *haori*, with the eccentricity of his golden hair hidden under a kind of rough Panama hat, there was nothing to distinguish him from his wife's family except his clear blue eyes and his fair complexion. A few hunters and woodcutters and sturdy mountain-girls, to whom Ako village even was a metropolis, stared with misgiving at the stranger; for O Bon is a season when curious things happen and the dead are not always invisible. A few children called out after him, "*Ijin! Ijin!* (foreigner!); and, after this deed of daring, scampered panic-stricken away.

After the ceremonies of the morning were completed, Dick changed into less formal garb; and, dressed only in a striped summer *kimono*, he went out for a walk by himself, shuffling along on his wooden clogs in true native fashion. He passed down the dusty street of Ako, past the shadowed courtyard and the high thatched roof of the Chutokuji temple, which always reminded him of the ill-starred Myohoji. From the temple onwards there continued on either side an alignment of small shops and houses. The shops were

protected from the dust by hanging blue curtains, on which the name of the establishment and the character of its wares were printed in white lettering. The houses were scarcely distinguishable from farm sheds; and the hoes and rakes and sickles and buckets and ropes piled up round the entrances supported this impression. The smaller dwellings opened straight on to the street; but the more consequential houses possessed a kind of lattice gateway through which one passed to the actual porch of the building, round the corner and hidden from sight. All the houses were of brown wood and were heavily thatched; there were only about twenty or thirty of them in the whole village.

To-day, being the first day of O Bon, the population was *en fête*. The rattle of the looms was silent within doors; and the square O Bon lanterns, with their kite-like streamers of straw, were hanging in all the rooms. Family groups, carrying offerings for the dead—flowers and incense sticks—were passing up and down. All of them already knew the "*Ijin San*"; and many of them were already known to him. So, on his way down the street, he had to pause from time to time in order to exchange those bows and breath-suckings which etiquette demands.

At last he reached the Shinto shrine of the *Ujigami* (clan god), which marked the end of the village. It stood like a kind of double pigeon-cote, beyond its red *torii*. In front was a children's playground, and behind rose a dark wooded knoll. Here the road made a *détour* to avoid the knoll, which was a place of spirits. Then it curved back again to its normal course between the rice-fields and the foot of the hills. Just opposite the *ujigami sama*, a footpath led away to the left among the verdant billowy rice, which was now at its highest growth. Dragon-flies were planing hither and thither over the bending ears; and from time to time a fish leapt in the hidden water at the roots of the plants.

Dick followed this path in the direction of the Shirakawa River and the steep volcanic hills beyond. The

mountains were spread before him against a background of brilliant blue in those abrupt and fantastic shapes, which appear so unreal in Japanese screens and pictures but which, all the same, are the characteristic landscape of this contorted country. Some of the hills were bald and soft in outline; others were crowned with a tuft of lonely beckoning pine-trees; others wore a scarf of woodland slung across their shoulders like a priest's *kasa*; others, again, were completely shrouded in forest.

Nowhere, except along the trickle of the brown houses of Ako behind him, was there any sign of humanity. The pathway dropped from the level of the rice-fields to a ravine of grey boulders, where a temporary bridge of planks spanned the river channel. The water had carved its way among the massive blocks with an almost mechanical exactitude, as though they had been measured and hewn and planed by human science into a series of deep galleries at the bottom of which the brown mountain water was flowing. In the distance, the muffled roar of the waterfalls sounded like a wind.

On the opposite side of the ravine, the forest rose heavenward up an almost precipitous cliff. The path, however, appeared in sight again; and a little wooden peg served as a direction post on the river bank. Beyond this post stood a weather-worn stone figure of Jizo, the children's god. A white bib with a faded red border was tied round the neck of the image; and at his feet a small mound of pebbles was piled, the offerings of the little ones. Dick furtively added a white stone to the collection; for, in his heart he cherished a sentimental regard for the gentler gods of Japan. This Jizo, whose name so curiously resembles that of Him who said "Suffer little children to come unto Me," could not but be a kindly influence. It is his function to succour the souls of dead children, astray in the desolate gully which leads down to Hell, and to save them from the bands of the torturers.

The pathway wound upwards at a stiff gradient. After a mile or so it suddenly emerged from the crepuscular shadow of the woods into bright sunshine. Here, in a clearing which overhung the river valley some hundreds of feet below, stood a barn-like temple building, untenanted and desolate. The altars and images had been removed; and the *tatami* stripped from the planks of the floor. But a few crude *ex-votos* still hung on a board outside the sanctuary, scrawled with roughly daubed figures of men and women, of horses and oxen.

This was the temple of Fujimi Kwannon, one of the chief beauty spots of the Ako district. Dick sat down on the steps of the shrine and looked out at the entrancing and delectable prospect of the valley in which he dwelt.

The rice-fields seemed to ripple like a "loch" of vivid green, narrowing beneath him where the hills closed in upon them but opening out wider and wider southwards beyond Ako. This calm green surface was broken here and there by clumps of trees and square enclosures, where a farm-house or a shrine had been set up on an island in this sea of cultivation. The river valley, like a silvery grey fringe, kept strictly to its place between the rice-fields and the nearer range of hills. The level monotony of the rice terminated in the indented slope of the range opposite, which looked just like a coast-line beyond the green waters—with its capes and bays and cliffs and headlands. In such a bay, between the dark mysterious knoll of the *ujigami sama* and the rocky cliff near the Hirata farm, the whole village of Ako was ensconced. At this distance nothing could be seen of it except the brown thatched roofs, so that it looked like a group of rodents browsing, or like a covey of partridges cowering at the foot of the hills. The most conspicuous of these brown rotundities—the father of the family, evidently—was the roof of the Chutokuji temple.

Behind Ako village, the mountains rose once again

with their abrupt celerity, as though they had been kicked up sky-high by some restless earth spirit in a nightmare paroxysm. Immediately above the house roofs the hill-sides were cultivated. But, further on, the woods and the bamboo grasses retained their sway. Still further, the green ridges faded into blue shapes of wave crest and cloud, draped with grey mist; and, far beyond all, hanging like a lamp from heaven, the grey ghost of Fujiyama brooded over the Country of the Gods.

Beyond Fuji, thought Dick, is Tokyo—and the Bishop and the rest of them; and beyond Tokyo is the sea, and the ships which go backward and forward between Japan and England. Will Grace come one day? he wondered. And what will she think of me, and of O Yuki and of the Hirata family?

Like a vision from a former existence, like a mirage seen at sea, the white mosque-like walls of Hernwood Rectory seemed to float across the blue sky; and the lines of another valley, very far away, as seen under the moonlight on that last evening, two immeasurably long years ago. Once again Dick seemed to be watching the poplar-trees and the grey tiles of the village roofs and the square church tower with its bells chiming midnight.

" Oh, worship the King, all glorious above ! "

Dick drew from the sleeve of his *kimono* two letters which he had been carrying about with him for day after day, as though they were the last link between him and the past—a link which, in spite of all, he was loath to destroy. One was from Grace. She wished him all happiness, of course, and O Yuki, too; but she had grave misgivings that a time might come when the position would become unbearable for her brother. If this should happen, she begged of him not to be the prisoner of his scruples or to sacrifice himself to a fantastic sense of duty. Better let everything go by the board—O

Yuki, Japan, priesthood, if necessary—and start afresh somewhere else.

"In a month or two from now," she wrote, "I am coming out to Japan myself to see what is really happening to you. I have got George to agree to this at last. Then, perhaps I shall understand. One of your dearest friends (name unknown) has been sending envelopes containing newspaper cuttings to the people at Hernwood. They paint you and your doings in a most lurid light, and are obviously nonsense; but father and mother have taken them rather seriously, for they have a rustic respect for the veracity of anything in print. They will forget in time, no doubt; but they seem disinclined to forgive. They seem to take your marriage as a personal affront to themselves. Never mind, poor old Dick; I have been through it, too, and I have survived. '*La promptitude à croire le mal sans l'avoir assez examiné est un effet de l'orgueil et de la paresse. On veut trouver des coupables, mais on ne veut pas se donner la peine d'examiner les crimes.*' This is from de la Rochefoucauld. He is wonderful at explaining everything in the briefest of phrases.

"Quite apart from rescuing you, I am longing to see Japan. Your pictures of your adopted country have become steadily less and less attractive. But, still, there is always something about Japan, its remoteness, its upsidedownness, its art, its flowers, its *kimonos*, its umbrellas, its lanterns, its dolls—which will always be infinitely attractive to us—'*les pauvres amoureuses des pays chimériques.*' I am full of quotations to-day, which shows that I am in an excited and romantic mood—all of a flutter at the prospect of my journey, and of seeing my dear old Dick again. George's comments I shall not repeat. They are unwritable."

Grace had talked so often about coming to Japan; but she never came. Did her brother want to see her? Yes—he did; and the desire came upon him so suddenly and so violently that he started to his feet, and crunched up the letter in his hand.

He was sick of Japan—sick of its artificial prettiness, of its cramping limitations, of the formality, the discomfort, the elusive speech and the undecipherable script, of the distance from everything and anything with which he had been familiar. He had failed; he had failed hopelessly. He could do nothing for these people. He was not of the stuff from which evangelists are made; he was of too light a weight. Nor were the Japanese of the stuff of converts. Their superficial restlessness, ebullience and intelligence were misleading. They were at heart proud, conservative and self-conceited; they had no ears for his message.

And O Yuki? Yes—he had given his life to the Japanese. He had pawned it to a woman of their race. "Greater love hath no man than this!" His wife was neither good nor bad, neither true nor false. She gave to her husband what it was her duty to give, what generations of Japanese women had given to their husbands—a passive obedience, a forced cheerfulness, and an assiduous care as regards food and clothing. But she was neither a friend nor a companion. Behind the barrier of her liquescent brown eyes lurked a spirit which Dick dimly divined to be—fear; fear of him, who would have loved to love her; fear of the stranger, the foreigner. Any sudden action on his part, anything unusual or contrary to the habits which his Japanese family seemed to have assigned to him—and she would start and shrink away.

"*Sa! Bikkuri shimas', né, danna san!* (Oh, I was frightened, master!"), was a favourite and symptomatic exclamation of hers.

Was he, Dick Aylmer, the Englishman, to be the lifelong prisoner of those brown eyes, of this narrow valley, of these overhanging hill-tops, and of this crushed and stunted life? And all for no purpose.

He sat down once more, and re-read his second letter. It was from his father.

"MY DEAR DICK,—For some time past your dear mother and I have been aware that something has been wrong. Your letters were not so frequent, and sometimes they contained words and phrases which seemed so unlike you and which gave us great pain. Then came the astounding news of your marriage—without any details. You tried to hide the truth from us. But we have now received information from Japan, which shows us that our worst fears were justified. You have disgraced us, Dick. You have disgraced the Aylmers. You have disgraced your sacred calling. And you have wounded your dear mother in her womanhood, and as a mother, in marrying a person whom, quite apart from her nationality, we could never, owing to her terrible past, ever regard as a daughter.

"We are still your parents. We still pray for you and love you. But the door is closing. You have chosen your life. It is very different from the life which we would have chosen for you; and you must not look to us for help. It is a very bitter sorrow for us to be called upon to endure in our old age. Your dear mother does not complain, but I can see that her heart is broken, once more, just as it was beginning to heal. And for this I can hardly forgive you. Good-bye.

"Your sorrowing father,

"ERASTUS AYLMEK."

What a rotten letter! Dick shrugged his shoulders, and looked out over the Ako valley. It seemed more tolerable now. "If ever you are in trouble," Grace had once said to him, "they will let you down." Narrow-mindedness, ignorance, prejudice and formality were not then indigenous to Japan. His father did not even ask to hear his son's side of the story. On the strength of a few malignant newspaper paragraphs, which some 'coward had sent to him anonymously, he

was prepared to condemn Dick—unheard. Did he not even wish to hear if there were any justification? At a distance of ten thousand miles he, a lazy, lichenous country parson, was giving judgment on an event in a country of which he had not the slightest knowledge, and was blandly ignoring not only the claims of Christian charity but even the elementary rules of ordinary justice. He was rejecting his only son, not really on high moral grounds—for the bombast of that letter, Dick could now understand, was mere hypocrisy and pretentiousness—but because that son's conduct had run counter to his own preconceived ideas. Good people are more selfish than bad people—Grace had often repeated to him that apophthegm—for they will insist on intervening unreasonably in the lives of others. Another time she had said about her own parents, "Their religion is a blight upon them."

Dick was aroused from his day-dreaming by the approach of a countryman, dressed in the yellow mushroom hat, the short blue tunic, and the tight blue trousers of the Japanese rustic. He carried a bundle in one hand, and a stick in the other.

With a word of apology he, too, sat down on the temple steps; and drew from a wallet a slender Japanese pipe, and a tuft of the thin mossy tobacco which the natives favour.

"Honourably tired?" he inquired, after the first whiff, giving the customary voyager's greeting.

"No—thanks to your shadow!" Dick returned the correct reply.

"You have come from Ako?" the countryman inquired. Dick assented, and then in his turn inquired where his new acquaintance lived. The Japanese waved an arm to indicate that it was somewhere beyond the mountains; but he was on his way to his brother's house in the village next to Ako. It was the season of O Bon; so to-morrow he must visit his family graves, for his ancestors had dwelt in this valley.

Then he rose from the temple steps, and from the

ledge of the cliff looked down upon his old home. As he turned he pointed upwards along the course of the river to where from a kind of pocket among the hills a cloud of steam was continually rising as from a cauldron. Tall pine-trees stood around as though gazing down into the depths. The roar of the waters could be heard like the distant rumble of iron wheels, but the cascade itself was invisible.

"Shirakiri waterfall?" the farmer pointed. "You have seen?"

"I have seen," answered Dick. "But I was just on my way thither again, and then back to Ako along the lower path."

"I should like to go with you," the Japanese answered. Dick rose; and in single file they passed down the narrow track, which behind the temple of Kwannon branched off from the road across the mountains.

"The autumn is the best season," Dick's new friend explained, "because of the maples. All these hill-sides become bright red—like blood."

"What a beautiful place!" Dick exclaimed. He knew the spot well; for already this visit to the Fall of the White Mist had become his favourite walk. Thither he brought his troubles, his anxieties and his disappointments; and every time he received a measure of consolation from the natural beauties which here seemed to acquire a definite and supernatural personality. For the first time in his life, the priest was beginning to see something beyond what he believed he ought to see, something far greater than his sham mysticism had ever sought for, something more still, more certain, more central and infinitely more powerful than the God of the Altar and the Cross.

"It is a terrible place!" said the Japanese. An eerie feeling came over Dick, that they two were not travelling along that path merely at haphazard, but that a purpose guided his companion's steps. For a moment he feared an attack; his nerves had been

none too strong since that *melle* in the Suruna temple. But no; the farmer's face, though ugly and wrinkled like furrowed sand, was kindly withal and sad.

They were passing through a grove of silver birch trees in a hollow beneath the overhanging shoulder of the mountain. Straight opposite and within a stone's throw rose the sheer cliffs of the other side; and between, like an immense transparent column of iridescent glass, the waters of Shirakiri plunged from the height to the abyss.

Where Dick and the Japanese were standing was about half-way down the fall. A rough parapet had been raised for the convenience and the safety of visitors; and, standing there, one could see the whole length of the cascade. It was a magnificent effect of natural stagecraft.

High above, the stream came ambling from its home among the hills. Under a curious archway of twisted pine-trunks, it took its first step into space, hesitated and was caught again on a ledge of rock, thence to make its final spring. Then, there was no holding back and no evasion! The whole volume of water hurled itself in a single mass at a single leap of nearly three hundred feet. Far down below, half hidden in the steam and spray of the fall, enfolded in flitting rainbows where the sunbeams caught the spray, like a chalice guarded by angels' wings, a rounded basin of grey rock received the falling water, which churned and raced round this receptacle in a whirl of thwarted fury.

"Is any one there?" asked the stranger, as he gazed into this place of death, where the incessant lashing and grinding of the waters seemed to be tearing at the very vitals of the mountain. Of course, no one could slip into that devil's mortar and not be pounded to death within a very few minutes; but Dick knew to what his companion referred.

"The suicides!" he answered. "No; there is no one there."

Of late, the Shirakiri waterfall had been growing in popularity as a resort for suicide. At one time the crater of the Asama volcano had been the favourite last pilgrimage for the Japanese Empedocles. At another time it had been the Kegon waterfall near Nikko. Suicide holds a recognised position in Japan; and the rescued suicide is not tried for murder as with us. It is a noble, though desperate act—consecrated by innumerable examples among the greatest heroes of the country. A *samurai*, of course, ought to perish by his own sword; but the ceremony of *harakiri* is a very painful one; and even *samurai* nowadays reject the cold steel. A nature-loving people prefer to commit their despair to the great visible powers of nature, and to perish like the butterflies and the blossoms which they love so well. These "rashly importunate" ones are for the most part students and young men, who have been suffering from the overstrain of growth and brain-work. In the red Shinto shrine at the foot of the fall is kept a pole with a fork at one end to rescue the bodies from the basin in which the relentless weight of water is pounding them into shapelessness. At the top of the fall is a pathetic little path among the bamboo grasses. Starting from under the shadow of the trees, it ends at the edge of the abyss. It is the suicides' track—the way that is followed in one direction only.

"My son—too!" said the farmer, looking up into Dick's face with that curious grin which, among the Japanese, so often accompanies a tale of personal and poignant tragedy.

"Your son—killed—here?" Dick echoed. The far-stretching prospect of natural beauty had suddenly shrunk to this one quivering point of anguish. He knew now why there had been such strange deliberation in the man's steps as he had led the way down to the gorge.

"Last year—in the autumn," the Japanese continued, still grinning. "When I came he was lying by

the temple there, down below. *Kawaiso da, nd?* (It is pitiful, eh?)

"*Kawaiso da*. He killed himself?"

The father nodded.

"It was because of a woman. He was in love."

Dick listened, full of sympathy. The other added: "He was a good boy. He wished to be progressive. He could have spoken English with you. He was a student of the Higher Commercial School of Tokyo. He was in love with a woman of the Yoshiwara."

"A bad woman?" Dick commented sagely; but his heart pricked him with premonitions, and the spray of the waterfall seemed to be beckoning to him, strangely

"No. A woman of good heart, he used to say; but—there was no help!"

"He wished to marry her?"

"No. We do not marry such persons. There was no talk of marriage—only despair. He saw despair; and he wished to die. *Horeté—shimatta*. He was in love—and finish. He threw himself away."

"*Kawaiso, kawaiso*," was all that Dick could find to say.

"He was the only son," the man concluded. "He was a boy of great promise. Thus to throw his body away was perhaps an undutiful act."

After thus completing his confession, the countryman proposed that they should start for Ako. So they went on together, in silence, down the precipitous pathway which was called the lower road, across the "Monkey's Bridge," a perilous plank with a rope to guide the hand, stretched at a considerable height above the roaring, foaming torrent, and thence on through the rice-fields, where the fireflies were beginning their evening dance of the scattered gold. Over the mountains the sun was setting, behind a scarf of orange cloud—the colour of old sherry. In the family graveyards, which littered the hill-side, the round cream-coloured lanterns, hoisted on poles and sheltered

each by a tiny pent-house covering, were already alight to guide the spirits of the departed back to their accustomed scenes. Within the houses, too, the O Bon illuminations had been kindled; and there was much sound of talking, bustle and preparation.

In the courtyard of the Chutokuji festoons of lanterns, cream or black or dark red or blue—and emblazoned with names and house signs—were swinging from the branches of the temple grove; and the Young Men's Association, under the direction of its leader, the carpenter's son, were assembled in full strength, and were busy lighting the lamps and making other preparations for the evening's amusement. For the dead are not welcomed back by gloom and solemnity, but by the echo of the songs and the dances, and by the smell of the food which they used to love in the old days; and this Feast of All Souls is one of the gayest seasons in the Japanese year.

One young man was flourishing the wooden clappers, which the leader of the dancing uses, and was mimicking the hoarse voice with which he intones the old traditional songs of O Bon.

When the two wayfarers reached the road which branches off to the Hirata farmstead, Dick's companion declined an invitation to take food and a bath. He must get on his way before nightfall; but he left Dick silent and thoughtful and out of harmony with the conventional merriment and rowdiness of the evening.

However, after supper, Dick accompanied the rest of the family, some fourteen or fifteen persons in all, to watch the dancing in the temple courtyard. Clatter! Clatter! Clatter! The wooden clogs were pattering on the stone pavement. Then the leader halted and silence fell, while the dancers waved their arms to and fro. At the leader's prompting, came a series of slaps as the palms of the hands descended on the thighs; then, Clatter! Clatter! Clatter! . . . The dance moved on again in its circular stream round and round the courtyard, under the dim light of the lanterns

and the stars. To the Japanese the appeal was irresistible. One by one the Hirata family joined in the rhythmical sway of the crowd. There was a sound of laughter and hoarse shouting and the giggles of the girls and the drone of the leading dancer chanting his monotonous melody. The two old Hiratas hobbled off among the dancers; then O Yuki went—with a sidelong glance at her husband.

Dick was left alone. He and a few children were standing outside the ring of merry-makers. The festival was degenerating into a saturnalia. A lad caught a girl's wrist, and pulled her out of the dance into the darkness of the wood behind the temple. Other couples slipped away more slyly and cautiously. Others, emerging from the wood, joined in the dance again.

It was all very strange, unreal and disquieting to Dick. He returned home by himself, lay down beneath his mosquito-net, and tried to sleep. But it was very hot—the breathless heat of the Japanese summer, flavoured with the pungent reek of the surrounding rice-fields. The munching of the silk-worms in the loft above him sounded in the silent house like the grind of slow machinery. A slight shock of earthquake made the timbers creak and the floor heave.

Dick descended from his bedroom, and walked up and down through the empty rooms downstairs. He seemed to be in a dream. Could this be his home—this glorified wigwam? Could that be his wife—the fluttering figure, with the long sleeves like moth's wings and the soft elusive speech? And those brown men—were they his relatives? Had the silver-haired rector of Fernwood been changed by some uncanny spell into the greasy, snuffling Hirata?

He tried to say his prayers, and to go to sleep; but he could do neither. Crunch, crunch—the insatiable caterpillars! And from the distance came the clatter, clatter, clatter of the dancers—then sudden stillness—and the clapping of hands—and then, clatter, clatter, clatter once again!

CHAPTER XXII

A JAPANESE FARM

AFTER O Bon came the final weeding of the rice-fields. This was a back-breaking and revolting business; for the family, women included, had to work all day in the filthy sludge, which had been enriched and strengthened during many weeks with the night-soil from the house. The women wore white towels wrapped round their heads, and the men round hats of straw; and they carried straw coats on their shoulders, as if it were raining, to shelter them from the pitiless rays of the sun. Their legs and feet were wrapped in swathings of cotton to protect them from the leeches, which pullulated in the oozy mire. Some were shifting the soil with steel-bladed mattocks, which from time to time flared like flashlight when the sunshine caught the edge. Others were weeding with gloved or mittened hands. Children paddled in and out of the water, and played at helping their elders. In all this labour there was something similar to the life of insects; and at a distance these crawling families looked like industrious beetles.

A few weeks later, and the harvest itself began. This meant still more work for everybody. Even Masuo left his accounts; and old Hirata his drowsing and his *go*. Dick, too, had to do his share. He was not expert enough to join the men in reaping the precious crop with their little crescent sickles. But when they had laid the sheaves along the low mud wall of the paddy-field for a preliminary drying, he could then assist in carrying the crop for its final scorching in the sun. The rice was then hung up to dry on poles

suspended between the trees which formed the outer boundary of the Hirata farmstead. There they hung like curtains or like enormous cobwebs for several days while their colour slowly turned from golden green to pale brown. After that, they were carried for threshing into the farm-yard close to the house. Here again was work in which Dick could take his part. The cars had to be drawn first one way and then another through the teeth of a large steel comb. This process separated the grain from the straw, which was stacked in small ricks in the yard. The grain, however, had to be further winnowed and husked.

Soon after the harvest, Atsushi's second baby was born—a son, as he had hoped. Simultaneously with the family rejoicings, a rumour spread among the women that O Yuki, too, was going to become a mother in due course. There were allusions and jokes which Dick could not quite follow. He questioned his wife, who answered him with that look of fear in her side-long eyes that perhaps it might be true. Her husband caught her to his arms, Western fashion, and hugged her. In spite of all, he was, like other men, proud of his paternity and grateful to his wife.

"*Iya! Iya! Bikkuri shimas' yo!* (Don't! Don't! You frighten me!)" she cried; for she had never accustomed herself to the typhoons of emotion which descended so suddenly upon the calm surface of her husband's affection. She thought they were symptoms of the madness of which she was more than ever convinced.

"Please, excuse me," she entreated. "I must go and feed the *kaiho* (silkworms)."

The breeding of silkworms and the sale of cocoons formed an important side-industry for most of the farms in that district. The precious creatures were kept on trays in a loft above the upstairs rooms. They required feeding eight or nine times in the twenty-four hours; and the feeding meant constant visits to the mulberry field on the hillside above the cemetery,

and continual choppings of the freshly gathered leaves. All this was women's work; but Dick was glad to help.

It was a relief to all concerned when the voracious worms had finished their spinning, and when the cocoons were quietly sleeping on the trays in the loft. Sheets of newspaper were laid over them which had been perforated with a number of round holes. Through these holes the new-born moths first creep up to the light. They are dead white in colour; and as they emerge from the darkness of their sleep with their wings fluttering and whirring, as though they were miniature aeroplanes struggling to rise from the ground, the air is filled with the flying dust of their scales, and the whole loft hums as with thousands of tops. The fluttering, dancing moths are the males, and they are waiting for a female to appear. As soon as she shows herself, the nearest suitor seizes upon her, and the work of mating begins. They neither eat nor drink—these ecstatic creatures; they neither fly nor play like other insects of their kind. Their whole life is abandoned to their loves; and their existence is an embrace. Then the farm women arrive for inspection. They run their hands over the trays and pick up those male moths which have not yet been mated, throwing them aside into a kind of wastepaper basket or trampling them on the floor. More and more of them every day pass into the tumbrel to be thrown out into the courtyard as food for the white, hairy chicken, or to be dug into the ground as manure for the garden. Later, when the females have finished their egg-laying, they follow their husbands to a similar fate.

These passionate brief lives, this ecstasy, this vitality, this swift, ruthless and complete destruction had a certain effect upon Dick. He had never seen so clear an illustration of nature's processes, nor of the way in which higher powers utilise these processes for their own remorseless ends. "Does the *kaiiko* know the looms of Nishijin?" says a Japanese proverb. Are we equally ignorant of the ends for which our works

are ordained? Or is there no end and no purpose? And are our gods even more futile than we? "The world is a joke," Grace Carey had been wont to quote, adding thereto: "Yes; but *whose* joke?"

Some one must have written to Kato San in Tokyo that O Yuki was going to have a baby; for the erstwhile disciple wrote to his master a letter of congratulation. Dick had received no news from his friend for some time past; and he was glad to learn that the former *katsuben* had now turned business-man, and that his affairs—their exact nature was unspecified—were prospering. But he read some of Kato's sentiments with misgiving.

"Indeed I lack your sympathetic sweet talk," the convert had written. "But I make fast upstep on fortun's road. I am now keen slave of Mammon, but heart ever true to faith of Lord God. When I am rich quick with daresome cunning act, then I make pious foundation and decease saintly like many other noble persons at home and abroad. Not yet so rich, but having vast prospects. When you, sir, visit Tokyo, I feast you with style. I fear you, sir, life of Japanese countryman very rough and sour and not suiting fine aristocrat scholar of university degree; but your dear O Yuki San, sir, have gold heart. I rejoy all the time that strong infant so soon forthcome. What superb mix of Great England and our Japan. How I rejoy!"

Kato was invited to Aiko, but he excused himself on the ground of business pressure. Later on, perhaps; nothing would give him more pleasure. Dick would have dearly liked to have seen his old friend again, and to have had for a few days the company of some one with whom he could have exchanged ideas, and have enjoyed indeed "a sympathetic sweet talk." He was on good terms with all of his wife's family. For her brother Atsushi he had a real affection. But every evening there seemed to be less and less to say and to hear. After the harvest season, indeed, there was no further attempt to talk down to the level of his

comprehension. The Hirata family would discuss farm and local gossip in that *patois* of the Shirakawa valley, which was still almost incomprehensible to Dick. So he would play games with the women and children—*ken*, a game of forfeits in which signs are made against each other with clenched or open hand; or card-throwing; or *sugoroku*, a race game along the highroad from Kyoto to Tokyo, which is played by throwing dice. But he would also pass the *saké* cup with old Mr. Hirata and his two sons; and he was grateful for the drowsiness and the insensibility which the warm drink inspired.

Dick had often prayed to be accepted into Japanese family life, and to become as a native of the country. With their usual mocking exactitude, the gods granted his prayer. But the Japanese home of Dick's imaginings had been somewhat different to the Hirata establishment. He had foreseen himself in a kind of Oriental manse, complete with rustic church. He himself would be in unfettered command, dispensing advice and benefactions, a radiant example of the Christian life. Instead, he found himself absorbed into the narrow compass of the Hirata world, a helpless piece of lumber carried by the steady current of Japanese rules and conventions further and further from his dreams. He had not married a wife in the sense of our parlance. He had become a member of a Japanese family; and a strange process of assimilation had begun.

The Hiratas, however, and indeed the whole village of Ako, were proud of their "*Ijin San*." No other family, to their knowing, and no other village possessed such a distinction. It was a matter for self-congratulation and for discreet boasting where the inhabitants of less fortunate localities were concerned. "*Ako no ijin san*" became *hanashi no tane*, a seed of conversation, when persons from neighbouring districts met. He was *mura no meibutsu*, a famous object of the village, in the same category with the Chutokuji temple,

the Fujimi Kwannon, the tomb of the warrior Tokimaro and the Shirakiri waterfall.

Moreover, on his first arrival, rumours, originating in Suruna and propagated by Kato, had preceded him concerning his magical powers. So, at once, he found himself called in for consultation, first on the subject of a sick horse, and secondly, to the assistance of a sick woman. The woman lived, but the horse died; so the practical efficacy of Dick's saintliness remained in doubt. Then he was asked to mend a broken bicycle of the bone-shaker era. Here he was completely at a loss, and his reputation dwindled hourly, as he fumbled with the links of a worn-out chain. But he recouped the position by presenting his own up-to-date machine to the crestfallen owner, the village carpenter, who in return volunteered to build a *yashiro* (shrine) for the *kami* (god) of *Christokyo*, such as he had heard was the desire of the *Ijin San*. *O Daiku San*, the carpenter, might well prove to be a valuable supporter; for he was hereditary chief of the artisans of Ako, just as his son was hereditary president of the local Young Men's Association.

On a ledge of the hill near the Hirata graveyard the carpenter and his son built from rough unbarked logs a little chapel of their own designing. It was raised on low posts above the ground level; and it consisted of an outer loggia, open and without walls, and an inner sanctuary. These two divisions, were separated by sliding *shoji*. The inner shrine was carpeted with *tatami*, and contained the altar which Dick was to serve. The edifice was crowned by a squat limpet-like roof of thin wooden tiles.

Every morning Dick "celebrated Mass" in his new chapel. His congregation consisted of O Yuki, who had been told to come by her husband, and naturally obeyed his wishes. Every Sunday he was prepared to preach if there was any congregation, besides his wife, to listen to him. But this was a rare occurrence. The carpenter had nobly acquitted his debt of gratitude.

He owed no further duty to the newcomer or his gods; and the rest of the village remained friendly but indifferent. Children would scamper and play up and down the step of the little shrine; and, now and then, a wrinkled old woman or an awkward-looking girl would attend in the hope that some remedy for ailment or for heartache might lurk in the shadow of "*Ijin no Iera*."

Dick was invited by the schoolmaster, who was also the priest of the Shinto shrine at the further end of Ako, to give a lecture on *Christokyo* in the village schoolroom. He accepted this invitation with high hopes. But something was lacking. The fire, the inspiration of the old Suruna days seemed to be quenched. Dick wished that Kato had been there to drum some enthusiasm into his stolid audience. Several of them, after their long day's toil in the rice-fields, were clearly slumbering. The missionary had proposed to end his address with one of the old mission hymns; but when the time came, with that somnolent and bucolic congregation, he did not dare. He was wearily conscious that his message had fallen flat.

The young men of the village, urged on by the carpenter's son and by Hirata Atsushi, were inspired by a brief enthusiasm for the study of English. Dick held classes in the chief "*zashiki*" of the Hirata mansion, and through them he tried to inculcate some interest in Christianity. But with the incoming winter, the bad weather and the snow, attendance fell off; and eventually the classes ceased.

Was it the strength of the past and the influence of the ancient gods which placed so formidable an obstacle across the progress of the Gospel? Dick could hardly believe that the priest of the Chutokuji was a very lively spiritual force; nor were his infrequent services any better attended than Dick's own. "*O Iera san*" was a round and corpulent man. His head was shaved; and his face and scalp were covered with brown spots. When he was, working in his fields he looked like any

other Japanese peasant; and altogether his interests were agricultural rather than ecclesiastical. In society, however—that is to say, when he came to play go with Mr. Hirata, senior—he wore a white robe with black *haori*, and a thin stole of brown silk round his neck. He was a priest of the Monto Sect, which promises the salvation of all men through the intercession of Amida, the powerful Buddha dwelling in the Paradise of the West—a comfortable creed.

This teaching seemed to have so much in common with Christianity that Dick determined to talk shop with *o tera san* and to point out to him how close they really were to one another. For this purpose, he called one afternoon at the Chutokuji in the company of Hirata Atsushi. After a polite interchange of banalities, the conversation was directed to the Monto doctrines.

"That is our own faith," Dick commented. "We believe in salvation through the merits and death of Jesus Christ."

O tera san did not appear to be either impressed or interested. Very soon he was discussing the harvest with Atsushi; but later Dick returned to the charge.

"Do you Buddhists believe in the devil?" he asked.

"Certainly there are devils," answered *o tera san*, fanning his wrists. "They torture the souls of the wicked in the cauldron of Hell."

"Do you then teach the doctrine of original sin?"

"All men are from the beginning naturally bad," said the priest cheerfully.

"But have they free will to choose between good and evil?"

"*Domo!* He asks hard questions, does not he, Atsushi Kun? And I am but a fool. You should speak with Hogen Shonin. He is a famous learned man. He dwells alone in the mountains. He is glad to see all who come to him without distinction. I am no good. I am a foolish priest. I only want to continue

this life in a pleasant way, and to have enough to eat and drink. I am without doubt a fool."

"Is it true," asked Atsushi, "that even *Genro* (the Elder Statesmen) and such like people visit Mitaké San to consult with Hogen Shonin?"

"It is true." The priest's fan waved to and fro. "He was a famous *samurai* before he became a priest). He had a village school at the time of *Go Ishin* (The Imperial Restoration of 1868), to which many great men came. Then, for some reason, he was not satisfied, and he departed from his house. He has lived alone on Mitaké San ever since. I am only a village *bozu* (a depreciatory term for a priest); but he is a great man and a saint. You should certainly speak with him."

Hereupon the priest's wife entered with cups and bottles.

"We are priests of Montoshu," explained *o tera san*. "We may drink *saké* and keep women. Hogen Shonin is a priest of the Zenshu. He is very strict."

Evening had fallen—the deep blue evening of the Japanese countryside in summer. The rice-plants were standing high in the watery beds; for that visit to the Chutokuji occurred just before the harvest. Fireflies were flickering like golden sparks over the bending ears; and the croaking chorus of the frogs filled the silence.

Dick walked home with Atsushi, who was the most amiable member of his wife's family. He was a tall round-faced farmer's boy, with red cheeks and with his sister's pleasant smile and dimple. His education had advanced as far as the middle school and he had learned some English, which he was anxious to improve. He was only twenty-one, but he had a wife and a dear little girl, just able to toddle. He was devoted to the child, and would act as its nurse, carrying it perched between his shoulders. But he would pretend to be angry with his daughter because of her sex.

"Why is Hanachan a little girl?" he would ask her.

"Father never wanted to make little girls. This time father makes a little boy."

A week or two later his wish was gratified, and his wife, an uninteresting little person called O Umé, presented him with a son.

The next event of any importance was a visit from the outside world. Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Paul wrote from Tokyo to ask whether they might visit Mr. Aylmer at Ako. Paul, the youngest of the three pillars of St. George's clergy-house, had been appointed to take charge of the work of the Suruna mission. He was on his way thither, but he wished to have the opportunity of a conversation with Dick. "No one recognises more than I do," he wrote, "that it was your zeal and enthusiasm which first started the work there. Others have laboured, and I have entered into their labours."

Dick was pathetically grateful to read this appreciation of his work, though Paul's gesture of friendship had come rather late and had been conspicuously absent when most keenly needed. He did not know that his colleague was now married; but he wrote at once asking them both to stay for a night or two, if they did not mind roughing it in a Japanese home.

Dick met them at the station some twenty miles down the valley. To his surprise, Mrs. Paul was no stranger. She turned out to be none other than Viola Tyrwhitt, the tall, pale English girl, whom he had met at Karuizawa. His first thought on recognition was, Why? Whatever could she see in Paul? They had been married for one month only; and the glamour of the honeymoon was cast over them, like an almost visible mantle of benevolence. They loved each other so much, that they loved everybody. They greeted Dick as the dearest of old friends; and during the long rickshaw ride up into the mountains, they regaled his envious ears with the story of their romance.

Yes; it was at Karuizawa that very summer that their acquaintance had ripened into affection, though

they had actually known each other for a long time. So a lengthy engagement had been dispensed with; and they had been married by the Bishop himself at St. George's just a month ago. Everybody had been so kind. The Ambassador himself had been at the wedding; and the best of all wedding presents had been the bishop's proposal of the important and interesting work at Suruna.

They talked with the careless selfishness of happy folk, not realising that each little vaunt was biting into Dick's heart with the bitterness of what might have been. They were too happy to notice any one else except each other. They did not even see Dick as he had now become, until they had arrived in front of the dilapidated and age-blackened farmstead of the Hiratas.

There he stood, the fair-haired Englishman, in his Japanese *kimono* and cloak, motioning them to step up into the house with an awkward gesture, half Japanese and half European. In the dark cavernous entrance, the two old Hiratas with O Yuki by their side were bowing a welcome to the guests. Viola Paul darted a look of compassion at her husband, which unfortunately Dick perceived and interpreted aright. For the first time he became intensely conscious of his deterioration.

What a fool he had been! There was his colleague's wife, with her charming natural ways and her competent knowledge of the Japanese language, chatting and laughing with O Yuki and the other women with an ease to which Dick had never attained even in his relations with his own wife. If he had married Viola—and surely a year ago she would have preferred him to Paul?—she would not only have made a suitable and delightful companion for him; but she would have been of far greater assistance in his work than poor pathetic little, Yuki, who was gradually dragging him down to the level of the tedium of Japanese rusticity. He had thrown his life away, like that poor farmer's

son who had gone down to his destruction in the Shirakiri waterfall; but his was a living death.

The contrast between fair Viola and the brown people around her was so striking that she looked like a goddess descended from Heaven. What claim had Paul to the love of such a being—Paul, with his long, earnest face, his hair-shirt and his ridiculous hagiographies? He is a fraud, thought Dick, and a hypocrite; and that night his dreams were haunted by visions of Viola.

He awoke early and went out into the neglected garden, only to find that Mrs. Paul was still earlier than he.

"I say a Mass every morning," he explained—not altogether accurately. "Will you come and add to my tiny congregation?"

Viola assented gladly. She was wearing a simple dress of brown Shantung silk, with a rope of green beads falling from her neck. She was bare-headed; and the early sunlight shone in the golden reflections of her abundant mass of hair.

"Mr. Aylmer," she said, "it is very wonderful that you can live like this. But you told me once that this is what you wanted to do."

Instead of frankly admitting that his life was becoming daily more exasperating and hellish, Dick smiled feebly and replied,

"It is not quite what I had looked forward to, but I try to do what I can in this little corner. We never know what use God may be making of us."

"You did wonderful work at Suruna," the girl answered—her praise was like wine to him—"and in so short a time. At first, the Bishop wished to close down the mission. Then he realised that it would be a sin to do so; and so he has sent my husband to carry on your work."

Again Dick smiled feebly; but his heart was glad and proud. Viola continued:

"And here, again, you are doing a wonderful thing,

that only a very special person could do. We foreigners are so selfish, so self-assertive. Self-sacrifice and sense of duty—why, the Japanese have far more to teach than to learn. And here are you, an Englishman, who can give up everything, and—and extinguish yourself in a Japanese country home. It's wonderful—a wonderful example both to the Japanese and to us—like Father Damien among the lepers at Molokai. It is bound to have a quiet, but a very great effect."

How encouraging to hear such praise—and from a sweet and charming woman of his own race! But under what false pretences he had earned it! Dick had summed up Paul as a fraud; but was not he, Dick Aylmer, a much greater fraud, and had he not been a fraud ever since his childhood? He had deceived himself and others by simulated virtues, which were in fact no part of his moral constitution. Who made thee a priest and a ruler over us? He had gone through life honestly and earnestly, it is true, but misled by a rooted conviction that he was somehow superior to the multitudes around him, that he had no share in their common desires and cravings, and that he was a person elect and aloof—a special friend of God! In the light shed by Viola Paul's presence he saw for the first time in his life that he had been a silly, conceited fool and that he had amply merited his misfortunes.

With Viola beside him, he ascended the short, steep pathway which led to his woodland sanctuary. O Yuki followed humbly in the rear. Standing before his altar in cassock and surplice, he commenced the "Our Father," which is the first prayer in the Liturgy. The grave and sweet phraseology of the service soothed him, and the "comfortable words," and the breath of the morning pine-woods which made a natural incense for his Eucharist, and the presence of some one who could understand. He returned to Ako with something of the old feeling of benediction upon him.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HERMIT OF MITAKÉ SAN

THE departure of the Pauls brought on a reaction. Dick felt heavy and dull again; and the rural coma began to creep over him once more. He started again to tipple *saké* of an evening with old Hirata, and would reel off to bed more or less intoxicated. O Yuki had no reproaches; for a Japanese wife expects such failings in her husband. In fact, she rather welcomed the hot breath with its fishy flavour as a sign of normality. But matters came to a head when one evening Dick found himself disputing about the mystery of the Trinity in loud and combative tones with *o tera san*, who had dropped in for his customary game of *go*.

"I am only a foolish *bozu*," his adversary was answering in the staccato tones which indicate annoyance in a Japanese; "I cannot dispute about such difficult matters. You should visit Hogen Shonin on Mitaké San. He is very wise. The long walk also will be good medicine for the body and the mind."

Dick was sober enough to know that he was making a fool of himself, and that these rough country people in their straw-thatched barn were in their way better mannered than he. So he took the priest's counsel to heart; and a day or two later he started one morning for the long tramp over the mountains.

The landscape had changed since, on the day of O Bon, he had taken that same road as far as the deserted temple of Fujimi Kwannon. The green valley bottom had become a chess-board of brown squares, spotted with the stubbles of the harvested rice-plants, which

looked like the stunted tufts of bristle in a worn scrubbing-brush.

The maples, which clothed the hill-side from below the Kwannon temple upwards in the direction of Shirakiri, were now blood-red, with patches here and there of gold and green. It was an impressive landscape, but a menacing one. There was violence in those crimson cliffs; and stagnation in the denuded fields. The sky was dull and mists hung above the valley. On all sides the scene was chilled by the breath of autumn, which is the messenger of destruction and decay.

The walk to Mitaké followed a series of switchbacks. The hill-tops were shared between moorland and forest. With the valley-slopes cultivation began; but the fields had been harvested and were bare, save where the lean twigs of the mulberry shrubs trailed untidily over the ground. A farm-house, with its high thatched roof like the top of a hay-stack and its whitewashed storehouse tower, was passed from time to time. But there was little doing in the fields; and only twice or thrice did Dick meet a fellow-traveller with his greeting of:

"*O tsukaré sama!* (Honourably tired!)"

In front of him, he could see now and then the wooded slope of Mitaké San, which was the goal of his journey. The mists were lifting; and the sun was emerging into a clear blue sky.

The walk ended with three or four miles of steady climb. Then, Dick found himself in front of a tall stone obelisk inscribed with a Buddhist prayer. The way led upwards in a flight of worn grey steps winding out of sight round the curve of the hill. To the right was a dense forest of pines and cryptomerias, rising skywards over the shoulder of the mountain; and to the left a wide prospect opened over moor and valley to the blue line of the indented coast and the dome of Fujiyama.

The steps were steep; and Dick halted more than

once before he reached the top. They ended in a low stone parapet, beyond which was the priest's house and the temple itself. It was a miniature sanctuary, much smaller than the Chutokuji at Ako or the Myohoji at Suruna—less formal in shape, too, but scrupulously clean and tidy. The temple itself stood away to the right under the shadow of the forest, on a higher elevation than the manse, and was separated from it by long broad steps as in a country-house garden and by a rivulet of sweet mountain water. The ripple filled the glade with a music clear and fresh, so that Dick felt at once that he had reached a spot beyond the confines of man's world.

This rivulet passed over a tiny cataract among the evergreen shrubs which formed the garden of the priest's house; then it vanished from sight through an aperture in the stone wall, which marked the boundary of the temple grounds. The house itself was built of a brownish grey wood raised on a wooden platform; and it was constructed in a kind of Z pattern, in two wings parallel but not impinging. The nearer wing protruded to the edge of the hill and the further one closed in upon the garden and the temple steps. The front door was at the point where the two wings joined.

Dick was approaching this entrance when he saw at the top of the flight of steps to his right, and emerging from behind a large stone lantern—a very old priest. He was dressed in the rough white cassock of the Buddhist priesthood, but was without cloak to his back or sandals to his feet. He was sweeping away the fallen leaves from the threshold of the shrine; and his feet and his hands were like carved ivory. Noticing Dick, he paused in his work, leaning on his broom handle. He was very old indeed.

"Please excuse," said Dick.

The old man bowed.

"Is it Hogen Shonin Sama?" Dick then inquired.

The old man bowed again.

"I am called Hogen," he said, in a clear and rather high voice.

"I am the *Ijin* from Ako," Dick explained; "*o tera san* of Chutokuji——"

At once the old priest rested his broom against the lantern, and descended the temple steps with *empressement*.

"Please step up into the house," he said, with a gesture of invitation. "It is a rough place, but——"

Dick offered a conventional semblance of reluctance; for, of course, he was delighted at the cordiality of the welcome extended to him. Then he unstrapped his rope sandals and entered the house. He was ushered into an end room whose two sides looked out over a narrow wooden verandah to the magnificent view southwards. It was indeed an eagle's nest. The room itself was a typical Japanese living-room, except that one side of the *tokonoma*, the alcove which forms one end of the apartment, was quite full of books—thin stitched volumes of the old style and modern books with perpendicular titles inscribed on their backs. In the other niche of the alcove hung a picture of a Chinese sage on a white horse passing through a mountain landscape. Beneath the picture, in a shallow bronze dish, two fronds of brown foliage were arranged.

The host excused himself for a few minutes and left Dick to take stock of the room and of its outlook. When he returned he had a brown scarf slung across his shoulder like a bandolier. White *tabi* (socks) were on his feet, and he carried a fan. He bowed to Dick most ceremoniously, as though this were their first meeting, and inquired if he were not weary. He offered him a bath that he might refresh his body; but Dick declined, saying that he had his return journey before him.

"Oh, no!" the old man smiled; "this night you must stay with me. Please speak freely with me. This is the first time that I have ever spoken with a learned man from a foreign country. It is a great honour for

me. Please stay a long time. One cannot speak freely when one is on the point of departure."

Dick refused the invitation, of course, but after two or more urgings he accepted.

"Then please take a bath and change your clothes."

At that moment a small round-faced boy, also with the shaven head of a priest, entered with tea and biscuits on a tray.

"This is Kichibei Kosho (little priest). He will attend to your wants. Please teach him some English words. That will make him happy. For he does not wish to be a priest. He thinks it is a dull life, eh, Kichibei? He wants to be a commercial traveller in America!"

Dick was ushered into another room, where a change of clothing was already laid out for him.

"Please, at your leisure," said the old priest, "make use of the hot bath."

Warmed and refreshed, Dick returned at length to the sitting-room, where Hogen was squatting as before, his head sunk somewhat between his broad shoulders. Shaven as he was, the fine shape of his long skull was clearly traceable. His face was like brown parchment, and his forehead was broad and smooth. The eyes, which were very black, so that iris and pupil seemed to be fused into one, were set far apart. The nose was aquiline, the mouth and lips clean cut and almost petulant in expression. The ears stood out a little from the head; and strong commanding lines were furrowed from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth. There was something Roman about the face, especially in profile. This was a type of Japanese whom Dick had never met before. His gestures were extraordinarily courtly and perfect; and the accents of his Japanese talk were almost English in inflection and in brevity of phrase. There was no trace either of the Italianate singsong or of the harsh gutturals and sibilant aspirates to which Dick had become accustomed in Tokyo.

"I am an old man of the Tempo era (*i.e.*, 1830-1843)," said Hogen when the first civilities were over. "I know nothing of what is called civilisation and progress. They must be good things, I know, for every one tells me that they are good things and that they have transformed my Japan; but I am a foolish old man, and I cannot understand."

"I think the old times were best," Dick answered.

"You say that for politeness' sake, because I am a man of the old times," the priest answered. "All this new wisdom comes from your country. We Japanese ought to be very grateful to you; for before you taught us we were barbarians."

"I don't think that is what you really believe," said Dick, aware of a sarcastic though not unkindly undertone in the old man's talk.

"You are right," said the priest. "I am a foolish old man. When I was a young *ronin* in the capital in the days of Ansei, I was called '*ijin-goroshi*'—the slayer of foreigners. *S-s-sa!* Are you not afraid?"

With a curious sibilant war-cry, he shook his lean right arm from its sleeve with a gesture as though he were brandishing a sword. For a moment Dick drew back. There was a ferocious reality in the old man's posture, which was truly terrifying. Then he laughed and complimented his host.

"Hogen Shonin must have been a splendid *samurai* in the old days!"

"I was a *ronin* (masterless *samurai*) of the Choshu clan," Hogen replied, "in the days before *Go Ishin*. We were gathered together in the capital (Kyoto) to help the Emperor against the *Bakufu* (the *Shogun's* government) and to expel the foreigners. Those were the days when Takayama Hikokoro, the greatest-hearted of us all, squatted like a beggar on the Bridge of Sanjo, and wept and wept before all the people for the shameful plight of the Emperor's court; when Yoshida Shoin taught patriotism and national expansion in the village school at Yamashita."

The world was young then, and we were all fools."

He proceeded to tell tale after tale of the thrilling years which saw the great change in Japan and the sudden transformation of a régime of feudal baronies into a strong centralised modern state—the greatest miracle in recent history and a most creditable achievement of human sagacity and discipline. He had planned to slip away to Europe with Ito and Inouyé, his fellow clansmen, in the days when it was death for a Japanese to leave Japan, but his plans were discovered and he was arrested. After two years of imprisonment he had escaped through his own daring. He had taken part in the battles of Fushimi and Ujeno, when men fought with swords more than with guns. At the storming of Niigata castle, that last fight in the cold north, which crushed the resistance of the Aidzu clan, he had been wounded with a slash across shoulder and chest—a scar which he still carried after more than fifty years. But his own clan of Choshu was one of the conquerors of the New Japan. At the end of the fighting his own friends were in power, and they were most anxious that he should join them.

Then came the question of the foreigners, the despicable barbarians from overseas. After all this fratricidal bloodshed, they, it seemed, were to be received with open arms. Since the young *samurai* had been away, fighting or wounded, his friends had changed their policy. The foreigners were to be accepted, and their humiliating treaties. Hogen—or Kuroda, as he was called in those days—opposed this fatal surrender alike in open council and in private debate. "They will ruin our country," he urged; "they will degrade our morals; they will reduce us to slavery." "To resist is to invite attack," wiser counsels had answered. "We are weak and defenceless; it would be a fight of the cicada against the lion. Remember the bombardments of Shimonoseki and Kagoshima. We must learn from them and become strong. We must chew our livers,

and bide our time." "As a man would eat poison himself, lest his enemy poison him," the young Kuroda had replied. So he would not cast his lot with the makers of modern Japan. He refused the cabinet rank which was offered to him. He took the tonsure, and the name of Hogen, and this temple "above the clouds," as his friends were wont to say. He left the world of change and activity and illusion to dwell with eternal truth upon the mountains of contemplation.

"My Japan," said Hogen to Dick Aylmer, "did not understand electricity and steam-engines and telephones and foreign exchanges; but it understood duty and honour and the refined life better than now; and the common people also were more contented."

He told stories of his days as a *ronin* in Kyoto, when "heads fell like carnellia blossoms," and when the great men, who made the change, used to go in danger of their lives, disguised sometimes as beggars or pedlars, meeting by stealth in the *geisha*-houses, which were their secret rendezvous; of the *geisha* themselves, that famous generation of the *geisha* of Gion, who so loyally kept their heroes' secrets, who saved their lives over and over again at the risk of their own, and who comforted them with their love—the fierce, bitter, tender love, known only to those men who love beneath the shadow of the sword.

"Our lives hung upon a thread," said the priest, "and each day was a separate life."

Dick was surprised to hear a man of evident saintliness dwelling with such satisfaction on the memories of his passionate youth.

"Yet your sect is strict," he commented; "you are not permitted to marry."

"With a woman in the house it is not possible to pursue truth or to separate one's heart from illusion. Either with affection she drugs you; or else there is quarrelling and nagging and no rest day or night. Besides, there is the care of children and the demands of friends and relatives. Such a man becomes a part

of a world. His heart is not clear. In it, as in a little garden pool, are mirrored all the little things around him and the people who pass. Only the lonely mountain lake can reflect nothing but the sky and the moon and the stars."

"But those *geisha* of Kyoto?"

"That kind of love is medicine to desperate men, but it is poison to the wise. You, *sensei*, have you a wife and children?"

"My wife is the daughter of a farmer of Aiko. I live with her family."

In his turn, Dick told his host some part of the story of his life. It was a relief to him to speak in the atmosphere of this calm confessional, with the world beneath him, and the clouds and the mountain-top above.

"What you say is hard to understand," said Hogen finally. "You have a family in England, and you are the only son. Although you have committed no crime, you leave your home. You come to a distant land, and you marry a woman of our country, and you become a member of her father's household without obtaining your own father's consent. And now, it seems, you know not whether you wish to stay or whether you wish to return."

"I must stay, since I have my wife and perhaps soon a child."

"Such marriage, for a Japanese, has no binding power, since it is not the union of two families. It is an accident, like a marriage in a dream. Your wife and your child would be happy with their own family. They are common people, and would take a gift of money. They do not need you. You are free."

There was something very trenchant in the old man's summing up of the situation; but Dick could hardly accept a morality so contrary to his own, nor the implication of his own insignificance in his wife's eyes.

"In our Bible," he answered, "it is written, 'Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder.'"

"And we, too," rejoined Hogen, "say, '*Fufu wa nisci*' (the relationship of husband and wife lasts through two incarnations); but that is merely a way of talking. There are two things which bind husband and wife—affection and *giri* (duty). If affection is no more, and if *giri* is satisfied, then it is better to go away. Why would you add the illusion of hatred to the illusion of love?"

"But where shall I go?"

"To your own country and to your father's house. I do not understand the *giri* of the foreigners, but, speaking as a Japanese, I say that is your place."

"But my work here—as the missionary of Him whom I believe to be the True God?"

"That also is illusion."

"You say that because you are a Buddhist. You hate *Christokyo*."

"You are mistaken. We who are on the Way have no hatred or enmity. *Bukkyo*, *Christokyo*—they are both reflections of the same darkness."

He was silent for a minute or two. Far below, across the remote and miniature landscape, passed a white streak like a thread of wool. It was a railway train on the Tokaido line. Then, the priest added, as though to himself:

"And that darkness is what men call God—and Buddha—and *Nehan* (Nirwana)."

The tide of reminiscence had ebbed, and a hush fell upon the two men; but it was not the silence of exhaustion or of boredom. Dick felt strangely elated. The old enthusiasm, which had lent, as it were, wings to the early days of his priesthood and which had filled the Myohoji at Suruna with visions and dreams, returned upon him, tempered with a mood of patience and understanding, which was new to him. He was very content to sit—silent—and to feel the restfulness of this new experience. His back was propped against the framework of the open *shoji*; for he could not

maintain himself unsupported in the correct Japanese attitude. An arm-rest—something like that in a first-class railway-carriage—had been supplied for his use by the attentive Kichibei. Opposite him his host had been squatting in the most erect and formal style. But, when silence fell, his chin sunk between the line of his shoulders, and his eyes, half-closed, seemed to be searching out objects beyond the confines of this world. He looked like an old condor of the Andes, watching—watching,—watching—

Dick seemed to be seeing life in its correct proportions. His sins and blunders and uncertainties—his convictions, his activities, his achievements, seemed to shrink to the dimensions of the tiny rice-plots, and dwarfish forests, and acorn-like brown roofs, which he could dimly discern in the depths of the valley beneath him. Did anything matter so much after all? Or are we doomed like the silk-moths to wholesale inconsideration? One brief flutter in a vain attempt to fly; and then our little share in the work of building up the next generation is over. The hands of our masters tear us from the embrace of life; we are thrown aside, and trodden down; we are fed out to the poultry or mixed with the dung for the fields.

Hogen Shonin had risen from his cushion. From another room he had returned with a writing-box and a roll of stout paper. Very leisurely, he poured a few drops of water from a tiny brown earthenware pot into the trough of the black ink-stone; then, slowly, he rubbed the cake of solidified ink up and down the stone. Every movement had a precision and an exactitude, as though it were part of a set ceremonial. He made a few preliminary dots and dashes on the paper to test his brush. Then, at great speed, he dashed off a sentence of ten or twelve letters in a handwriting which even Dick could appreciate as being of supereminent strength and character. Then, seeing that Dick was interested in his work, he pushed the writing material in his direction.

"Please make writing, as a memorial of to-day," Hogen asked.

"In English, then, for I cannot write Japanese; and in any case I am a bad writer," said Dick.

He was used by now to the Japanese pastime of writing texts and lines of poetry; and he had collected quite a stock of them for appropriate occasions. But this time he made a new choice, and inscribed with laboured brush that line from Marcus Aurelius:—

"LIVE AS ON A MOUNTAIN."

The English capitals looked crude and childish beside the living Chinese script, but Hogen seemed pleased with the sentiment. In return, he expounded the sentence which he himself had written for his guest:—

"WHEN ILLUSION VANISHES QUIETUDE WILL
APPEAR :

WHEN QUIETUDE APPEARS KNOWLEDGE
WILL ARISE :

WHEN KNOWLEDGE ARISES TRUTH WILL
SHOW ITSELF."

"I shall now prepare supper for us three," said the priest: "There is no *go chiso* (choice food); only some rice and vegetables and *o tsukémono* (pickles). But I shall prepare it myself, for Kichibei is careless. But, first, I shall show you the garden."

He ushered his guest out of the room and through the entrance porch.

"You have looked upon the world from a great height," he said, "and you have seen how small it is and of how little importance. Now you shall look into the enclosed place of the heart, and see how it should be."

"Look at the rivulet. It appears out of one dark

wall, and it disappears beneath another. So is man's life. But as it passes between darkness and darkness it sings its song, and it fills its narrow space with music. It gives nourishment to the flowers along the brink and to the little fishes in the water. See! There is one of the autumn flowers—the *kikyo* (harebell); and there is a small chrysanthemum. A poet has said, 'Of all flowers, I love the chrysanthemum the best; yet I love it, because, when it has gone, there are no other flowers left in the world.' . . .

"You may cross the brook by the bridge. The bridge is the priest; he joins one world to the other; and, having crossed, you may ascend to the *mido* (central hall) of this temple. There you will see a very ancient image of Buddha, brought from China by the priest Eisai, who first taught Zen-shu in our country. Beyond the temple is the forest—which is the outer-world of the Unknowable, full of angry and deceitful spirits. Do not venture there. The garden of his own heart is the dwelling-place of man. We have not enough if we look upward; but we have more than enough if we look downward. Everything outside is illusion, and we must beware lest illusion creep into the heart also. . . .

"Now, please excuse my rudeness; I must go and prepare the rice."

Dick was left alone on the grey stone bridge which crossed the tiny brook in the temple garden. The sky, beyond the roof of the manse, was a bower of rosy clouds. The temple grove re-echoed with the chirruping chorus of the *semi* (cicadas)—a regular string orchestra of invisible musicians. Some were playing sharp staccato notes, others a low and continuous thoroughbass; others were chiming on a tireless triangle; and one, the leader of the band, seemed to be pushing his top note higher and ever higher, until all of a sudden the effort broke, and down it came with a run of indivisible chromatics, like the sound of a fairy's threshing-machine.

Dick ascended between the two stone lanterns, and paused at the temple opening. The words and demeanour of the strange old man had affected him deeply. His host had spoken with authority, and not as the scribes. Hitherto Dick had regarded Buddhism, not with an unfriendly mind, but as a creed outworn and moribund, which Christianity must one day replace. Now he was not so sure. He felt that his own faith had misled him; that its altruistic and propagandist current had carried him out of his depth, but could not guide him back to firm ground again. Yet Christ's command was unmistakable—"Go ye out into all lands, and convert all nations, baptising them. . . ." What was the matter with missions and missionaries? This old warrior priest, who for fifty years had cultivated his own little garden plot in solitude and detachment, was worth all the vapourings and "uplift" of Karuizawa.

And who was he—Dick Aylmer? The Apostle of the East? No!—a vain and bumptious fool! And what had he done with his life so far? He had wasted it on sentimentality and self-approbation. Hogen had said, "Go back to your father!" Yes—like the Prodigal Son, he had wasted his substance—not on riotous living, but in a foolish orgy of misplaced altruism. But what about O Yuki? Hogen had said that she did not matter, and that he was nothing to her. He could not bring himself as yet to believe that he was of so little importance even in his own family circle.

He was still sitting on the step of the temple building when the old priest came up from the house.

"Have you seen *hotoké sama* (the Buddha)?" he asked.

"No," Dick admitted ashamedly. He had forgotten about the historic image, and he was afraid of hurting his host's feelings. But the old man smiled.

"That is good," he remarked. "When the heart is full, what are images to the eyes?"

He was holding a taper in one hand, which burned steadily in the unruffled evening air; and when he went up into the sanctuary he lit a small lamp, which hung in front of the image. Then he rubbed his hands together over his rosary of crystal beads. His prayers were brief; and in a minute or two he rejoined the Englishman.

"Supper is now ready," he said.

After supper, they talked again. The room was shuttered now, for the night air was turning cold. This time Hogen inquired about *Christokyo*, and he seemed to be listening sympathetically to Dick's narrative of Christ's life on earth; but at the end he said, sadly and critically:

"A tale of violence."

After that he was silent, until Kichibei came in to announce that the bed of *o kyaku sama* (the guest) had been spread for him in another room.

Early next morning, while the surrounding hills were still swathed in cloud, the "little priest" brought in the first pot of tea and the salted plums, which constitute the *petit déjeuner* of every Japanese. Later, Dick joined his host for the proper breakfast in the parlour which had been the scene of last night's talk.

"You rise early?" said Dick.

"I rose three hours ago," answered Hogen. "Old men sleep lightly."

He had been across to his temple, and had performed two hours of meditation. Dick inquired what was his method of contemplation; and the old priest then explained something about *zazen*—the mystical exercise which is the speciality of his sect.

"This should not be undertaken carelessly, or for mere curiosity's sake," he said, "nor yet by such as have no knowledge of the Way; neither should the body or the mind be in a state of weakness, for the empty chamber may also be the unguarded chamber, and it is not always the light which enters. One should sit cross-legged in a quiet place—not too bright, not too

dark, not too hot and not too cold. The mind must be free from all outward sensations. One must sit on a large soft cushion, so that the body is at ease. The clothes, too, must be loose and easy. One must rest the right foot on the left thigh, and the left foot on the right thigh. The right hand with palm upturned is laid on the left foot, and the left hand on the right palm. The thumbs rest against each other and point upwards. They must be just in front of the navel. The body must be kept upright. One must not bend to right or left, nor lean backwards or forwards. The tongue must stick against the upper gum; and breathing, which is the most important thing, must be through the nostrils. The mouth must be closed, and lips and teeth must stick to each other. Thus sitting, one breathes ten or twelve times through the open mouth. Then, ten or twelve times, the body is rocked from side to side, each time less strongly, so that at last it comes to rest in an upright position. Thus sitting, one thinks of that which is unthinkable, one knows that which is unknowable. All ideas of heat and cold, of will and consciousness pass away; all memory passes, all perception and contemplation. One makes no distinction of right and wrong; one has no desire even to become a Buddha. As illusion vanishes, so the individual mind, which perceives illusion, vanishes also. Then that which really is appears. . . ."

The old priest spoke quietly and without emotion, as though he were discussing some ordinary operation of everyday life. Then he added :

"Ignorance is the great evil; patience is the great virtue. Patience is the source of all happiness."

Later he said :

"You speak less than when you first came here. That is the first sign of understanding."

Dick left at about noon. When he had said "*Sayonara*" to Hogen, and while he was standing by the little temple, taking his last look at the place which had brought so much comfort to his heart, he noticed

a Japanese approaching by the long flight of steps which led up from the foot of the mountain. This newcomer was dressed in an ordinary dark grey *kimono*; and he carried his cloak over his arm and a silk bundle in his hand. He was bareheaded; and the square, box-like shape of his head, the broad forehead, the beaky nose, the small "tiger-claw" moustaches, and the fierce, protruding chin were somehow familiar to Dick. At the door he was greeted by Kichibei, and passed at once into the house.

Dick turned and started on his climb upwards. He wished to see the view from the summit of Mitaké San, before retracing his steps back to Ako. The way was steep; and at the top he was glad to rest for half an hour or so, beside a worn figure of Jizo, the children's god, who is also often to be found on mountain-peaks. Then he began the long descent; and on passing the temple on his way downwards he saw the priest Hogen with his new visitor, standing on the verandah and looking out over the valley. They might have been two old Admirals taking observations from their quarter-deck. Suddenly, with a flash of recognition, Dick guessed the identity of the square and sturdy figure who, with one hand raised to shield his eyes from the glare, was gazing across the valley seawards. It was the Prime Minister of Japan.

CHAPTER XXIV

O YUKI'S BABY

WINTER at Ako was a numbing experience for Dick. Snow lay continuously on the tops of the hills, though in the valley it did not settle for long at a time. But every morning the stagnant water in the brown rice-fields was frozen, so that they seemed to contain a jellied substance like aspic. There was no work on the farm; but within the house the women's looms kept up a monotonous clatter until late into the night. The men sat about smoking or drinking or doing nothing; and there was nothing for Dick to do. He had abandoned his daily "Mass" in the chapel on the hill; it was too cold. The young men of Ako had tired of their English lessons; they were too difficult. Nothing remained as an antidote for Dick's increasing discontent except the coma of the winter which seemed to have spread from the immobilised fields to the houses of the men who cultivated them.

They were very cold and draughty, too, those houses of wood and paper. In each of the downstairs rooms there was a square hole sunk in the centre of the matting. This was an auxiliary fireplace and was kept supplied with charcoal. Over this cavity was laid a grating of bamboo, so that the family could squat around the warmth with a thick wadded quilt thrown right over the stove and the knees of the company surrounding it. Thus, huddled together like sheep, they talked, or played games, or sat in silence.

The rooms in the upper storey were practically abandoned; they had become too cold. The family slept downstairs, jostling each other for warmth, in

shivering clots of humanity. Dick and O Yuki shared their room with Atsushi and his wife and two children. Sometimes they slept in line, cheek by jowl; sometimes they arranged themselves starfish-fashion, so that their feet might get the full benefit of the heat from the stove. Sometimes it was too hot. The bamboo grating would become overheated; and some one would awake in the night with a cry and a burned foot.

But the centre of the homestead during the cold winter months was the entrance hall, in the middle of which was a pit full of sand and cinders, the principal house fire. The lighting of this fire every morning by the faithful Kuma was the first sound of life before the pale dawn. Over the charcoal embers a large kettle hung by chains from the roof-beam. This kettle supplied the numerous demands for tea which continued throughout the day. It swung on a regular pulley-chain of great length; for this hall had no upstairs room over it, but was open right up to the criss-cross woodwork of the pointed roof. There were shelves, too, among the roof-beams, where bags of rice and farm implements were stored; and on the floor below in the corners of the hall stood hand looms, looking like the primitive church organs of mediæval times.

The charcoal fires filled the house with a bitter smoke which stung the unaccustomed eyes. The wooden walls and beams were stained with this smoke, and the paper *shoji* had darkened to a reddish brown. The penetrating smell of pickled *daikon* (a kind of radish) spread from the kitchen—an acrid and fetid odour like that of a tropical swamp. From time to time, when a clearance was overdue, the rank reek of human sewage was exhaled from the direction of the *benjo*.

Dick Aylmer found that he was being absorbed more and more into the surroundings of his wife's home. The Hiratas accepted him with the fatalistic

acquiescence of Japanese farmers. He was quite useless. He could not even mend a broken hoe. But they tolerated him, as they tolerated "*kichigai Jumbei*," a harmless idiot, related to the family, who slept among the farm buildings during the summer, and in winter crawled unrebuked into one of the more draughty corners of the hall.

Old Mr. Hirata still liked to take his cup of *sake* with Dick; and together they consumed more and more of those deceptive thimblefuls as the winter progressed. Atsushi and Masuo taught their brother-in-law the intricacies of *shogi* (chess) and *go*; and he played endless baby games with the smaller children and with O Haru, his wife's little sister.

The children were the saving grace amid the tedium of that family life. No wonder the Japanese love their children, and welcome each new arrival with ungrudging pleasure. Life in Japan is lacking in episode and recreation; but the children—and it is difficult to conceive of a Japanese house without children—provide a continual source of amusement and a spontaneous topic for talk. They were for ever getting lost, or falling into the pond, or teasing the dog or "*kichigai Jumbei*," or in some way or other contributing incident to the dreary winter days. Masuo had two little boys and a baby girl; Atsushi, a little girl and a baby boy. There was O Haru—still a child; and there was a little boy of obscure origin who belonged to Kuma. All these children soon classed "*ijin san*" with Jumbei and the dog, as a harmless creature who could be teased with impunity when there was nothing more exciting to do.

The liberty allowed to these children surprised Dick. Every room in the house was open to them; every drawer and every box could be pried into and fingered. Elder people, even Mr. Hirata and *o tera san*, could be bumped and jostled without rebuke. O Haru and O Fumi, Atsushi's daughter, would be dressed up like little queens whenever the arrival of some visitor o.

the occasion of some festival provided an excuse; and boys and girls alike were kept supplied with a constant flow of toys and sweetmeats from the village shops.

"Children are the great treasure of the house," old Mr. Hirata would remark sententiously; or, at times, he would say:

"One is a child only once in a lifetime; let them enjoy themselves!"

The New Year festival came—the making of the *mochi* (pounded rice) and the shaping of it into those great cakes like Stilton cheeses, which are used first for ornament and then for food; the setting up of the *kadomatsu* (corner pine-trees) in front of the outer gateway, planted each in a coil of rope; the hanging of straw ropes with their fringes of pendant stalks round the verandahs of the house and round the family shrines in the garden and in the kitchen; the interminable calls upon all the other inhabitants of the village; the interminable receptions of reciprocal calls; the constant flow of *saké*, and the resultant headaches.

Such was Dick's impression of the festive season of New Year in his Japanese home. It snowed, too, about that time; and the picture of the snow-laden roofs and branches, the smooth white garden paths, the slit cavities in unvarying pairs which the high wooden shoes imprint into the snow, and the snowball in the yard which the children—and the grown-ups—had rolled together, and the snowman adorned with one of Dick's old clerical hats, returned to the Englishman's memories at subsequent New Years as from a world of dreams. His position in the village of Ako was, moreover, recognised by a special invitation from the schoolmaster to occupy a place of honour on the raised platform at the ceremony of the First of January, when the portraits of the Emperor and Empress are unveiled with due solemnity before the bowed heads of the assembled school.

Only O Yuki, his wife, became more and more of a stranger to Dick. She seldom smiled now, and the

dimple was never seen. She did not seem to be happy and proud like most mothers at the advent of her child; and especially, she would avoid her husband's company, so far as it is possible to avoid any one in a Japanese home. Once Dick attempted to speak to her seriously and to ask her to confide in him the reason for her obvious distress. She wept and would not answer. Then he asked her mother; and the old bent beldam replied :

" It is because of the child; her nerves are sick."

But this explanation did not quite satisfy him.

The baby was born in February, a month before its time; but, all the same, he was a sturdy, well-formed little fellow, brick-red in colour and of a kind of india-rubber texture. O Yuki had been attended by the village midwife, who was the doctor's aunt. When her crisis came she had been screened off from the other inhabitants of the room, and had been made to rest, propped up against cushions in a kind of sitting posture; and it was in this attitude that she gave birth to her child. It was on a grey dawn in the period of the Great Cold, that the heir of the Aylmers made his appearance by the light of an oil lamp hanging from the ceiling. All night O Yuki had been groaning and muttering to herself. The name of " Kato " kept on recurring in the course of her delirious talk; and Dick, too, wished that his friend were there, for the family seemed to take the event as a matter of course, and did not show to the anxious father the sympathy to which he considered himself entitled.

All night there had been goings and comings of women behind the screen, carrying food and basins of water and wrappings for the invalid. In the small hours the groans increased to a continuous moaning, and Dick suggested that the doctor should be summoned at once; but he was ignored. The moaning became a cry, as of a lost soul; and Dick called out wildly to Atsushi :

" Are they torturing her?"

"No, it's all right," the young farmer answered; "it's always like that."

The cries ceased; and then, all of a sudden, Dick heard a new and a different cry—a child's cry for life. There followed the sound of renewed bustle and washings. The baby was born.

For nearly a month O Yuki remained behind her screen nursing her infant. He had been born at the hour of the Tiger, and the day, too, was a propitious one. The afterbirth had been duly buried under the earthen floor of the inner porch; and on the sixth day the village called to offer its congratulations. It was then announced that the baby would be named Tadao.

"He is a real Japanese," said the village, half-proud and half-disappointed; for they had expected the child of *ijin san* to be something phenomenal. Tadao received his first presents—notably a large figure of a stout dog, called "*hariko inn*," made of *papier maché* and crudely daubed with white and red and black and blue. He did not as yet take any personal interest in his possessions, but the dog was kept at his side all the time as a guardian against evil spirits.

On the thirty-first day O Yuki carried him herself to the "*ujigami-sama*," the Shinto shrine of Ako; and on the return journey visits were paid to the notables of the village. Tadao was arrayed in copious robes of flannelette gayly imprinted with an ornamental salad of vegetation; and he wore a kind of white tam-o'-shanter on his head, so that he looked like a Tudor princeling. This presentation of his son at the shrine of the false gods was not entirely to the father's liking; but it was taken for granted by the Hiratas as a necessary step in the child's progress. Dick could not tilt against the forces of tradition, alone and on ground of their own selection. He had to give way; but he compromised by insisting that Tadao should be baptised.

The baptism took place the very next day at the chapel on the hill. Both the schoolmaster and *o tera san* had given their opinion that the ceremony could

do little harm. They themselves were present—out of curiosity; and a large number of village people gathered round, who had heard that *ijin san* was about to wash his own baby in accordance with the curious custom of his country. So, for the first—and the last—time, Dick had quite a fair-sized congregation in attendance; and he took the opportunity of explaining that he had made the sign of the Cross on his son's forehead, and had given him his own name of Richard, in token that his sins were washed away and that he was now a member of Christ's church on earth. He hoped that some of his listeners might one day be similarly baptised. The men and women of Ako listened with respect, but with little comprehension; and when Dick invited them to attend his services on Sunday, and to come to him for any spiritual counsel which they might require, they all bowed and sucked in their breath; but they never came.

A day or two later a letter was received from Kato. He had met with "shocking slumpiness and end of fine boom." He had received "hard kick to mind, also purse." He proposed, if he might, to come to Ako for "brief pleasure tour, also priceless occasion of sweet Christly talking." For, as he himself wrote in conclusion, "in misery often broke heart thump back to Holy Trinity."

Dick was delighted at the prospect of seeing his first convert again. From the weary monotony of the days and nights of Ako he looked forward with longing to renewed companionship with a man who could approach with some degree of familiarity his own level of intellect and culture, and who, moreover, was appealing for his help and sympathy. With the letter in his hand, he ran into the house to tell O Yuki the good news.

"Kato San is coming," he cried.

His wife looked up from her needlework with that pinched look about the mouth which he had begun to notice of late. She dropped her work clumsily.

"*So des' ka?* (Indeed?)" she replied, without emphasis.

Tadao Richard was sleeping by her side in a kind of wicker lobster-pot, filled with flannel rags.

"Aren't you glad?" asked Dick, surprised at her lymphatic manner. She had always seemed to be so fond of Kato.

"I had almost forgotten that Kato San," she replied. "It seems such a long time ago. Has he written anything about *Botchan* (baby)?"

No; Kato, in his preoccupation, had omitted the customary family inquiries. It was strange, all the same, in a Japanese; for they set great store in Japan by little courtesies of this kind, and an omission often amounts to an affront. However, Kato was warmly invited to come as soon as he liked, and to stay for as long as he wished; and within a few days he arrived.

"*Sensei!* You have become quite Japanese!" was his greeting in the vernacular; and, strange to say, it grated on Dick's ears. He did not want now to be a Japanese. Kato, too, was changed. His red face was pale; and his bright eyes were sunken and haggard. His old self-confidence was less assured. He had clearly been passing through an anxious time. But, all the same, he delighted the Hirata household with his stories of life in the great capital which none of them had ever seen, with his gossip of statesmen and *geisha*, with imitations of the famous actors and with tales of the chivalrous, inconsequent "*Yedokko*" (Tokyo cockneys).

O Yuki he had greeted almost as if she were a stranger; but he paid special attention to baby Tadao, nursing him in his arms and dangling his spurious gold watch for the infant's delectation.

It was not until next morning that he unburdened his woes to Dick.

"Life is a most miserable thing to me, sir," he confessed, as they followed the rough footpath among the rice-fields in the direction of the Shirakawa River.

"My day is sour; my night is pain. I owe debt to all, I cheat my friend, I have no faith of God, all is lie, all is curse, all is dirty trick. How so?"

Dick tried to comfort the young man; but he himself was far from believing in the conventional consolation and the pious assurances which he was offering. He was afraid, too, lest the conversation might lead up to financial proposals, which with his new responsibilities he would be unable to entertain.

"When purse is broke, also heart," Kato continued. "Philosophic meditating offer no joy. Stoic I try, also Plato and Euclid. I pursue ideal world with Kant. What good when I have bill to pay? Honourable Mrs. Eddy also I consult in public library; and I sing Salvation Army song. What good?"

They were passing the temple of Fujimi Kwannon; and, to distract Kato's thoughts, Dick told him the story of the farmer and of his son who had thrown himself into the Shirakiri waterfall. The Japanese listened attentively, and, at the end of the narrative, he said:

"*Ano tokoro wa mitai* (I should like to see the place)."

Such a relapse into his native tongue was a sign of deep interest in the subject of conversation; for Kato preferred as a rule to show off his remarkable English. When he spoke in Japanese he sometimes said what he really thought; but when he was speaking English he was generally posing, or was following the channel circumscribed by the limitations of his vocabulary.

Together they descended the way which led down to the waterfall. Together they leaned against the wooden parapet which overhung the gorge. They watched in silence the flying column of water and the fringes of foam into which it disintegrated itself over its round receiving basin of hard grey rock. The water became so deatomised that it hardly seemed to reach the foot of the fall; it hovered over its receptacle in a cloud of gossamer flounces. The setting of the fall, too, had

changed with the coming of spring. The tender green of the silver birches and the deeper green of the young maples stood out against the sombre pine-trees. At the base of the cascade, round the rustic shrine, a grove of plum-trees was in full bloom. Half-way up the cliff a clump of these gallant flowers hung out above the water; and another bevy of them clung to the ledge beneath the sky-line. There is a famous poem inspired by this identical spot in which the poet professes to wonder whether the blossoms are indeed the flowers of the plum-tree, or foam from the cascade. Kato tried to quote this conceit in English.

"Shirakiri plum-tree," he said. "Is he bloom? Is he scum? How so?"

"'Foam,'" suggested Dick, "would sound better than 'scum.'"

"You are right, sir," Kato agreed. "Is he bloom? Is he foam? I now conceive my own poem with witty notion. What do you think, sir? Shirakiri waterfall—like elevator falling downward only—for hotel how useless!"

The poet paused, and then added:

"We call such poem *haiku*, because he has comical style."

But by this time it was Dick who was in no mood for levity. To him, the place was haunted by the spirit of that countryman's son who had thrown himself headlong because of his love for a woman. He could feel the creepy attraction of that mighty leap for freedom, and he could see the waters beckoning.

"I was thinking of that poor fellow," he observed.

"In Japan we say suicide is most correct death of noble person and gent; but how shocking to Christian clergyman, I think."

"It was the death of Judas," Dick commented.

"That Judas—I forget," answered Kato.

"The disciple who betrayed Our Lord."

This silenced Kato; and nothing further was said

until they were among the rice-fields on their way home. Then the Japanese began:

"Excuse me, sir, I have friend in Tokyo; he is in great mistake and frightfulness——"

"Tell me, Kato San, what is his trouble?"

"He reside with benefactor which treat him most kind."

"Yes——?"

"All time he adulterate himself with wife of that kind friend."

"Is he ashamed of what he is doing?"

"He is shame; but he say, This is *ingé*, this is fate. Perhaps because of marriage in last life, this love *ingé* is now so. Also there is one young baby."

"Yes——?"

"That good man is made fool and think, He is my own male child. How proud on him! He play with him so happy, and give him toy and sweet cake."

"Well——?"

"Must my friend now confess that shameful love, and cry, Your wife trick you; your baby also trick?"

"The husband would not forgive?"

"Ah, no—he never forgive. Proud, bitter, sour gent of *samurai* class."

"What would he do?"

"He—perhaps—kill!"

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," quoted Dick. "It is a difficult case. I think your friend ought to make some excuse, and go right away, and never see those people again."

"Then that benefactor say, How false ungrateful that young knave now fly me; yet to me he owe all things. How beastly deed."

"Hogen Shonin," Dick replied, "would say that since it is a matter of this transitory world, it is all illusion. Let the young man do what he thinks is his duty."

"You tell me now way of Buddhist priest. Are you, sir, Christian clergyman no more?"

Kato turned on his companion with some severity. He was glad to have this opportunity to introduce this side current into the main stream of interest, lest the Englishman might guess that he had told the story about himself. Dick had to acknowledge the justice of the rebuke. Why should he quote Hogen Shonin—he, who knew a more excellent gospel?

"I was trying to put myself in your friend's position," was his excuse. "I suppose he is not a Christian."

"He is young brainful man of progressive age," Kato answered. "He believe—nothing at all!"

They were passing down the village street. Beyond the high-roofed Chutokuji, they turned to the right between the rice fields, as yet unplanted, towards the Hirata homestead which stood like an oasis in the flat wilderness of the cultivated valley. Two rickshaws had been left unattended outside the gate. Both the riders and the rickshawmen must have gone within the house. This in itself betokened an event; for the country people use their own legs, and do not often employ the wheeled cars save on occasions of exceptional solemnity. More often the presence of a rickshaw in Ako signifies the arrival of a visitor, a luxurious inhabitant of the sophisticated cities of the plain.

CHAPTER XXV

GRACE CAREY ARRIVES

As Dick thrust off his *geta* at the entrance to the Hirata home, he noticed among the domestic collection of variegated footwear a pair of laced boots, which were of the very best London shape and style and evidently of the feminine gender.

"Perhaps it is Mr. and Mrs. Paul from Suruna?" he exclaimed excitedly.

Then, like one of the tall ghosts of the native stage, a dark figure swept through the hall from the direction of the inner parlours. A voice which the young man had not heard for years, a deep, bell-like voice which he knew at once but which he could not at first believe, cried:

"Dick!"

"Grace!" he shouted; and he was in her arms in a moment, the Hirata family standing around them aghast at such an unconventional greeting and doubtful whether it might not portend some evil to themselves.

"Grace, where *have* you come from? Why didn't you let me know?"

"But I wrote and I cabled."

"I haven't heard from you since Christmas."

"I said then that I was coming."

"You always said you were coming, but you never came. I had given up hoping for you."

"It's George's fault; he's such a limpet. Well, brother Dick, I suppose it's you because of your voice; but the rest of you is most improbable. And I've seen my nephew. He's a fine-looking fellow, but not much like the rest of the Aylmers."

"And George?" Somehow Dick did not want to talk about his baby.

"I left him at Kamakura. Foreign travel has not improved him. He's grumpier than ever."

"And father and mother?"

"Poor father has become rather shaky and very repetitive. Mother's all right."

"Did they send me any message?"

"They sent their love."

But Dick knew that Grace had said this for decency's sake, and that she bore no tidings of reconciliation.

The intervening years had not changed Grace in any way. Tall, majestic, assured and melodious, she seemed as much at her ease squatting beside the *hibachi* (fire-box) as she would have been in an arm-chair at her own fireside. She wore a travelling costume of black serge, and a small black hat with an aigrette.

"Yes, Dick," she was saying; "George disliked Japan cordially and at once. 'There is no landscape here,' he said, 'and there are no landscape-painters.' The mountain shapes are flattened out against the sky like pictures on a screen, or like pressed plants. They rise at outrageous right angles from the plains. There is no gradation, no middle distance; and consequently the Japanese have no landscape art worth considering. Look at Turner's 'Crossing the Brook,' and then compare Hiroshigé. 'I am no good at caricature,' says George the Great; 'and Japanese landscape is a caricature of nature.'"

"But the cherry-blossoms, Grace, and all the other flowers. You've not seen it yet. You've come just in time."

"Oh, I don't agree with George—as usual. I think the country is most picturesque, and most soothing to the eye. To the nose—it is less pleasing."

Even here where they sat at the window of the guests' room, propped against the framework of the open windows, a whiff of sulphurous fertiliser came floating from the fields.

"You must come along with me," said Grace, "at once! You are becoming positively bucolic. I shall take you back with me to Kamakura."

"I should love to come. But what about to-night?"

"I shall stop here if your uncles and aunts have no objection. I have always wanted the experience of staying in a Japanese house, but I must say I never dreamed of stopping in one belonging to my own relatives."

Mr. and Mrs. Hirata and O Yuki were squatting at the back of the room, for Japanese politeness does not permit that visitors should ever be left alone. Grace had brought with her a Japanese guide, a very small man named Yamada, dressed in an elderly frockcoat several sizes too large for him. But he had disappeared from sight, as also had Kato.

Mr. Hirata bowed to the floor and inquired whether *o ané sama*—honourable elder sister—would not like to enter the hot water. Dick explained that they were proposing a bath.

"Yes, of course," Grace agreed; "a splendid idea. I want to do everything now I'm here. Will the whole family come to watch me? I hope so."

"Oh, no; but I will send O Yuki to scrub your back."

"All right, if it's part of the ceremony. But I'm quite used to scrubbing my own back."

Grace was allotted a corner in the upstairs room, which her brother and her sister-in-law were now using once more. Extra *futon* were brought out to raise and to lengthen the structure of her bed. But she had brought her own *kimono*, a resplendent garment purchased from some Yokohama store. It was deep blue in colouring and embroidered by hand with flowers and butterflies and what not. Swathed around Grace's tall figure, it looked rather comic in comparison with the modest raiment of her Japanese relatives, the sombre colours and the lack of ornament. In fact, she looked rather like an immense cushion. But she was

delighted with the admiration which the Hiratas, of course, lavished upon it.

It was a shock to the Japanese family to see a woman thus assume the privileges of a man—talking with freedom and abandon, asserting her likes and dislikes, taking her place at the men's supper, drinking their *saké* and laughing at the clumsiness with which she manipulated her chopsticks. Kato, however, was quite up to the occasion. He informed the Hiratas that he was used to conversation with foreign ladies, and that they had better leave all arrangements to him.

"Madam," he begun. "Myself and your dear brother are very chum. Let us chum also. How so?"

"Well, will you please start, Mr. Kato?" answered Grace, who still made the cardinal error of flippancy in talking with Japanese.

"I am vastly admiring the sweet sex," the gallant Kato proceeded. "Now, madam, I toast you with wine."

He had raised his thimble cup of *saké*, and was sucking it down with a loud hiss of intake. Altogether it seemed a merry evening.

But next day, when brother and sister were at last sitting side by side in the Tokaido train, and when the Hiratas and Yuki and Kato and Ako village had all been left behind, Grace turned to Dick and said:

"Dick, dear, I'm not going to play the fool any longer. I must say what I am really thinking."

"All right, Grace," replied her brother, rather surlily. "Say anything you like. Don't mind me."

"Dick, this can't go on. It's monstrous!"

"What can't go on—you or I or Ako or Japan?"

Dick was wearing grey flannels and an old browned straw hat, garments which he had not seen for nearly a year. He was less aggressively de-Europeanised than he had seemed in his *kimono*. But Grace was conscious of a very great change in him—both from the English Dick whom she had known and from the Japanese

Dick whom she had imagined. There was a roughness in his manner—and a tone of defiance. The calm self-assurance of Hernwood Rectory had completely gone. The young man's innocent outlook had gone also—the idealism, the enthusiasm, the crusading fervour. Dick was less picturesque and more commonplace—in spite of his *kimono*, his Yuki San and his exotic setting. He was an Englishman who had made a silly marriage and was degenerating, and who was conscious of it and resentful.

"You will meet an old friend of yours at Kamakura," Grace was saying, as the train jugged slowly through the Shidzuoka tea-fields.

"Who? George?"

"Oh, no; I didn't mean George. He is always with us, of course; and he is no one's friend—not even his own!"

As Dick did not seem inclined to be interested, Grace had to supply the information uninterrogated.

"It's Chloe Carbery," she said.

Dick had almost forgotten.

"The girl at Tilbury," he said at last; and then he added suspiciously:

"Why ever did you bring her out here?"

"I didn't bring her out," said Grace, realising once more how her brother had changed. "She was in the boat. I hadn't seen her for ages."

Dick's interest and attention were again astray; but Grace continued:

"She has changed her name; she calls herself Chloe de Vesta."

"Is she married?" Dick asked listlessly.

"I'm not sure," his sister answered.

The truth was that Miss Chloë was touring the East in the company of a corpulent bull-necked gentleman, named Hancocks, who represented very large engineering interests in the North of England. He had gone off to Peking in search of a railway concession; and he

was to rejoin his *inamorata* later on in Japan, when his mission had proved successful.

Soon after leaving Marseilles Grace's attention had been attracted to a very beautiful but rather artificially decorated girl, who had soon become a centre of admiration for the unemployed on board ship. She looked at her again, and seemed to recognise her. Then she searched the passenger list for guidance, but found none. At last she remembered; and so one day she spoke to her.

"I am Lady Carey," she said; "do you remember me?"

"How delightful!" she of the hennaed hair had replied with exaggerated emphasis. "Of course, I remember. How small the world is!"

Lady Carey agreed; and then explained how she had searched the list for Miss Carbery's name.

"Of course! How stupid of me!" said Chloe. "I—I've changed my name. Oh, no; I'm not married; not yet! I had some property left me. I am Chloe de Vesta now."

Later in the day Grace informed Sir George, who commented:

"Strikes only on its own box! I wonder."

Lady Carey had quickly summed up the situation. Chloe had progressed along the road which she had chosen, passing from one man to the next, from the rich to the richer, wherever possible. She specialised in financiers, contractors, engineers—men who were doing things on a big scale and who had plenty of money and little time to waste. She had been very successful; but she was terribly bored. Her career had been free from any of those romantic adventures which had variegated the patchwork pattern of her mother's life. She had never been unfaithful to any of her protectors, except out of policy—to awaken jealousy or to precipitate a rupture.

But she had become a very wonderful-looking person—slender and pale. Her face was of an almost

china-like glaze. Beneath the arch of her darkened eyebrows her hazel eyes looked out enigmatically at the men who were always glad to be drawn within their orbit of attraction. Her hair, which was now of a dark chestnut colour, had been burnished with interminable brushings; and there was a French maid always in the background to keep her mistress in perfect preservation.

She had an inexhaustible change of quite fresh raiment, and a dazzling supply of those broad-brimmed picture-hats which were then the fashion. She wore three or four valuable diamond rings; and a round diamond ornament hanging from her neck, which she had a trick or a mannerism of raising to her eye like a monocle. But this by no means exhausted the resources of her jewel-case.

Before the voyage was over she was on the friendliest of terms with Lady Carey, who had seen in her a possible agent of Providence—especially after she had learned that this Delilah was going on to Japan, alone.

"So Dick has married a Japanese wife," Chloe had remarked. "How very quaint! He will think me a dreadful person now."

She had developed a sleepy, drawling, unnatural way of talking; but her expressive eyes were not untroubled at the memory of Dick.

At Shanghai her escort, Mr. Hancocks, had left the boat; and a change had come over Chloe.

"It's such a relief, dear Lady Carey, when they go away," she said, with some return of animation.

"But he's kind to you, isn't he?" Grace asked.

"They are so oppressive," explained Chloe, still insisting on the plural; "and they think that all a woman wants is clothes and cheques and jewellery."

"That's something to be going on with," Lady Carey replied. "What more do we want?"

"To be something in a man's life. Not to be always going about with 'To be let or sold' signboards out. It is so heartbreaking to be treated as if one is—nobody."

"Could you change now, if you wanted to?"

"Oh, yes," Chloe answered, most positively. "You may not believe me, Lady Carey; but I could be a better and a more faithful wife now than when I was—different. Then this kind of life would always have attracted me. Now—I know it; and I would never want to go back to it, if—if I can once escape."

"But surely, with a little determination, that is not very difficult."

"It is very difficult—for a Chinaman to escape from being a Chinaman," observed Miss de Vesta, pointing with her parasol towards a blue-gowned celestial manservant, with black flower-pot hat, red button and pigtail complete, who was shuffling along the deck in search of his master. "I was born into the *demi-monde*. I breathe its air. I talk its language. I don't know any other. What am I to do?"

Grace would have liked to help the girl's better aspirations, but there was something stagey and unreal about her regrets. So, instead, she changed the subject.

"You will like seeing Dick again?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," Chloe had answered with real sincerity in her voice. "I have made a kind of idol of your brother. I know it's all nonsense. But in my mind he stands for all I have lost."

She was fingering the diamond plaque, turning it over and over in her hand, as though it were a coin which she hesitated to stake.

"He will probably be a disappointment, then, when you do see him," Lady Carey laughed. "Missionaries are generally rather depressing people."

"They can't be worse than engineers," the girl had answered.

Some of this story, carefully edited, Grace was retailing to her brother in the long empty carriage, as the train circled round the foothills of Fujiyama. She painted her picture with considerable art, as a farmer prepares his field before it is sown. She inspired a

movement of expectancy in her brother's mind. She warmed his heart—as wine is warmed—with the thought that there was another lonely soul in the world, who throughout these years had been cherishing his memory for guidance and for comfort. She had prepared him, too, for the first shock of cruel recognition when he was to see how this girl whom he had known innocent and unspoiled had been transformed into the typical creature of her class—hard, tired and mercenary.

"She feels that she is treated as being nobody," Dick repeated. "Why, I have been a nobody for nearly a year. You saw me in that house with O Yuki's family. They are kind people in their way. But I am a stranger; there is no place for me."

The train stopped at Gotemba station. Dick turned, and gazed up at the leper hospital, with its edging of larch-trees, high on the hill opposite Fujiyama.

"We were married there," he said, pointing; and, involuntarily, he shuddered.

"What month was that?" his sister asked.

"July."

"And the baby was born in February. Eight months. That was very quick work. Tell me honestly, Dick; were you surprised when it arrived so soon? Or had you and O Yuki already——?"

"No, of course not."

There was silence until they reached Ofuna station, which is the junction for the branch line to Kamakura. There they had to wait among the crowd of Japanese which is never absent from any railway station throughout the country. They always seem to be waiting there for trains which never carry them away. There were schoolboys with their uniforms and their yachtman's caps; there were the little girls with their bright hair ribbons; there were the "*haikara*" young men in their ill-fitting European suits; and there were the old countrymen with the skirts of their *kimono* girt up into their waistbands and with their browned and

patient wives, laden with packages, plodding along after them down the platform.

"It's impossible!" exclaimed Grace, with a tone of bitter languor in her voice.

"What is?" asked Dick, though he knew full well what her meaning must be.

"To think that you—that we—are related to these people! It cannot be!"

"But it is," said her brother gloomily. "I'm sorry now—now that I have seen you. I know that I have made an appalling mistake."

CHAPTER XXVI

CHLOE DE VESTA

CHLOE DE VESTA arose from the zereba of bamboo furniture which filled the lounge of the "Seaside Hotel." She was wearing a black velvet evening-dress of a modified "Gibson Girl" type, very simple in its lines, which showed off to full advantage her admirable throat and shoulders, and the undulous lines of waist and hips. As she rose, an ermine cape slipped elegantly off her back on to the chair where she had been resting; and a pearl rope of great value appeared which hung from her neck almost to her waist. She had preferred her pearls to her diamonds that evening, since they have far more appealing and romantic qualities. Pearls are the tears of the suppliant; diamonds are the corruscation of success.

Dick saw at once that his Ministering Angel had become a very beautiful woman. She shook hands in the hesitating, floppy way which was then considered *chic* in her world in London.

"It's a long time, Mr. Aylmer," she said; and those troubling eyes of hers seemed to be groping into the darkness of Dick's mind and memory. The fragrance of one of Coty's latest perfumes floated round her. Dick was being carried by a swift current of emotion in the direction of a destination which the two women alone understood.

The young man shook hands, and murmured something which he felt to be commonplace and stupid. He had never remembered Chloe Carbery being like this. In Bethnal Green she was a gushing and awkward girl, inconspicuous, too, and uncertain of herself.

Chloe de Vesta, as she stood among the cheap furniture of the gimcrack hotel, appeared to the young exile to be an incarnation of beauty. There was a queenliness about her which was accentuated by the ermine furs. There was an elegance and a refinement in her dress and manner; and there was an invitation in her voice and in her eyes which Dick could not but accept—at any rate provisionally.

"I'm awfully glad to see you again," he answered. "It's a long time, and we've both changed."

He was thinking mostly of himself, how rough and uncouth he had become; and even this simple sentence sounded boorish the moment he had spoken it. He represented the rice-fields of Japan, and she the drawing-rooms of London. Chloe took the remark differently.

"Don't be too harsh in your judgment of me, Mr. Aylmer, please."

Dick had been so impressed by Chloe's dazzling appearance that up to that moment he had not given a thought to her past nor to the manner in which that elegance and that luxury had been acquired. Now he remembered; but there was a tone of penitence in her voice which more than counteracted the unpleasant impression. Is any confessor quite insensible to the tears of a beautiful Magdalen?

"Come on, Dick!" interrupted Grace, delighted at the success with which her little intrigue was already beginning to work. "You must clean up before dinner. You see," she added, looking round at the litter of chairs and tables, "we are supposed to be back in England now, so you must do as the English do, and dress for dinner."

She guided her brother up the broad wooden staircase, with its pretentious red lacquering, to the corridor of the upper storey. The route was lined with dumpy chambermaids—Japanese girls in brown and grey *kimono*, who peeped slyly at the new visitor and whispered and giggled among themselves.

"Here's your room, Dick; and Chloe is next door. George and I are just round the corner. You have a nice big verandah, you see, where we will all meet for breakfast; and we are quite screened off from the rest of the hotel. Hallo, there is George!"

Sir George Carey, already in evening dress with short jacket and black tie, came round the corner of the verandah. He looked more like a squire than an artist; but he managed to draw his right hand out of the depths of his trouser pocket in order to welcome his brother-in-law.

"Well, Dick," he said; "and how's Japan?"

But he did not bother to await the answer to so large an inquiry. He crossed over to the edge of the verandah, and with his arms crossed on the railing stared out through the pine-grove towards the sea.

Dick returned to his room to change, and, as he passed Chloe's open window, he caught a glimpse of snowy undergarments and a whiff of perfumed femininity. Then he thought of O Yuki and of his own married life on the floor of the Hirata farmstead; and, with the thought, he felt a stifling sensation about his throat and chest as though great weights were hung about him.

Conversation at dinner ranged over personal reminiscences and criticism of the company present in the big dining-room. The guests divided themselves into three very distinct categories. There were the Japanese—only two parties of them, all men and all silent. Then there were the European (and American) residents—stolid merchants from Yokohama with their anæmic wives. Lastly, there were the globe-trotters and tourists, mostly American, garrulous and exuberant. Here and there fusion could be observed between the two latter classes, but on the whole they kept away from each other. There were also a few oddities in a miscellaneous class of their own—a Europeanised Japanese with a foreign wife, both looking equally scared of each other; the purple widow of a forgotten

diplomat; two or three cranks; and an amiable couple engaged in drinking themselves to death in a land where there were no relatives or friends to interfere.

The tables were decorated with sprays of cherry-blossom, and great masses of the national flower were banked up in the corners of the room; for at Kamakura the season was much further advanced than in the mountains, and early in April the coral buds of the cherries were already beginning to open. From the ceiling hung the broad white punkahs, motionless as yet, for the weather was not sufficiently hot for their use. The waiting-girls waddled hither and thither carrying the insipid makeshift for a Parisian meal. They brought the *budoshu* (wine), the "whisky-tansan" (a local variety of whisky and soda) and the Kirin "*biiru*" for the guests' consumption. Their shrill "*hai!*" of assent broke in at times among the hubbub of strident nasal voices; and their bowing, shuffling figures made eddies round the tables.

In the middle of this outlandish scene, neither Japanese nor wholly European, crawled spider-like the squat figure of Signor Squarcia, the Italian manager. He was old and bald and sturdy, with the head of Bismarck and the figure of a box. His Japanese was as vigorous as his Italian; and the legend ran that he had been a great man once in his own country. Now he had reached the shores where greatness is forgotten, and had found them to be not uncongenial; and he had lived for many years with his Japanese wife in a small wooden house in the grounds of his hotel. At meal-time he patrolled his dining-room, speaking occasionally in French with those few of the guests who were conversant with the language of civilisation, and ignoring the others as barbarians and of no account.

To Dick there was glamour in the scene. It seemed so long since he had consorted with his own race that even this grotesque company appeared to radiate friendliness and confidence. Even the stale *hors*

d'œuvres seemed delicious and tasty to a palate long condemned to a diet of rice and pickled *daikon*. Dick ate plentifully, and drank more plentifully still of the sweet champagne, which Sir George provided to celebrate the family reunion.

"How wonderful to be here!" he exclaimed with unfeigned delight.

Grace exchanged a glance with Chloe, a sign that all was well. The "Ministering Angel" was quite aware that Lady Carey had given her *carte blanche* to work her will with Dick. Of course, nothing had actually been spoken upon so delicate a subject; but the wireless telephony, which every woman can operate with such dexterity, had been calling ever since Dick's arrival.

"He's yours if you can get him," Grace had signalled.

"But can I keep him?" Chloe had retorted.

"Do you want to?" the elder woman had replied.

"I don't know yet," came the answer.

'There was neither speech nor language, but their voices were heard among them;' and the compact was as clear to both women as if it had actually been ratified by word of mouth. Chloe knew well that this complacency on Grace's part was not due to any particular love which Lady Carey might have for her. If she wished to keep Dick permanently she might meet with strong opposition where now she found encouragement. She knew that this tall, dignified sister, who was so ready to play the pander's part, did so solely because she felt that her brother was in a most perilous plight, and that an operation was imperative.

Chloe wanted Dick. She admitted it to herself, and she admitted it to Grace in the course of their silent colloquy. In England she would have thought differently. It would have seemed ridiculous there for Chloe de Vesta, a queen of the *demi-monde*, to throw herself away—gratis—upon a bashful little curate.

Perhaps. But she was not in England; and, besides, hers was a way of life at the same time grasping and lavish. She had been money-grubbing for some years. The tide had turned now; and she was ready to spend. Chloe's loves had been so mercenary that there was still something virginal about her. She felt, too, that the call of destiny was awaiting her in Japan. She was a disciple of the school of fiction which overemphasises the rôle played by destiny in human affairs, especially in love romances. The fatal hour was upon her, she felt, and the fatal mood; the fatal lover was sitting opposite her, glancing at her from time to time with frank admiration. Of this she felt sure; and the certainty warmed her heart, and danced before her eyes, and spread delicious ripples of nascent electricity through the nerves of her body and across the surface of her skin. At last—at last she had something worth living for.

She was beginning to get wireless messages through to Dick also, and to receive replies—not clear and crisp as in her conversation with his sister, but deliciously halting and diffident.

"Dick! Dick!" she seemed to be calling.

"Chloe," the voice of his spirit could be heard to reply, "you are wonderful and beautiful."

"I am waiting for you, Dick—waiting through all these years!"

"I am afraid to answer as yet; but, O God, how I want to!"

Above the clatter of conversation these messages seemed to be flying to and fro. As a matter of fact, Dick was speaking of his life at Ako, laughing at the discomfort and skipping over the monotony. He was turning it into a joke for his listeners' amusement.

"But do you want to go back, Dick?" his sister had shot at him.

He was silent for a moment, and a cloud passed over his feverish happiness.

"When the holidays are over," he said with a sigh.

After the dinner had ended with a cup of bitter coffee, they all went out for a moonlight stroll along the sands. Somehow Sir George and his wife succeeded in going on ahead, while Dick and Chloe loitered on the broad, deserted beach.

The girl passed her arm through that of her companion, and the touch of her thrilled him. The beach was very lonely, between headland and headland; and under the silver dapple of the moonlight the inky wavelets fell with slow deliberation. To the right was a Japanese fishing village, dimly lighted; and some narrow, sharp-prowed boats were drawn up on the shore. There seemed no need for speech; but, at last, Dick said:

"Are you happy?"

"Yes—very—at this moment," Chloe answered in sleepy, purring tones.

"So am I," said Dick, turning aside from what he had intended to say.

"Come nearer, then!"

He lay by her side under the deluding light of the moon; and that dreamy perfume of hers enveloped him. He had rolled up his cloak to serve as a pillow for her; and she lay at full length, swathed in a long black cape. Her fingers rippled through his hair or stroked his forehead. There was magic in her touch. The lazy plash of the waves provided a fitting accompaniment.

At last all movement ceased, and Chloe lay wondering what the end of that first evening would be. Then, as though guessing Dick's thoughts, she said, very gently:

"It's a pity."

"Yes," Dick agreed; he had been reflecting on his futile marriage.

"What are you thinking of—Dick?" She spoke his name for the first time; and he was pleased.

"Of what cannot be altered."

"Let us forget a little, then—while we can!"

She was going too fast; she had struck a wrong note. Dick sat up with his hands clasped round his knees, and stared out across the trembling sea.

"We'd better get back," he said. "They'll think we're lost."

He helped her to rise, taking both her hands in his. This was the point at which she had intended him to kiss her; but he did not. Instead, he picked up his cloak and shook the sand out of its folds. Then, they walked slowly back to the hotel.

In the public drawing-room some bore was playing an indifferent ragtime on a jangling piano. The Careys were nowhere to be seen.

"This is too dismal for words," Chloe sighed. "I'm going upstairs. I'll say good-night."

She offered Dick her hand with the same floppy gesture with which she had welcomed him. Then she ascended the broad staircase with its red banisters. Half-way up she turned and smiled at her swain, who was still watching her.

He had meant to stay in the smoking-room, to wait for his sister, to go out for a walk again—anything to quiet the tempest of the Unthinkable, which was sweeping over his senses. Certainly, he did not mean to find his way to his own bedroom so soon, with its tantalising contiguity. Yet he did so; and moreover he changed into one of his white cotton *kimono*, which allowed him to feel more normal and more at his ease. Certainly, he did not mean to go out on to his balcony, past the perfumed zone of Chloe's window. Yet, somehow, he did so. Perhaps he wanted to watch the sea beyond the pine-grove, or the intermittent flashes of the island volcano of Oshima. And, somehow, he was aware that the long windows behind him were opening; and that she was coming out to join him. But he did not move.

The jangling piano—its sound was sweetened by the distance—was playing the "Geisha" music, that amiable epic of a non-existent Japan.

"*Chin—Chin—Chinaman! Muchee muchee sad!*"

Chloe was at his side. Her abundant hair hung loose about her shoulders; and she wore a loose silk wrap of iridescent blue. It was a relief to Dick to notice that this garment had regulation sleeves and was not a *kimono*.

A tall electric light standard stood on the lawn outside. Moths fluttered round the imprisoned light. Beyond was the tennis-court and a children's playground, with a giant's stride and a low swing.

"Chloe——" said Dick, but he never finished the sentence; for round the corner of the verandah came Grace and Sir George.

"Hallo, children," said Grace cheerily; "we lost you, and you got home first. Isn't this a jolly place? We can walk about in our night-dresses, and nobody seems to mind."

She could see that the romance which she had prepared was making progress already.

Next day was Sunday. There was no church for Dick to attend; and this, too, was a relief. He did not have to simulate a piety which he was far from feeling. He wanted to enjoy himself during this brief holiday. "Be happy while happiness offers itself," Hogen Shonin had said; "the time comes when we can only remember happiness." He was like a convict released from prison on ticket of leave. He had a month or so during which he might gorge himself with happiness. Then would come the return to gaol, and the weary years of picking the oakum of despair. Why should he hesitate? Grace was here—his sister who loved him; there would be no wrong in taking a holiday with his sister, whom he had not seen for three long years.

Yet, beneath this specious reasoning, Dick knew—but would not confess even to himself—that it was not his sister Grace who made the blood dance in his veins, who shed a new beauty over the sea and a new wonder over the dreamy old Japanese town, and who made every moment long with expectancy or brief

with fruition. It was not his sister Grace who added a spice of daring and devilry to his enjoyment of the delicious spring weather. It was not Grace who made him wonder in his soberer moments, whether he had not better go away—before it was too late.

The cherry-blossom was aflower everywhere; and since the season was remarkably mild, it clung to its brown branches with unusual tenacity. The Temple of Hachiman, God of War, was embowered in the pale coraline purity, which is the warrior's particular emblem; and a long rosy-white arcade led for about half a mile from the lotus lakes and the queer round bridges at the foot of the temple steps back into the centre of the town. The restaurants, the *geisha*-houses and the broad streets and intricate by-ways were thronged with crowds of Japanese sightseers. Dick remembered Kato's stories of sprees in the cherry season.

"*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit.*"

"*Hana wa sakura, hito wa bushi,*" the Japanese say; "As the cherry is to the other flowers, so is the warrior to the rest of mankind." But since the cherry-flower is to be seen at its best among the Kyoto palaces and on the hill slopes of Yoshino, it was decided that Dick should escort the two ladies for a brief sightseeing tour in the neighbourhood of the ancient city of the Mikados. Sir George remained behind in Kamakura. He was "painting the sea."

"This is a country for water-colour and sketch books," he growled. "I can't get on with anything else. But there's always the sea!"

So Dick and Grace and Chloe departed for Kyoto, where they spent memorable days inspecting the artistic treasures of the Imperial palaces, rummaging through curio shops and wandering among temple courts on the cherry-clouded hills. They saw the "Cherry Dance"—*Miyako-odori* or the Dance of the Capital—as it is performed every spring in the special theatre of the *geisha* school in the Gion quarter. It was

a revelation even to Dick, who had hitherto seen mostly the rougher manifestations of Japanese life, to watch this kind of ballet drama with its exquisite refinement and accuracy, its careful postures and its charming colour schemes. But he could not admire individually the little *geisha* who took part in the performance. He was so tired of Japanese artificiality and mannerism; and he could not compare their picturesque prettiness with the beauty and personality of his own race, as typified by his sister and Chloe de Vesta. They looked like queens in a doll's garden.

From Kyoto they went to Nara, which was the seat of the Emperor's court in the earliest civilised period some fifteen hundred years ago. There they saw the Horyuji, the oldest of Japanese temples, and the flock of the sacred deer in the Kasuga Shrine. They went up to Yoshino, most famous of all cherry-gardens; but there the blossoms were already falling, and, by the time the travellers returned to Kamakura, they were beginning to feel that they had exhausted the possibilities of the country.

"Everything is just like everything else here," Chloe was saying to Dick in the course of a *tête-à-tête* stroll which followed on their return to the seaside. "They are quaint and pretty, these temples and the rest; but there is no variety. I like a change—change—change all the time. Dick, however can you bear it?"

He could not bear it; but up to now he had not realised how unbearable it had become.

"When I first arrived in Japan," he said, "I was carried along by a great idea. I thought that all these people were waiting to hear about God and Our Lord; and that I had been specially sent to tell them about these things. So the country did not seem dull to me, then!"

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Chloe vaguely.

"I felt that they were waiting for me to come and help them; and that I could understand them, and live their life, and lead them to God. That was

why I married a Japanese wife," he concluded, lamely.

"And you are sorry now?"

She was dressed in white—white serge skirt, white silk blouse, white shoes and stockings. She had taken off her broad white hat from the burnished copper splendour of her hair, and she had laid it on the grass at her side. She smiled up into the young man's face with her ambiguous eyes dancing in the sunlight.

"Dick!"

He had been pacing to and fro, while she sat on the grass, attentive. But at her call he dropped to her side in a kneeling position. Her hands were on his shoulders, and her face within a few inches of his own. Her face seemed to grow as large as the earth, as large as the sky above him. Her lips were saying something to him; but he only knew how full and how red they were, and how that perfume was rising to his brain. He felt her hands lock behind his neck. He held her body in a tight embrace, and her mouth became his mouth; and all sense of time was lost. . . .

CHAPTER XXVII

DICK'S LOVE ROMANCE

THEY lay in each other's arms on the high bluff of Reisan, which shuts in Kamakura Bay from the Westward. Over them were the red trunks of the pine-trees, and the dark green canopy of the pine-branches. Beneath them was a couch of pine-needles, soft and fragrant. They were screened from the inquisitive by a clump of bamboo grasses; and they could look out upon the sea, the island grove of Enoshima—which is the sanctuary of Benten, Goddess of Love—the golden sands of Katasé, and—far away across the intervening hills—the silver wings of Fuji.

It was May Day and Sunday and a perfect afternoon. The earth was warm, and the sky and the breeze. Even the sea was warm enough to tempt a few early bathers. Chloe and Dick had wandered out as usual for a haphazard meandering among the hills and temples of the ancient town. But this day there was a curious certainty in both their minds, which must have communicated itself by that wireless machinery, now in excellent working order. Grace watched them go, with her lazy, tolerant smile; for it seemed that she, too, was in the secret. She was so certain that she even teasingly offered to accompany them; and smiled again, when they both assured her that she must rest.

"Don't be late for tea!" she called out to them, mockingly, as she lay back in her long wicker chair, and resumed her yellow novel.

The other hotel guests may have been in the secret, also. From the lounge and from the verandahs of that glorified doils' house, they glanced at the graceful

couple, and some of them whispered and smiled, knowing the story of Dick's life in Japan and divining the character of Miss de Vesta. But the Seaside Hotel and its denizens are used to these transient romances, without which life in exile would be so intolerably dull and conversation so insipid and trite. So they smiled and closed their eyes again.

There was one, however, who neither smiled nor closed his eyes. Instead, he rose and followed Dick and Chloe at a suitable distance. It was the Reverend Stephen Paul. He was dressed in correct clerical garb, very different from Dick's holiday flannels; and he looked more prim and more severe than ever. Every Sunday for the next month or so he was by way of coming over to Kamakura from a neighbouring village, where he was reposing after his labours in Suruna, in order to conduct a service in the hotel for those of the guests who tempered their boredom with piety. There he had met Dick—not at the service, but on the sands with Chloe. He shook hands with obvious disapprobation.

"I hope, Aylmer," he said acidly, "that I have not intruded upon your taking the services here. I was informed that there was no service last Sunday."

"I am having a holiday," Dick explained lamely.

"I should have thought that Mattins—and Evensong, too—once a Sunday would hardly have been too great a strain; or have you been overworking at Ako?"

"I am quite all right, thanks. I hope Mrs. Paul is keeping well?"

"Quite well, thank you; and Mrs. Aylmer?"

He raised his harsh voice on the last words so that Dick's companion might be sure to hear. There was a festive look about Dick which irritated his colleague, and Chloe was disquietingly elegant. Paul preferred to see Dick atoning for his rashness amid the squalor of Ako. He began to talk at some length about Suruna; but Dick was obviously not interested. He drew pictures in the sand with his stick. At last, Chloe broke

in with an excuse that they really must go on, as the Joneses would be waiting; and Paul was left there by the water's edge in the middle of a sentence.

"What a dreadful man!" said Chloe before they were wholly out of earshot.

Paul disliked Dick. He was jealous of him. He had disliked the inconsequent airs of superiority which this callow recruit had sometimes assumed in St. George's House. He disliked the occasional reminder that Dick had been at a more swagger college at Oxford. He disliked the respect with which his wife Viola used often to speak of Dick. He disliked the almost daily evidence at Suruna that Dick was a personality and the creator of a movement, and that he, Paul, was only a substitute and a deputy. Since coming to Kamakura, he had already heard strange stories about the goings-on of this handsome young clergyman, who did not even wear a clergyman's collar. He conceived that it was his duty, an enjoyable duty, too, to find out the worst about him and to bring about his complete humiliation.

So that May Day afternoon, when Dick and Chloe stepped out of the hotel with the aura of Aphrodite already almost visibly cast about them, the Reverend Stephen Paul recognised that it was his obvious duty to follow them, and to see what they were up to. He had followed them down the main street of Hasé, the westernmost of the cluster of villages which form the present-day Kamakura. He had followed them along the main road westward as far as the steep hill over Reisan bluff and the sacred Well of the Stars. There they had turned up a side-path through an old abandoned cemetery with its moss-grown Buddhas, its upright slabs, and here and there a bunch of wild flowers in a little vase before a tomb. Higher up, they paused to look backward at what had once been the chief city of the land, but which had now shrunk to a skeleton of its former greatness—a trickle of brown houses along the line of the roads. On the hill opposite hung

the grey roofs of the temple of Hachiman; and a corresponding bluff ran out from thence to the sea. Between headland and headland the thin line of white foam was stretched like a warrior's bow—to the right of it the blue Pacific, to the left of it the golden sands. Between the hills and the sea, walled in by sand dunes, lay a semi-circular basin, some two miles across, which had been almost entirely built over in the days of Kamakura's supremacy. But no trace now remained of the ancient days except a few lofty temple roofs and a brooding sense of calm. In a secluded valley, visible from Reisan, Daibutsu, the great bronze Buddha, spirit of Quiet, of Patience and of Reconciliation, meditated through the fretful centuries with bowed head and sloping shoulders and hands palm upwards in his lap.

"There he is!" Dick had exclaimed; and Paul, slinking after the two lovers, had heard the exclamation and had imagined for a guilty moment that he had been recognised. But no; Dick was pointing out the Great Buddha to his companion, and was talking about the gods of the heathen in terms of most unorthodox commendation.

Then they went on their way up the hill, which was very steep. Dick's arm was round the girl's waist. They passed the monument in Japanese style to a famous German scientist, which stood at the top of the ascent, and the sapling within a square wooden fence, which Herr Köch had planted there with his own hands. On the crest of the further slope they sat down in a sheltered spot away from the public footpath.

Paul was in a tremor of excitement. He stalked from tree-trunk to tree-trunk like a Red Indian. He watched them as they talked together. He watched Dick pacing to and fro, and speaking of his ambitions and his disillusionments. He watched how he dropped to the girl's side—how her arms closed over him—how their lips met—how they were no longer two but one

being, who rocked passionately this way and that, oblivious of all surroundings. They sank out of sight among the bamboo grasses, which shook and trembled. Paul could hear little cries like a mouse's cry behind the wainscot; but he had seen enough.

Filled with a puritan's envy of lovers' unsanctioned happiness, with a sense of outraged rectitude and with a genuine disgust at the habits of humanity, he took his way back through the graveyard to the town. He went by tram to the station, and thence by train to Tokyo to report to Bishop Blackett. He also wrote in rough Japanese an anonymous letter of warning to Mrs. Aylmer Yuki in Ako village.

An hour or more later Dick and Chloe wandered homeward by the same broken path. Material things hardly existed for them. They were floating on clouds like the gods of mythology. They heard only each other's voices. They saw only each other's eyes. They clung to each other, hand in hand. They were like country lovers, unsophisticated and unashamed.

"Chloe, love, I shall take you home with me."

"To England?"

"Yes, to England. Nothing can come between us now!"

"No; nothing, darling."

"I loved you, Chloe, love, from the moment that I first saw you long ago in the slums!"

"Why didn't you tell me then, darling?"

"I was a fool. I didn't know."

"And what has happened since?"

"It's a dream. It's a bad dream. It means nothing!"

Grace Carey had succeeded beyond her expectations. As soon as the pair returned to the hotel the wireless was at work again; and Grace on her verandah knew that a crisis had occurred. After dinner the wireless was set aside; and Chloe made an open avowal.

"He says he will come home to England," she began.

"But his wife and family and the rest of it?"

"They aren't in the running," Chloe answered, smiling mischievously.

"You don't mean——?" Grace asked.

"Yes—I do!"

"Everything?"

"Everything!"

"But when did this—happen?"

"This afternoon!"

Grace's tolerant air had vanished. Now that her plans had been completely successful, she began to be anxious as to the possibilities of the future. She had been intent on rescuing her brother from Japan and from his Japanese relatives. But she did not want to hand him over, a poor captive, to the arbitrary disposal of this *belle dame sans merci*. The girl was, for the moment, in love—that was obvious; but Grace knew that she would prove fickle and corrupt in the end.

"I am glad," she commented. "It will be fun for you both—while it lasts!"

"But it's going to last," said Chloe, picking up some of Grace's knitting and examining it as an amateur might examine a complicated piece of machinery.

"Dick says——"

"And Mr. Hancocks?" Grace interrupted brutally.

"Oh—damn Hancocks. I never liked him, anyway!"

The men came up from dinner; and Chloe gladly turned from a displeasing memory to gaze into her lover's eyes. Sir George lit his pipe, and went out for a stroll on the beach. He could not bear, as he himself put it, "to sit and listen to that young cub yapping."

Later that evening, when they had all retired—ostensibly—to their own rooms, Dick strolled out on to the verandah—in confident anticipation. He found his beloved already there. She kissed him on the lips; and, with her arm about him, drew him into that perfumed heaven beyond the open windows. . . .

The rosy veil of dawn was stretched from headland to headland by the time that he tiptoed back across the verandah in order to make a show of having slept in his own bed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BISHOP'S ULTIMATUM

As in a fairy tale, the gods allowed these two lovers some forty-eight hours of perfect happiness, untroubled by remorse, anxiety or outside interference. Then, with the second morning, the storm broke. Dick received a letter from Bishop Blackett summoning him at once to Tokyo. It was at breakfast on the verandah of the hotel; and only Grace was there.

"My bishop has sent for me," said Dick, his hand trembling; "I shan't go."

"That's the way to talk to bishops," laughed his sister.

But later, like the young man in the parable, he repented and went.

It was nearly a year since he had seen his chief; and he was surprised to find how unchanged everything was about St. George's, in spite of his absence. Even the books strewn about on tables and chairs seemed to have remained there, collecting more dust, ever since the time of his last unpleasant interview. The Bishop still stood in the same position in front of the empty grate, his hands behind his back and beneath his coat-tails. It seemed, indeed, to be merely a continuation of the last *tableau*. He did not offer to shake hands with Dick; his face was overcast, and the smiles and whimsicality had vanished out of his expression.

"Please, sit down, Mr. Aylmer."

Dick took his place on the familiar horsehair sofa—sullen, stubborn and resentful. Who was this small, bird-like being that he should call another man's conduct to account?

"Mr. Aylmer, you probably know why I have sent for you?"

Dick shook his head, but did not answer. He crossed his legs and affected unconcern.

"Last year," the Bishop continued, "you were foolish enough to contract a most unwise marriage. This year, you have deserted your wife and your child, and you are——"

Dick stood up; and the Bishop's sentence terminated.

"So you have thought it worth while to spy on me," exclaimed the young man, trying to control the anger which was boiling up within him, anger not only against the Bishop and his informers, but against the whole system which he represented—the Anglican Church, so weak, so pompous, so lacking in conviction, in understanding and in authority.

"Your behaviour has been so brazen and so crazy that there has been no question of spying or prying. What you did last Sunday you appear to have done for all the world to see. You seem to be completely—shameless!"

"I see," said Dick sulkily; "then it was Paul."

"Last year I gave you a chance——" the Bishop began again.

"You humiliated me in every possible way. You took my work away from me, and you even tried to refuse to marry me!"

"Wasn't I right? Wasn't I right? Are you happy with your Japanese family?"

This question knocked the wind out of Dick's combativeness. He sunk back on to the sofa and propped his face in his hands. There was silence for a moment, which the Bishop did not attempt to break. At last Dick said:

"We're *all* wrong!"

"Speak for yourself, sir. You do not drag the rest of us down with you."

"You know what I mean," Dick groaned. "You

have told me time after time—here in this very room, that the Anglican Church can mean nothing to the Japanese. A belief in Queen Bess and the bishops! You have said that yourself. I believed in the Sacrament. I don't now. That was magic and superstition—powerful enough, though! With that 'Mass' magic I could move the crowds in Suruna; and that movement would have shaken Japan. You know it; and that's why you stamped it out, and sent Paul to kill all enthusiasm. You were afraid of shaking Japan. You were afraid of what it might lead to. Perhaps you were right; for it was magic and superstition; and there was danger in those fighting crowds. But it shows that at the bottom of your heart you believe in—nothing!"

The Bishop did not answer. The young man, squirming in front of him, would be insolent, if he were not temporarily insane. Dick went on:

"Porter believes in education, and Paul in snuffing and spying, and poor old Porteous in the House of Lords; and he's the best of the lot, for at least he's a gentleman. And with this crew you come out to convert Japan. Convert Japan—to what? They are an ancient and civilised people; more civilised in some ways than we are. They have their own creeds and their own standards of duty. Since you believe nothing, and are afraid of enthusiasm, what would you convert the Japanese to? To speaking indifferent English. That is all the result of all our effort—of the thousands of pounds which dear old maids in England subscribe, of our elaborate training, of our missionary colleges and our missionary conferences and the rest. What are we, after all? A second-rate language school!"

"If you must talk, please talk more quietly," said the Bishop, pulling at his beard as though some of Dick's wild words had stuck in it. The young man was shouting and gesticulating now; and his chief was afraid that some one might be listening to this rhodomontade.

"I won't be quiet!" shouted Dick. "You've called me up here to explain myself, and I will. I lived in that false, hypocritical, sentimental atmosphere which is called the Anglo-Catholic Church; among the sickly leavings of the Oxford Movement; in the world of candles and vestments and yearnings for Rome. But I believed that *that* was religion. Religion should either be a steady foundation for a normal, healthy life; or else it should be a consuming fire. I chose the fire! I would have given my life for Christ in Japan. You know it! You know that I did do it in a way; and yet you say, 'Last year I was foolish enough to contract a most unwise marriage;' and you go back to your teas and your classes and your shoddy criticism, and you blotted me out because I cared *them* for the things which you ought to have cared for!"

The Bishop looked up from the floor. He was thinking that it was high time that a new carpet was purchased. From his puzzled frown Dick imagined that he was at least impressed, and added:

"Oh, yes; I have no illusions now!"

"And so," commented the Bishop dryly, "having found the spirit bankrupt, you are turning to the consolations of the flesh. My poor boy, that is an old and oft told story!"

He sat down at Dick's side on the sofa, and spoke in a much gentler tone than he had hitherto used:

"Dick—my mother has a great belief in you, even now; but the curse of Reuben rests on you. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

It was Dick's turn to be silent and to listen. He was as easily propitiated by gentle words as he was antagonised by criticism. But the Bishop fell back on his favourite poetry, and murmured as though to himself:

"'Saints tumble to earth with so slight a tilt!'"

Then, to Dick, he added:

"You were different to the others. You were never the ordinary type of missionary, paid and staid and

content to believe in his church. Yet you have no right to jeer and sneer at such. Even if their belief is only a belief in belief, have you anything better to offer?"

"Honesty," murmured the impenitent.

"Does honesty consist in following your own desires, and in leaving your own wife to run after other men's wives? Dick, you talk about illusion. There is no illusion greater than the carnal illusion. 'What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?'"

"How do you know?" replied Dick roughly; "have you tried?"

"Even the Buddhists will tell you that."

"But the Buddhists, the wise ones, anyhow, tell me that youth is only young once; and that the love of woman is a young man's pleasure and an old man's memory. Why should I refuse?"

"Why should you refuse? That is a question to which I shall not try to reply. You can only answer yourself, Dick; and you will answer—correctly—in time. As you say, I am just a bloodless, loveless cenobite!"

Dick rose, rather awkwardly; he was not feeling so heroically misunderstood now.

"Well, anyhow, I have told you my point of view," he said.

"Yes," replied the Bishop; "and your resignation?"

Dick stared. He had never contemplated this. Once a priest always a priest, he had thought. He now realised that he was there to be unfrocked.

"It would be better for you to resign your post here, quite quietly," the Bishop continued, "and submit your decision to renounce your Orders. You can write me a letter, giving reasons or not, as you like. Otherwise it means that I must appoint a commission to investigate your late conduct, and probably a disciplinary court would follow. But I imagine that, if only for your father's sake, you will prefer the way which gives least pain to yourself—and to others."

"I am God's priest," answered Dick, "not yours, or even the Archbishop's, if it comes to that. I shall not resign."

"I shall allow you a month for consideration; it would avoid publicity and scandal."

"Good-bye," said Dick; and he held out his hand, wondering whether the other would take it. The Bishop did not refuse. He shook hands with him—that short, crisp handshake which was characteristic of the man.

The last Dick saw of his ecclesiastical superior was a small and rather weary figure in black, who leaned against the door-post of dingy green, fingering his beard and making lines with his toe in the dust of the threshold. He would probably never visit the Bishop or St. George's again; and he wished to take an unembittered farewell of the little church which had been his first home in Japan, and of the Church of England which it represented. He entered, and sat down among the pitch-pine pews, and looked up at the stained glass, the brass lectern, the pulpit and the tidy, uninspiring altar which he had served. True, he had refused to lay down his priesthood until summoned to do so by the authorities, and he was still refusing; but he knew, all the same, that he had reached a parting of the ways.

The Bishop had suggested that it was the desire of the flesh which was severing him from his old allegiance. He thought that this criticism was puritanical and unfair. His love for Chloe he took to be a symptom rather than a cause of the change. He now understood Kato's point of view in asking why the love of woman and the love of God should be mutually incompatible. He knew that his relations with the girl were morally reprehensible; and yet he could not feel any shame or remorse. Rather, he had a man's pride in his conquest and in the possession of so beautiful a creature. He loved her with his whole being, sincerely and honestly. A Royal Procession of Love was passing through his

heart and mind; and all other considerations must give way to this. His priesthood? Yes; since he could not condemn for sin what he believed to be revelation. His father and mother? Why? They had already practically disowned him for his marriage. Could this *liaison* be a greater offence than that? O Yuki? Well, as Hogen Shonin had said, she was happy in her own way with her family at Ako. Her husband was of no special significance to her; and to the rest of the Hirata clan he was still a stranger. His son? Here Dick hesitated; but the little chap was far more of a Japanese than an Englishman. He would never miss his father. Although there was no place for Dick in Ako, there was a place for Dick's son. He would grow up to the healthy toil of the rice-fields, amid the not unkindly atmosphere of a Japanese home.

He was sorry now that he had insisted on a Christian wedding, and a notification to the Consulate. Nobody had wanted this, except himself. If he had just been content with the Japanese form, a divorce would have been so easy. Just a word to the village office at Ako, and the matter would have been settled. But now, he might have to pass through the British courts—adultery, cruelty, desertion.

Dick tried to pray for guidance, and for Chloe, too. What was "sin" anyway? The mist of error which hides God from our eyes. But, so Dick reasoned, his love for Chloe made him very clear-sighted and acutely conscious of something infinitely beautiful in life—as it were, of a central fire, of which human love is the reflection. If this were not God, where, then, was God to be found? Dick tried to pray, in a somewhat pagan fashion, it is true; but his mind kept on slipping, like worn machinery, against the old formulas under which he had been educated.

He heard a sound of flicking behind him, and turned to see Mr. Mikami dusting the font with one of those whisks, like a paper horse's tail, such as Japanese chambermaids use.

"*Konnichi wa*, Mikami San!" said the Englishman; he had not seen his old teacher for more than a year.

"Ah—a long time——" exclaimed Mikami, bowing deeply and sucking in his breath. Dick inquired if the old man were busy.

"Very busy—there is no help," he replied. "This autumn is the Foreign Office examination. *Tabun*—perhaps this time I may pass."

"That will be fine," Dick agreed. "Certainly you will pass."

The old man bowed again.

"Thanks to your shadow," he answered. "And Aylmer San?"

"I am going back to England."

"Ah, that is far; and Aylmer San will come again to Japan?"

"Perhaps I shall not come back again."

"Aylmer San is a great light of *Christokyo*. Even in the newspapers, it is said so. We Japanese are very grateful that you come so far to teach us. But Japanese Christians are poor quality. Also Japanese life is not a life for a great Christian gentleman. It is a low life like the animals. I, too, have seen foreign countries—broad streets, tall houses, fine trains and trams, great churches with organ music and many candles and images, splendid international exhibition, and the Emperor Napoleon riding on a noble horse. That is like the Kingdom of Heaven; of course, a great Christian gentleman wishes to return to his own country."

Seldom had Mikami given vent to so long a sentiment of his own formation. Dick disclaimed any idea of superiority.

"I should like to stay, but——" he replied.

Then, since it is quite correct to end a sentence in Japanese on the contingent note, he took leave of the old *samurai*, and turned his back on St. George's. "Sayonara!" If it must be so!

He took a tram-car down to the Ginza, which is the

great highway of the Japanese capital and the principal shopping centre. He made his way along the crowded footpath—the Ginza is always crowded—to the Café Lion, which the Japanese call Café Rion, since they cannot pronounce our labial "l." This is a rather pretentious restaurant of the "*bierhalle*" type, run on quasi-European lines. Dick sat down at a round, marble-topped table, and ordered one "*omuretsu*" and a bottle of Tansan water from the powdered girl in white skirt and apron, who screamed "*hai!*" at him, and shuffled away to attend to the order. After this mediocre meal, he strolled up the Ginza, gazing at the odd medley of shops—Occident and Orient so incongruously blended—and at the listless crowds who drifted up and down the dusty thoroughfare. At the Nihonbashi Bridge, which is the umbilical centre of the city, he turned off to the right, past a shop which glittered with golden Buddhas and lacquered family altars, into a kind of untidy lane running parallel with the main street. He passed over one of the high-ridged wooden bridges, which are a feature of the almost Venetian waterways of Tokyo, and so plunged into the Nakadori, the principal street for curio shops. He was looking for something which he could take back to Kamakura with him as an offering to Chloe.

He found, at last, an exquisite figure of Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy, the Madonna of Buddhism, with her *bambino* in her arms. It was a Chinese piece, probably of some antiquity, though of course one never can tell. The gracious droop of the head under the high mitre-like hood, the exquisite fall of the robes, like the waters of Shirakiri, the fine modelling of the tapered fingers, and the beautiful milk-like purity of the glaze, gave to the figure a distinction and a charm appropriate to its high destination. It resided in a box padded with pale blue silk, shaped to the outline of the image.

It took an hour of polite bargaining over a cup of green tea to complete the purchase, so that it was

evening by the time Dick returned to the seaside with his treasure under his arm. At Kamakura station he hailed a rickety landau, so as to get back to his lady with the least possible delay. He was happy and light-hearted. He had forgotten the bitter interview with the Bishop; he had forgotten the complications of his life.

*" Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus !
Rumoresque senum severiorum
Omnes unius aestimemus assis !"*

Let us live, the Roman poet had sung, and let us love ! And let us reckon the lectures of our narrow-minded elders at their proper valuation—of one farthing ! In this mood Dick was returning to his romance. He was thinking only of his Chloe, and of what he would say to her in offering his gift.

Then, suddenly—whsssh ! and a jangle of bells. Two rickshaws, coming full tilt from the opposite direction, had almost collided into Dick's Rosinante as they swirled round the corner of a lane, hidden by the bamboo fences of a private house. The rickshawmen were grinning and mopping their foreheads. A stout and florid Englishman was swearing alternately at them and at Dick's driver. In less than a minute the confusion disentangled itself; and the two processions went on their different ways. The indignant Englishman was wearing the straw boater, blue coat and white trousers of a city man on his summer holiday. He was followed by a second rickshaw, carrying a lady in white, with a white veil hiding her face. She looked rather like Chloe. Dick turned to watch them, but they were gone in a cloud of dust. They were evidently in a hurry, for they had men to push as well as men to pull; and they were heading in the direction of the station. There was a train for Tokyo in ten minutes. The rickshawmen, with their round mushroom hats, looked like gnomes, who were hurrying off their victims into some enchanted world.

CHAPTER XXIX

A BILL FOR DAMAGES

DICK felt suddenly ill at ease; and, on arrival at the hotel, he looked anxiously round the lounge to find if Chloe were there. He could not see her. Upstairs, perhaps? He was already on the staircase, when a Japanese voice behind him called out:

"Mr. Aylmer, sir!"

He turned round and saw Kato, his whilom disciple, less spruce than in the old days and dressed in a white suit, such as planters in the tropics affect, with a white tunic buttoning round the neck and no opening for collar and tie. But his freshness was soiled by smuts from the railway.

"Ah, Kato San!" said Dick, shaking hands. "You here?"

"Quick busy matter bring me, sir, to help, I hope you. Long careful talk I pray of one hour or two."

"Then wait here for a few minutes, please. I must go upstairs, now."

What could the fellow want? To borrow money probably. Or was there bad news from Ako? How selfish of him. He had never even asked. But still—Chloe first! He left his parcel in his bedroom, went out on to the verandah, and glanced into Chloe's room. Her maid, Fanchette, was arranging her mistress's things. Dick felt that Fanchette disapproved of him. He was not quite up to the standard of her lady's admirers; and he did not seem to understand that certain little obligations were due to the lady's maid on these occasions. He felt that her cold eye was upon him, and he did not dare to ask her where Chloe was

to be found. So he went on further to his sister's room; but she, too, was away. Perhaps they had all gone down for a stroll on the shore.

He returned to Kato, and led him out to a bench near the tennis-court, where nobody was playing. Some children were scampering round the giant's stride; and from his seat Dick could watch the verandah above, and could probably catch sight of Chloe the moment she returned.

"Well, Kato San," he asked—with an effort, "how are they all at Ako?"

"I leave him seven thirty-five this morning," the Japanese answered. "All people is fine and wish you good wish."

"And you have come specially to see me?" Dick inquired. "What about?"

"In Japanese marriage custom," said Kato, wriggling his neck about, as though his words wanted shaking out, "as you know, sir, it is ever way of best friend of party to intrude himself. Hirata family use me to speak you plenty."

"Yes?" interjected Dick, apprehensively. Was it possible that, through one of those almost magical intelligence systems of the Japanese, about which one reads in books, the gossip about his *liaison* had reached even to remote Ako?

"I am sorry for you," Kato began diplomatically; "perhaps not so soon you return yourself to Ako? How so?"

"I don't think I shall ever come back to Ako, Kato San, if that is what you mean."

The words in Kato's throat were more sticky than ever, and he wriggled his neck desperately to get them as far as his lips.

"How great shame for Hirata family! To all Ako village also great shame. Other people say, '*Ijin sama* live too dirty and sour. He cannot bear; he retreated him.' How can Hirata San show face in Ako village? All people sneer him, or show him

sorrow—and that to proud heart is more shame. And O Yuki San and Tadao San—*kawaiso des', né!*"

"I shall provide for O Yuki, of course," said Dick. He appreciated the Japanese tact which made no reference to the cause of the rupture; but the picture of the stain on the escutcheon of the Hiratas, which his departure would cause, and the humiliation of old Mr. Hirata, who had sold his daughter twice already and would no doubt try his best to do so again, struck him as being exaggerated.

"O Yuki does not love me," Dick answered. "I don't suppose she ever did. I don't think a Japanese girl can love a European—at any rate, while she has got all her Japanese relatives round her. She does her duty, that is all; she never feels free to love. You see, Kato San," he added, glancing up at the verandah, "I know now what real love is."

"I see; I understand. Yet what say God to this, I ask? He curse, perhaps?"

"He forgives me already, I think, Kato San. I made a great mistake. I admit it. It was a mistake my coming to Japan. And O Yuki was a mistake. I tried to do my duty to O Yuki; but I was losing my self-respect. When my sister came, I was ashamed to see her. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; I understand. That O Yuki is low-class woman. He is not fit wife to noble gent; yet how fine deed to save him from *kurawa*. Now he safe in 'Ako; more wise you throw him away now. He never miss; he too fool. Yet he have young baby of you; and he is wife of Christian wedding also; and Hirata family most shocking poor."

"Yes," agreed Dick, "I shall pay her something every month, for herself and for Tadao's education. I must do that."

"Then here, sir, is bill of compense, which that Masuo San write down. Masuo San great business man—only he never make money!"

Kato grinned sheepishly, as he handed Dick a folded

note of thick Japanese paper. It was an account written out in the form usual in Japanese business, and contained a series of items, such as :—

Item. To Hirata family, compensation money.	20,000.00 yen
Item. To Ako village, charity subscription.	10,000.00
Item. To wife, O Yuki.	5,000.00
Item. To son, Tadao.	5,000.00
Item. Food and lodging, ten months.	1,000.00

There was a charge for the erection and demolition of the Christian church, and for various repairs to the house—badly needed, it was true, but for which Dick could have no possible responsibility; and there were gratuities for Kuma and other domestics. The total amount came to nearly five thousand pounds.

"This is preposterous," said Dick, folding the document with elaborate care and handing it back to Kato. "You can tell Masuo that if he wants me to do anything for his sister, he had better not send me that kind of nonsense. I bought their farm for them. I spent every spare penny I had on setting them up. I owe them nothing."

"Very well, sir. I tell Masuo San. He disappoint, I think. He take high hope——"

"To turn O Yuki into money again," Dick interrupted; but Kato went on :

"He hope you pay; then divorce more easy. Christian divorce most hard to find, say lawman, unless innocent person also make guilt."

Dick realised that his wife's family were now preparing—most politely, of course—to blackmail him; and he suspected that Kato himself might have a finger in the pie. But it was in O Yuki's power to block for ever his marriage with Chloe; so he answered :

"I shall allow O Yuki and Tadao so much every month."

"If I can tell how much," Kato asked, mopping his brow with a wad of paper, "perhaps Masuo look more agreeable?"

"I don't know yet," said Dick, "how much I can afford. Perhaps a hundred yen a month."

The envoy from Ako shook his head doubtfully.

"Two hundred yen more better, I think," he said; "for he is Christian wife also."

But Dick had caught sight of his sister up on the verandah above him. So he inquired as to Kato's address—he was staying at a Japanese hotel in the town; and he promised to send for him again next morning and to discuss the matter further. Then he left him—straddling his length on the seat in the tennis-court and mopping his forehead once more, like an exhausted athlete after a strenuous race.

Dick ran quickly upstairs, through his own bedroom and out on to the verandah. Lady Carey was reclining in her long wicker chair.

"Where's Chloe?" he shouted at her.

Grace shook her head.

"She's gone," she answered.

"Gone where? when?" Dick gasped, with a feeling as of an icy hand groping in his breast.

"She has gone with Hancocks. They leave for America to-morrow morning."

"I must stop them," cried Dick wildly. "She mustn't go. She must stay with me. Are they in Yokohama?"

"It's no good," said Lady Carey in her deepest, weariest tones. "You will make a fool of yourself. He's very rich. You can't compete."

"But she loves me. She has told me so."

"Love—my poor Dick! Perhaps she does; but what can love do? You can't live on it."

"You and George did. Why shouldn't we?"

"George could paint pictures, and I could give English lessons. Besides, I didn't want very much. But Chloe is a bird of paradise. You couldn't afford

to keep her in perfumes even; and whatever could you do to earn money?"

True, Dick could do nothing at all, except preach doctrines in which he had ceased to believe. A numbing sense of his own fatuity crept over him.

"My people——" he said vaguely.

"If they knew that you were 'living in sin,' they would cut off the little that you have now. Chloe asked me that."

"What did you say to her?"

"Hancocks came for lunch. He had heard about you from some one, and he paid a surprise visit. After lunch he gave her half an hour to make up her mind, while he sat in the garden smoking his cigar. She came to me in great distress—for she is very fond of you. 'What can I do?' she said; 'has Dick got enough to keep me?' 'Not yet,' I said; 'he may one day.' 'One day's not good enough for me,' she said; 'I can't—I can't face poverty again.' She was quite right; you would not have been happy together. Then she said, 'Tell Dick not to come after me; it's no good; and give him this.'"

Grace took from her wrist-bag a small gold locket, starred with diamonds. She handed it to her brother, who opened it. Inside was a miniature of Chloe.

"Poor old Dick, I'm sorry. You had better be content with that. *Une maitresse de luxe*. They don't come our way often. You are lucky to have had her, even for a few days, and 'as a dream doth flatter.' A delightful and indestructible memory; and no evil results."

Dick was crying. His need for violent action had abated. There was something in the deep tones of his sister's voice which convinced him, more than her actual arguments, that it was useless for him to take arms against his troubles. Perhaps, too, something of the Japanese fatalism had eaten into his soul. *Shikata ga nai*. "There is no way of doing!"

Grace was sorry for her brother. His romance had

been so brief. But she was glad to be rid of Chloe—a dangerous person! She had served her turn—or, at least, Grace imagined so. She had turned Dick away from his Japanese entanglements. He would be now more than willing to come back to England. So she thought.

The young man rose from his chair, walked over to the verandah railing and leaned against it. His shoulders were bowed, as though beneath an unbearable load, and his whole attitude was one of the deepest depression.

"Dick," said his sister at last. He turned towards her, and stood at the foot of her chair with his hands locked behind his back. "Dick, will you come home with George and me?"

Dick shook his head.

"Why, what are you going to do?"

"I am going back to Ako. That is my home"

Grace put down her work, and sat up on the edge of the chair. All her carefully manipulated schemes were going to pieces on the rock of this young idiot's obstinacy.

"I must," Dick added; "it's my duty."

"Your duty, Dick, is to get out of Japan as quickly as possible, and to come home with us. After all, you had an English home long before you had a Japanese one."

"But you have just said yourself that my people would cut me off the moment I do anything which does not suit them. My people have thrown me out; the Church has thrown me out. What else am I to do but to go back to my wife and my little boy?"

"That baby!" exclaimed Grace. "I have never seen anything so Jap in my life. He hasn't got any look of you whatever. I don't believe he is yours. He was born eight months after your marriage. He's not yours. I would be quite certain of that."

"You mustn't say that, Grace," Dick pleaded, "no; not even if it's true. You see, they are all that

I've got left now. O Yuki has always tried to do her best. I am not going to start disbelieving in her—now."

"You know what she was before you married her," Grace went on ruthlessly. "That baby can't be yours. So how can you possibly want to see it or its mother again?"

"Is Chloe any better?" groaned Dick. "Just at the jingle of money she leaves me. O Yuki would be more faithful than that. She would follow me anywhere, even if she doesn't love me. That is like a Japanese woman. They are more loyal than ours. They have a sense of duty——"

"Duty—piffle!" exclaimed Grace. "Where does duty lead to, if there is no happiness or hope of happiness? To murder and suicide."

"Perhaps," said Dick darkly.

The dinner gong was sounding; and there was a stir in the hotel below.

"I am not coming in to dinner," said Dick. "I can't bear to see all those irritating faces. I want to be alone."

So he left her; and she watched him cross the lawn in the direction of the sand hills and the beach. What more could she do? What appeal could she make to her brother which she had not made already? Did he really prefer life in that cattle-shed at Ako to what England and Europe could offer him? Did he *want* to go back to O Yuki, straight from the arms of a woman of his own race and of real charm? Or was it the will-o'-the-wisp of "Duty" which was leading him back towards that home which was no home, and towards that family where he could never be anything but a stranger?

As a matter of fact, Dick was clinging to the thought of Ako as the only possible refuge for his desperate need. Why should he go back to England? He had no place in Grace's artistic world; and his own father and mother had treated him with chilly disapproval,

when he had most needed sympathy and understanding. Was it likely that they would understand him now—now that the Church had cast him out, and now that he was being carried on the flood-tide of his own disillusionment out even beyond the bounds of Christianity? Contiguity would only aggravate the antagonism. He would be more of a stranger at Hernwood Rectory than he would be at Ako, where at least he could understand their lack of understanding.

Thus he pondered as he stumbled through the heavy sand of the upper shore. Some vestiges of daylight still lingered in the greenish silver band of brightness which lay along the sea horizon. Among the boats and lobster-pots on the beach beneath the village a handful of fishermen's children were playing hide and seek. Dick turned inland, past the wretched hovels and the little shops which were their homes. In front of a tall building, with a miscellaneous collection of *geta* and umbrellas at its portal he halted.

"Is this the Sagamiya Inn?" he inquired in Japanese.

A spotty-faced clerk bowed and assented with some reluctance. Foreign guests were not appreciated at this establishment. They gave trouble and did not know how to behave themselves; and sometimes they did not even understand the rules of the *chadai*, that comprehensive tip, sometimes larger than the bill itself; which each visitor must present to the hotel.

"Is a gentleman called Kato Gintaro here?" Dick asked again. The clerk nodded an inquiry at one of the lumpish servant girls who had gathered round the entry. She waddled away to look for him; and in five minutes or so he appeared at the foot of the steep stairway at the back of the hall. He was dressed in a hotel *yukata* of cotton with broad black and white stripes.

"Can you come for a short walk?" Dick asked.

Kato assented gladly, confident that his diplomatic mission was about to be crowned with success. He

slipped a pair of *geta* on to his feet, and shuffled off at Dick's side up the main street which led towards Reisan.

"I have decided to come back to Ako," was Dick's first disconcerting announcement. The Japanese came to a dead stop, with his head on one side.

"That, sir," he said, "you cannot do."

"Why ever not?"

"Some new thing is made in Ako, I think. *Domoi!* It is difficult to say. Hirata family most unglad, I think."

"What? If I come back?"

This was a new light to Dick. He thought that, at least as an article of property, he was of some value to his wife's family.

"Perhaps O Yuki make new bride, I don't know," suggested Kato.

"Already," said Dick bitterly. "They don't lose any time in Ako."

Kato did not reply. His whole manner and bearing were comically crestfallen. What he had omitted to mention to Dick was that he, Kato, was the son-in-law designate. The Hirata family had naturally leapt to the conclusion that Grace was the emissary of the Aylmer family sent to recover the truant son. Then came Paul's anonymous letter. This was interpreted as being a tactful hint, probably from Grace or from Dick himself, that the Aylmers were preparing an English marriage for him, and that it was time for O Yuki to be obliterated. Being reasonable people, who regarded these matters from a commonsense point of view, they were quite ready to concur with this imaginary proposal—at a price. Then came Kato's turn. He laughed at the very moderate sum which Masuo had at first indicated. This Englishman was rich, he explained, and could afford much more. Moreover, he would have to get a divorce by English law, or he could not marry again; and it was difficult to get such a divorce without the wife's complicity. For that, too, he must pay. Let him, Kato, have charge of the

negotiations. He would halve the proceeds with the Hiratas, and he would marry O Yuki. He had always been fond of the girl; and both he and she believed that the baby, Tadao, was probably his. It would be a most suitable arrangement.

He also bragged in his usual inflated style about his business in Tokyo and his influential friends and connections; and he suggested gracefully the advantages which such a marriage would confer on a mere farmer's family. The truth was that Kato had invested the handsome percentage which he had made out of Dick's wedding arrangements in business in the capital. He had prospered for a time, and had spent lavishly. Then he had lost. He had lost everything he had and everything he could borrow. He was in a desperate plight. He had come to Ako to fling himself upon Dick's mercy, and to beg for a considerable loan. But he had found himself confronted by an entirely new set of circumstances, which promised him both pleasure and profit.

He had lost no time in ingratiating himself once more with O Yuki. She was easy to convince. Kato, with his swank and his witty talk, had always fascinated and amused her; and she felt that it was to him really that she owed her escape from the Shimosaki *kurawa*. Besides, she believed that he was the father of her child. Her English husband was most distasteful to her. He gave her a respect which she did not require, and, at the same time, demanded of her a sympathy which was not hers to give. She thought he was mad; moreover, she did not like being a Christian. It was probably unlucky; and her relatives reminded her of it in crises of altercation.

But these details were unknown to Dick as he discussed the future in the narrow lane outside Kamakura.

"It is very difficult," he was saying. "But, at any rate, O Yuki is my wife, and she deserves consideration. She shall not be put up to sale again. I shall go to Ako to-morrow."

"It is despair to me," Kato answered gloomily. "Hirata think I bring you back; O Yuki also think I return you. There is anger to me without fail. They say Kato is silly busy. See you not, sir, they diswant you?"

"Whether they diswant me or not, I am going to see what I can do for O Yuki and little Tadao. Then I shall know what my duty is."

"Have you, sir, no family in England who want duty from you?" said Kato, exasperated to an impatience which even a Japanese could no longer conceal. "Japanese family diswant your duty."

They turned back at the entrance to the Paradise temple, and retraced their steps up the hill. Dick was silent. There was a bitter truth, he felt, in Kato's queer phrase. He was "diswanted." Nothing had made him realise more keenly the utter failure of his Japanese experiment. Chloe, too—and his Church—and his home in England—they all "diswanted" him. Yet he had never done harm to any one. For what fault was he being so cruelly boycotted?

They walked back in silence; and they parted—the master and the disciple—without further explanation at the door of the Sagamiya. As Dick was on his way back to his own hotel, the rain began to fall, the heavy rain of the early summer, the Plum Rain or *nyubai*, as the Japanese call it. It falls in slow, tepid drops out of the warm sky. It almost stifles the towns and the people who dwell in them; but it fills the brown plots of the countryside with water, and prepares them for the planting out of the young rice.

CHAPTER XXX

THE WISDOM OF BUDDHA

ALL night the patter of the rain on the verandah roofs seemed to emphasise the discord of the young priest's thoughts. He could not sleep. Once he arose in the pale darkness, and stole across the verandah to Chloe's open window. All the boxes were gone from her room, all the gowns and shawls and trinkets of various kinds. Only a far-away memory of her fragrance remained, that ambrosial perfume which seemed to Dick to be the quintessence of her charm. He felt for her locket which hung round his neck; then he dropped on his knees at her bedside and prayed, but his prayer did not seem to be launched in any very definite direction. Sometimes he was praying to her to come back to him. Sometimes he was praying to God for guidance and for deliverance from his sin. Sometimes he was merely following the bitterness and misery of his own thoughts. Where was she now? In the arms of the man to whom she had sold herself. O Yuki at Shimosaki; Chloe and Hancocks! Why was he of all men fated to find his destiny linked with that of women who lent themselves to that hateful commerce? Or are all women purchasable—more or less?

He would leave next morning for Yokohama, and he would save Chloe! No, he would not. That would be only an excuse for following in the pathway of his own sin. Besides, Chloe would snub him for his pains, and the humiliation would be more than he could bear. He would flee in the opposite direction, lest the temptation to see Chloe once more became too strong for him. He would take the first train for Ako.

Fortified in this determination, he crept back to his own room. A beam of light from the electric standard on the lawn penetrated right into the interior. It struck full upon the greenish pallor and the delicate poise of Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy.

Dick slept for about an hour. At seven, he knew, Sir George Carey went down for his bathe, in fair weather or foul. He heard the door slam, and the heavy steps resound down the corridor. This was Dick's opportunity to say "Good-bye" to his sister.

"Will you promise me one thing?" she had asked at that last meeting.

"What is that?" Dick inquired.

"That before you definitely settle to go back to that awful existence, you will see me again."

"Of course; I want to see you before you go away from Japan," Dick had answered, evasively.

He had felt that he wanted to cry; but he could not. A kind of parching drought had descended upon him. He must have seemed to his sister to be hard and loveless. As soon as he had regained a measure of composure, he would write to her in a letter what it was so difficult to express by word of mouth.

Thus he pondered as he sat alone in his first-class compartment. At Ofuna he had to change; and on the platform of the station he recognised Kato. He thought that he had seen him getting into the train at Kamakura; but he had not been sure. Kato must have recognised Dick, too; for they studiously avoided each other. In the main-line train, Dick decided that he would go on to the next station beyond the town which served Ako and the Shirakawa valley. Partly, this was in order to dodge Kato; partly, because the next station was within a few miles of Mitaké San, and Dick had felt a sudden and overwhelming desire to talk once more with Hogen Shonin. He was old, he was wise, he was a man of courage and education and wide sympathy, and he had found peace. Such a man could give him counsel in his extremity.

The train was climbing slowly up from the plains to the foot-hills of Fuji. Nothing could be seen of the great mountain, and even the lesser peaks were swathed in cloud. The mountain-torrents foamed and churned with the rush of the new water. Country people on the station platforms were hidden under straw rain-coats or were shrouded in sheets of yellow oil-paper. But the air smelled sweet and refreshing; and Dick knew that so it would smell on Mitaké San—but sweeter and fresher.

Two hours more of travelling; and then Dick saw Kato pass along the platform at Kabuto, his white suit rumpled and dirtied, and his Panama hat limp under the rain. Dick noticed how he seemed to drag himself along. All the bounce and impertinence had gone from his gait.

At the next station Dick himself alighted; and, after inquiring as to the way to Mitaké San, he struck off by the field paths which led towards the mountain. The temple, it appeared, was only four or five miles away; but the rain was falling steadily and the hills were hidden from sight. The bare rice-fields were full to the brim with the steady downpour, which, regularly occurring at this season of the year, is one of the necessary factors in agriculture. The whole valley appeared to be under flood; and the rice itself was still growing in the narrow seedling plots, set like squares of emerald among the pools. In a few weeks time the labour of transplantation would begin; and from the fields of Ako also the song of the planters would arise.

Early in the afternoon Dick began to ascend the sides of the mountain. Half-way up he emerged from the rain into a world of bright sunshine. He then found himself at the foot of the steps which led up to the temple, and which this time he had approached from a different direction. The verdure around him gleamed like burnished leather after the recent rain, and the summer flowers glittered like jewels. Outside

the temple garden a bush of tawny azalea in full bloom stood sentinel like a clump of fire.

Beneath, the valley was wrapped in cloud, as though the world had only been half unpacked out of its primeval cotton-wool. Only the hill-tops could be seen like half-formed islands resting on the sea of cloud. The air was delicious. It seemed to be impregnated with a kind of pristine purity. Dick felt better already. There was a god-like serenity which brooded over the place; and the dark undergrowth of the hillside was full of the ripple of hidden streams.

Save for the murmur of its miniature rivulet, the temple grounds were hushed in deep silence. It was so still that for a moment Dick hesitated, wondering whether the manse were still inhabited. There were *geta*, however, and an old lantern at the front-door. Dick entered the garden, and clapped his hands, shouting, "*Moshi! Moshi!*" which is the polite expression whereby to challenge attention in Japan.

Kichibei, the little novice, came to the door. His eyes were blinking and he had evidently just tumbled out of slumber. He at once invited Dick to condescend to step up into the house; and he guided him to the parlour where he had been entertained on the occasion of his first visit. Nothing was changed, except the flower arrangement and the hanging picture in the alcove.

"And *osho sama?*" Dick inquired.

Kichibei shook his head.

"He is better now," he answered; "but he has been very ill."

He was eating very little; and he hardly slept at all. Kichibei had to stay up with him until all hours of the night, listening to the old man talking—talking—talking—talking; talking to himself, talking to old comrades dead years and years ago; talking about all kinds of, old-fashioned things. Kichibei did not altogether appreciate the privilege.

"He often speaks of *Ijin San*," the boy added.

"He will be very glad when he hears that you have come. He has been awaiting you for two or three days."

It was a curious phrase; and it struck Dick later on with a thrill of mystery. Kichibei waddled off to prepare tea; and Dick was left alone for a few minutes.

"I think, perhaps, his mind is altered—a little," the lad whispered, when he returned with the tea-pot and the lacquer box of insipid cakes, which looked like coloured caramels and which tasted like bran.

Later Kichibei produced a clean *kimono*; and Dick was glad to change out of his damp flannels. *Osho sama* himself did not appear until it was nearly evening. His coming was announced by Kichibei. He wore, as before, his white *koromo* and his scarf; and he carried in one hand the fly-whisk, made of a white horse's tail fixed in an ivory handle, which is one of the insignia of the Zen Sect.

He made deep obeisance to Dick, and apologised at length for his long delay.

"I am beginning to be not being," he explained.

Indeed, he looked taller to Dick and leaner than ever. His face was almost diaphanous, and his hands were like bird's claws. His eyes had sunk deep into their sockets, but they were still alive with that dark scintillating fire.

"Since *sensei* was last here I have become a very old man," said Hogen. "Old men have many dreams. What is dream and what is real, they are not sure. So that impudent Kichibei says that I am mad. My madness is wiser than your wisdom, boy, I tell him; and yet he is wiser than us all, for he is still young. He tries to do his best, but he is poor company for a dying man. The last days are precious ones, in spite of all. My friends gather round me. I see them beyond the walls—Yoshida and Takayama and Kido and young Ito. But I cannot speak with them—freely. I call them; and only this Kichibei answers '*Hai! Hai!*' like a silly servant-girl."

He mimicked the boy's cracking voice; and poor little Kichibei, hunched in a corner of the room, blushed scarlet to hear his inadequacies thus advertised.

"He says that you were awaiting me," asked Dick. "How is that?"

"That *sensei* has condescended to come once more to this rustic place is a pleasure greater than anything else," Hogen relapsed into the polite style of Japanese conversation, and bowed deeply as he ladled out the compliment; Dick bowed in return.

"Old men are full of dreams," the priest continued in less formal language. "I have seen *sensei* also in my dreams many times. I know that a change has come to you. I know that you are in a state of perplexity. I know also that death stands against you to the East and to the West. Please, tell me freely; I have given counsel to many men."

So Dick told his story as simply and as clearly as he could; and the old anchorite squatted in front of him with his hands in his lap and his fly-whisk held like a sceptre. Kichibei slumbered—or pretended to do so—in a corner of the room. At the end of the young Englishman's narrative Hogen did not answer immediately; but, after a pause of ten minutes or so, he replied:

"*Sa!* This is a complicated *ingé* (chain of cause and effect). Complication is the seed of grief. Last time, I said, Go back to your father; that is *giri* (duty). But now—it is hard to say. Your mind is more complicated than that of Japanese people; and *giri* you do not understand as we Japanese understand. For *giri* you Western people put *ai* (love). God is Love, you say, meaning that love is the highest principle. We also know *ai*; but we do not say that God is *ai*. We say that *ai* proceeds out of *giri*—except *ren-ai*, which is disorderly love and confusion. But you people say that because there is *ai*, therefore there is *giri*; just as you Western people read a book from the end backwards to the beginning."

The old man paused again; but Dick did not care to interrupt his homily with some inadequate remark. Presently Hogen resumed :

"The laws of *giri* are well known. They are written in the Chinese classics and in the writings of the wise men. But the laws of *ai* are not clear. Like a poem, *ai* suggests different meanings to different men; and then they begin to contend with each other, saying, You are wrong and I am right. So for Love's sake they will hate each other. For each man has a different *ai*. Where the treasure is, there is the heart."

Dick was surprised to hear this Buddhist priest quote the Bible, and he said so.

"I have lately read the *fukuinsho* (gospels) once again, since *sensei* came to see me," Hogen replied. "I also admire greatly that teaching; but it is far from the practice of the *Seiyojin* (Western people). *Christokyo* says, God is Love; but the *Seiyojin* says, God is what I love. That is very different. The Japanese says, There is a way which I must follow; but the *Seiyojin* says, I make my own way. This also is very different. Last time I spoke to you about *giri*. Then I did not understand. *Giri* is the way which the Japanese would follow. This time I ask you, What do you want? Is it in England, or in Japan, or in some other country? Where the treasure is, there is the heart. Do what you want; that is the *giri* of the *Seiyojin*."

"But I don't know what I want," said Dick. "That is what I wished to ask."

"Then I shall answer to-morrow morning in my own way, as our wont is in *Zenshu*; for we say that words conceal. Even *Kichibei* says that I am now *o-shaberi* (a chatterbox). I start to talk; and then I cannot stop. The pine-tree starts to creak before it falls."

Kichibei brought in the simple repast of rice and pickles and tea; and, after the meal, they all retired early to rest. It was Hogen's intention to be up betimes next morning. "Light comes at dawn," he said.

During the night there was a violent storm, which rattled the wooden casings of the little house and threatened to tear it from its perch and to hurl it into the valley below. The wind screamed and whistled and groaned; and in the forest near by the branches of the trees were beating against each other as in a mediæval combat; and from time to time in the distance some great trunk fell with a resounding crash. Dick peeped out of his room to see if there were any alarm, but he could hear no sound of movement. Evidently, the residents were accustomed to these manifestations and took no notice of them. Soon after midnight the wind abated; and, when at dawn Kichibei appeared with the tea and salted plums, the valley and the hills opposite were bathed in rosy light. The rain-clouds of the day before had all been swept away. The lines of the mountain-ridges looked like waves of the sea dancing to the measure of the summer breezes; and Fujiyama itself appeared on the horizon like the inverted hull of an enormous ship.

Dick put on his flannel suit which had been brought to him. This was a gentle hint that he was not expected to stay for another night; otherwise a *kimono* would have been supplied for his use. He dressed and went out into the garden. The storm had scattered the azalea flowers, but fresh buds were on their way to blossoming. He walked up the broad stone steps towards the temple. Next to the main building there was a small room usually vacant, which was attached to the shrine by a low wooden gangway. This morning the room was occupied by what appeared in the distance to be a lifesize figure of a seated Buddha. But as Dick approached he discovered that this was none other than his host himself, seated on a broad cushion like a Lord Chancellor's wool-sack and absorbed in a contemplation so deep that it resembled a trance. His eyes were open; but they were motionless and unblinking; and he did not seem to see Dick or to be in any way aware of his presence. In his hand he held

the fly-whisk which he had carried during the evening before. Dick stole away on tiptoe, feeling somehow that he had been intruding.

About an hour later Hogen returned to the house; and the two breakfasted together. Then the old priest said :

"To-day I shall answer in the fashion of the Zen Sect. We do not love words; but we teach rather in parables. Are you ready to walk with me to the top of this mountain?"

This was an unexpected proposal from so old and frail a being; and for a moment Dick wondered whether it were part of the parable. But he answered :

"Certainly. But you, *sensei*, who have taken many years, it will be difficult. I am troubling you too much."

Hogen waved his hand in front of him as a gesture of denial.

"No, no," he said. "I, too, wish to see my country once more before I become not being. You must watch me, and then you will return alone. Do not wait for me. If there is no certainty yet, then you may return to this house; but if there is certainty, then you may go straight to your own business. Do not say '*Sayonara*' to me or any other word of farewell. Then my spirit can accompany you. The word '*Good-bye*' is like a blow to the spirit."

Supported on a rough stick, and at times taking Dick's arm for his support, the old warrior tottered up the long ascent. When they emerged from the forest on to the open moor which continued up to the mountain top, he paused and sat down for a rest by the wayside.

"When I was a young man," he said, "I remember climbing such a mountain—but with stronger legs. It was at the time of '*Son-O-Jo-I*' (Venerate the Emperor, Expel the barbarians; *i.e.*, the time of the Imperial Restoration). My friends were urging me to join the Government. I climbed on such a morning to the top

of such a mountain. On one hand I could see below me the city of Miyako (*i.e.*, Kyoto), where for years we had been scheming and fighting, and the river bed of Kamo and the Imperial Palaces; and on the other hand were the forests and mountains of the *naichi* (the interior) and the smoke rising from a woodcutter's hut. At the top of that mountain I sat down and began to play with the pebbles, a game we played when we were children in the garden of the *daimyo's yashiki* at Yamaguchi; and when evening came I went down to the woodcutter's hut on the further side of the hill. . . ."

"I shall not talk any more," he added, "but please watch what I do."

From this point on the hill-side upwards there were placed, like milestones along the path, at distances of five or six hundred yards, small statues of Jizo, the tender smiling god of children and travellers. They had doubtless been erected in consequence of some vow, for a child's recovery from sickness or for the return of some loved one from a distant land. They were so weather beaten that it was impossible to date their age; and many of them were worn past all recognition. But one or two wore little bibs of discoloured cotton round their necks, as a sign that they still had their votaries; and one had a red cap perched on the side of his head. At the foot of each image was a little pile of stones. Hogen gathered in his hands a quantity of pebbles from the pathway; and as he passed each statue he threw one from his collection on to the heap of votive stones, and stood for a moment or two in contemplation of the crude image. Sometimes the pebble rested on the pile; sometimes it fell wide of the mark; sometimes, after an effort to remain in its place, it would trickle down and be lost again on the path or among the grasses. But the fate of his stone did not seem to concern the old priest, nor did he ever throw more than one for each statue.

When they reached the top of the mountain they

found there an image rather larger than the rest, sheltered under a rough kind of pent-house. This Jizo wore a bright red hat and a bib of some pretensions; and a little bamboo vase with withered flowers stood at its side on the stone pedestal. Hogen gathered a large handful of pebbles; and, squatting cross-legged on a hummock of grass, he began to throw them at the image slowly, one by one. He scarcely seemed to look where he was throwing. Sometimes a pebble would hit the god in the face; and one careless shot knocked over the little vase of flowers. Dick replaced it; but the old priest took no notice. He seemed absorbed in his game.

Dick watched him for a time, expecting some change in his demeanour, some action of distinct significance. But the monotonous lobbing of the little stones continued; and no clear message came. Hogen had said that words conceal, so it was useless to ask him for any explanation. Explanation, he would have said, is a sign of misunderstanding. Yet what exactly could be the meaning of this symbolism? Were the pebbles our evil and heedless deeds flung into the face of the gentle gods, but of which they take no account? Or were they the prayers for the prodigal's return—prayers from Ako and prayers from England—contending against each other with himself for the prize? Or were they just indications of the slow passing of time, and of the insignificance of our own decisions and alternatives in the midst of the gradual processes of the great immortal powers? Dick could not tell; so, after a time, he gave up wondering, and looked out upon the landscape. It was much the same view as could be seen from the temple below, but wider in range. A little sea-port had come into sight on the opposite side of Mitaké San. The wharves and warehouses could be plainly seen, and a sandy spit with a line of pine-trees marshalled along it, and pine-covered islands. A few steamers, riding at anchor, were turned in the direction of the open sea. Beyond this microscopic harbour, a

long mountainous promontory ran out into the Pacific. If Dick were to follow the path on past the image of Jizo and down over the brow of the hill, he would reach the sea and the ships and ultimate freedom.

It was a very clear day. He turned his gaze in the opposite direction, and there he could distinctly see the silver shield of the mountain lake above the Shirakiri waterfall. He could trace the line of the valley downwards to the point where he knew Ako must be.

Click! Another pebble struck the image behind him. He had been waiting on the mountain-top for more than an hour; and still God had not said one word! The breeze was cool. The bamboo grasses on the slopes around were bending and rustling beneath its breath. Dick shivered. After all, Ako was his home. His wife was there, and his child; for he refused to entertain Grace's uncharitable suspicions. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

He was on the point of speaking to his host, when he remembered his warning. He was to watch; and when certainty had come to his heart then he was to go—without a word. In any case, he must return to Ako to make various arrangements for the future. Thus far there was certainty. So he turned his back on the sea and the steamers, and set his face towards the mountains inland, even as Hogen had done years ago on that hill above Kyoto. He passed behind the priest, who still continued unrelentingly his monotonous pastime. Click! The pebble struck against the stone, or rattled down among the other pebbles. Click! Click! But already Dick was out of earshot, swinging along downhill on his homeward way.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE WATERFALL

As he passed the temple garden he called out to Kichibei, and told him where he had left his master. Then, after conveying a message of gratitude and good wishes for transmission to Hogen Shonin, he turned on his way downhill again. He seemed to cross the valleys and the moors with winged feet, as though the spiritual powers of the old hermit were giving him strength and courage. But by Fujimi Kwannon, on the cliff above Ako, he paused. It seemed that he could hear the thunder of the falls of Shirakiri—powerful and attractive as ever; and he wished to test his new faith against the spell of self-destruction. Although he had already walked many miles, he set out once again down the narrow pathway leading to the cascade, with the intention of taking the longer road home past the falls.

The attraction of the plunging water increased as he descended the gorge. He thought of the farmer's boy who had found in that headlong flight a solution of all his troubles; and as on the occasion of that visit of nearly a year ago, so now he felt a kind of premonitory foreboding rise around him like a cold vapour. Had he himself taken the path of self-immolation? Would another hour or half-hour see the end of all his questionings? The Japanese, at least, would approve such an action. The seven million gods of Shinto have not set their canon against self-slaughter.

The arc of the waterfall leapt into view. Sparkling in the sunlight with diamantine lustre, it looked like the span of a great bridge—leading from this transitory

world to immortality. No; to-day, at any rate, the call was not for Dick; for against the rustic parapet by the edge of the fall a countryman was leaning. He was staring downwards into the abyss. The sight of him was sufficient to check Dick's fluttering imagination; for suicide requires solitude.

Dick's mind was peopled so vividly with his own thoughts that he assumed that this stranger must be the same farmer with whom he had previously visited the spot, and he greeted him accordingly:

"Already, perhaps, I have hung on your honourable eyes?"

The countryman gaped at him; he had never seen Dick before. But this must be the *Ako no ijin san*, of whom every one was talking. He did not know how to address an *ijin*, never having met with such a creature; so instead he pointed downwards to the foot of the fall. Dick realised that he had made a mistake; and he looked in the direction which the man was indicating. There was activity round the red-stained shrine at the foot of the fall. Men were coming and going; and Dick could distinguish the blue uniform of a policeman.

"What is it?" he asked the countryman.

"There may have been *shinju*," the man answered, awkwardly; for the Japanese are an instinctive race. Now, "*shinju*" is the word used for the double suicide of two lovers, who have decided that destiny is unfavourable to them in this life, and who resolve to die together so that in their next incarnation their fate may be more fortunate.

"Who is it?" asked Dick; but, in his heart, he knew already.

"It is a woman of Ako. The man is a *tanin* (*i.e.*, an outside person, a stranger)."

Dick murmured some uncertain words, and fled down the narrow path. The countryman watched him until he joined the other human insects who were running in and out round the shrine of the water-god.

He had heard that the woman was the wife of *Ako no ijin san*.

Dick leapt from boulder to boulder down the side of the ravine. The little group round the temple looked up; and, seeing him, retreated, not without fear lest this might be a ghost. But the policeman stepped forward, ready to do his duty even against the unseen powers. With note-book in hand, he spoke to Dick; but the roar of the cataract was so deafening that he could not distinguish what was said. Dick ignored him, and passed straight on to the shrine.

On the floor of rough boarding two wet bundles were laid side by side. A fringe of water was trickling out across the floor. From one bundle there protruded a grotesque side-spring shoe, soaked to a kind of deep crimson colour, and a mangled foot.

Dick raised the coverlet from the face which had once been Kato's. It was a horrid mass of bruised flesh and protruding bone. One eye had been gouged out and the whole of the mouth had been laid open through a gash in the cheek. The features were quite unrecognisable. The Englishman replaced the coverlet, and turned with dread to the place where O Yuki lay. Had she, too, been reduced to this caricature of humanity?

No. Her face had been spared in her fall. It was practically unmarked. The eyes were closed and the lips were smiling. A suggestion of her little dimple even was discernible in her chin. Dick knelt down beside her and pushed the matted hair away from the cold, damp forehead. Then he kissed her between the eyebrows. In the presence of such a consummation there could be no question of blame or of forgiveness.

"Dead?" he said in English to the policeman who stood at his side. He shook his head, not understanding; but he made a note in his book to the effect that the Englishman had spoken in his own language after inspecting the corpses.

"*Kawaiso, né!*" was his comment.

Dick rose from his wife's side.

"And the child?" he asked.

"There was a child," the policeman said. "It has not yet been found."

"It was with them?"

"She took it and brought it here. She has written a letter. It was the child of this man."

Dick stepped out of the damp, stifling shed, where the bodies of his wife and of his disciple were lying, into the sunlight and the group of people, most of whose faces he knew, but to whom in his dazed condition he could give no name. The policeman was asking him all sorts of absurd questions. Who were his father and his mother? Where did they live? How long had he been in Japan? Where had he been spending the last month? He answered for a time automatically; but at last, tiring of this farce, he broke away from the inquisitive group and the law's representative, and set his face towards the valley. He could not bear to look up again at that pathetic mausoleum, nor at the giddy height whence those two had leapt to their doom. He recrossed the boulders and regained the path; and he was already on his way—whither, he was uncertain—before he was aware that Atsushi Hirata was walking at his side.

The young farmer looked up at Dick with that curious grin which the Japanese assume in the face of their personal sorrows and disasters.

"When was this?" Dick asked.

"This morning, very early; we did not know that they had gone out."

"They were sleeping together?"

The young man hung his head. He did not like having to confess his complicity.

"While I was away, all the time continually, there was this relationship?" Dick asked again.

Atsushi assented.

"And baby—was not mine?"

"She said he was not."

"And you all knew; and yet you never told me?"

The first numbing effect of the shock was beginning to wear off.

"What was the use?" said Atsushi. "Was it true? Was it not true? Who knows how a child is made?"

They walked on in silence. Down the village street of Ako those of the inhabitants who had not gone out to Shirakiri watched them with sympathetic curiosity. When the children started their cry of "*Ijin san! Ijin san!*" they were at once rebuked.

Mrs. Hirata received Dick with grave formality at the entrance of the farmstead, as though nothing unusual had occurred. The two sons' wives were in attendance upon her; and, as the men entered the principal sitting-room, *o tera san* from the Chutokuji bowed his greetings, from where he was squatting on the floor.

Dick wondered why he should have come back to his wife's home. It must have been mere force of habit; for it was quite futile thus to return to a house where there was no place for him—nor ever had been. Conversation continued between Atsushi and the priest about the tragedy and about arrangements for the funeral. The women served soup in lacquer trays, and, later on, some rice and vegetables. But no one spoke to Dick. Mrs. Hirata sucked at her hollow tooth.

At last Dick said to her:

"May I see the letter which O Yuki left?"

The mother glanced at her son, as though doubtful whether such a secret should be confided to a *tanin*. Atsushi nodded approval, and went on with his talk. Mrs. Hirata fetched the folded slip of soft native paper. It was inscribed in a woman's clumsy handwriting:—

"TO MY HONOURABLE TWO PARENTS,—

"In this world it is impossible to choose one's life, but when life is unbearable it is possible to escape. Yet this is a selfish act, and I humbly beg forgiveness. Kato Gintaro tells me that

Ijin San comes back to-day. This is more than I can bear. Kato Kun asks me to make *shinju* with him. How can I refuse? He is my lover through three thousand worlds. He is the father of Tadao San. So we take our baby also to Shirakiri. I am very selfish and undutiful to my honourable two parents, but I beg for their forgiveness and I pray for their continued prosperity. Kato Kun also asks you to please excuse.

"With deep respect,

"YUKI."

The writing was so simple and so elementary that even Dick could understand, although he had never seen his wife's penmanship at any length before. She could not bear to see him; and so she had killed herself. Was it remorse or shame which had prompted her? Somehow he did not think so. He faced the alternative honestly, though it was hardly complimentary to himself. To this little Japanese girl—simple, dutiful, and harmless at heart—death with her lover was preferable to life with himself as her husband.

"And for me also, no letter was left?" he inquired.

Mrs. Hirata shook her head. He had never shown his wife anything but kindness; yet neither she nor Kato had left a single word for him, when they set out together upon their last dark journey. Was he, Dick Aylmer, Apostle of the Orient, worthy of so little consideration as this? She wrote, not to her husband who had saved her, but to the parents who had sold her into a life of shame, and had then bartered her away to a foreigner. Poor little Yuki, weak and unresisting plaything of fortune! She had yet contrived to make her husband feel that it was he—and not she—who had failed. He handed the letter back to her mother.

These people were as formal in their grief as they were in their joy. Had Mrs. Hirata shed one tear or given utterance to one cry of the heart, Dick could

have responded to her, and have forgotten the wickedness and meanness of the past. But nothing could shake the classic gloom of this withered matron. She sucked at her tooth, and stared at the *tatami*; and that was all. Dick felt increasingly ill at ease. He rose from his place on the floor. All the others rose.

"I beg leave," he said; and then added:

"I am going out—alone—by myself."

They all escorted him to the door. At the gateway he drew Atsushi after him for a few paces down the road.

"I am not coming back," he whispered.

Atsushi protested.

"That person was very bad," he apologised. "Really there is no excuse. The family of Hirata is ashamed. It has been a great mistake."

"She was my wife," said Dick. "You are right. It was a great mistake; but it was my fault also. It is heaven's punishment. I cannot stay. I will help your parents, if I can—for her sake. Please write to me at Kamakura. I cannot stay."

He was forgetting his Japanese; he was becoming more and more incoherent. Perhaps, thought Atsushi, O Yuki was right; and, like most foreigners, he was a little mad.

"Then I shall return to the house," said the farmer. "There are many preparations to make; and the people of the village also will soon come to call. Please excuse. Very many thanks for very many generous favours. Indeed, the Hirata family is unworthy. *Sayonara!*"

"*Sayonara,*" Dick answered.

So, with a final exchange of conventionality, with bowings and with suckings of the breath at the turning of the road, Dick took his leave of the Japanese home, to which, it seemed, he had brought nothing but misfortune. Far away, in the direction of the river, he thought that he could discern O Yuki's funeral procession winding its way through the flooded rice-fields.

CHAPTER XXXII

CHERRY SUSAN OF THE LILY BAR

SAYONARA! If it must be so!

The unhappy Dick walked quickly down the rough track, which served as a high-road for Ako valley. He was oppressed by a sense of guilt. He felt that he was to blame. If he had not presumed to meddle in the lives of those two mortals, whose psychology he had not begun to understand, this grim tragedy would never have occurred. O Yuki would have continued her career in the Shimosaki *kuruma*, as a dutiful daughter working for her family, and Kato would still be *katsuben* at the Kaminari-za cinema theatre, a calling which suited his gifts. He, an Englishman, young and of no experience, in a country of which he had but little knowledge, had called Kato to be his chief apostle, and had chosen O Yuki to be his wife. "*Mea culpa! Mea culpa!*" was the burden of his reflections as he strode along the road towards Kabuto; "it is better to mind one's own business, and to leave other people alone!"

He was becoming footsore and leg-weary, when the public "*basha*" overtook him, on its way to Kabuto. This was a kind of miniature charabanc, covered with an awning. It was painted blue and white and red; and the covering, too, was of striped material; but all the colours had suffered through exposure to the weather. It was dragged by a lean but gallant-hearted pony. The reins and most of the harness were made of rope and string; and the jolting, rattling progress of the springless vehicle was accompanied with flourishes of a whip and tootings of a motor horn.

There was room within for three passengers on each

side; but the seat was extremely low, and the knees—Dick's knees, at any rate—rose almost to the level of the chin. The other passengers eyed him uneasily, for they knew that this must be the *ijin san* of Aiko, and they had already heard the story of the *shinju* at Shirakiri. The clatter of the *basha*, however, prevented any conversation; and Dick was grateful for some assistance on his way, however uncomfortable it might be.

At Kabuto he took a ticket for Kamakura; nor did he have to wait long for his train. But, when once he was seated in the compartment, weariness of mind and body swept over him like a full tide; and after about half an hour of cogitation so discordant that it bordered on delirium, he fell asleep. When he awoke he had already passed the junction for Kamakura, and darkness had fallen. The next stop was Hiranuma, on the outskirts of Yokohama city, where passengers for that destination had to change, since Yokohama station had not then been built on the main Tokaido line.

Dick left the train at Hiranuma; and from there he walked until he could take a tram going right into Yokohama. He alighted from the tram near the public park, and continued on his way along the narrow crowded footpaths to one of the big hotels which stood on the sea-front.

He inquired at the office for Miss de Vesta. The Japanese clerk glanced sideways at the dirty unshaven figure, which looked odd and out of place even among the motley company of the Ocean Hotel. Then he replied that Miss de Vesta had sailed by the *Tenyo Maru* yesterday morning.

Dick stared round him at the artificial orientalism of the hotel lobby, at the *himono* and Satsuma wares in their show cases and at the garrulous guests. Then his eye caught the sparkle of bottles through a door on the left; and he dragged himself towards the bar, which was also the billiard room.

He drank a stiff brandy, then a second, and then a

third; and after that, rather to the surprise of the rotund white-coated bar-boy, he paid. He lurched across the lounge, through swing-doors, and—in ungainly fashion—down the broad steps which led to the asphalted front and the sea-wall. There were benches, as in an English park, placed here and there along the front; and an iron chain, supported on white posts, kept the careless and inebriated from toppling over into the sea. Bright electric standard lamps, besieged by clouds of moths, illumined the empty street. Out in the harbour the lights of the shipping were shining in geometrical patterns. Beneath the sea-wall, the black water was lapping round the concrete.

Dick sat down on one of the benches, his hands in his pockets and his legs thrust out in front of him. He did not know what he was going to do, and he did not care. He felt deliciously superior to all the evil combinations of destiny.

"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul," he quoted to an individual in a kind of uniform, who, after stumbling over his feet, had sat down beside him on the bench. At the words "master" and "captain" this person had glanced round him nervously. Then he answered haltingly, as though he were attempting to translate from a foreign tongue:

"That's ri', ole top. It's thirsty work lookin' at the blarsted sea."

"Come into my hotel, then," said Dick spaciously, "and have something to drink."

"Cor! Not that swell place for me! Not in these trousers!"

He had stood up, and was bending over the sprawling Dick, in a confidential manner. His thick, husky voice seemed to be escaping, like gas, out of a cloud of stale whisky.

"I know a peach of a place!" he whispered. "Girls, too! Yum-yum! Got the price of a rickshaw? I'm 'earts of oak!"

Dick scrambled to his feet and linked arms with his new friend. He felt that this was the man whom he had travelled round the world to find—a real friend, wise and trusty. They drifted along unsteadily until rickshaws were in sight.

"*Oi! Oi! Nicho!* (Hi! Hi! Two!)" cried Dick.

"Cor! You speak the blarsted lingo like a mandarin!" said the unknown. "What *are* you exac'ly?"

"I'm a missionary," Dick replied solemnly.

The beachcomber broke into a gasp of merriment:

"Cor! That's a good 'un! A missionary goin' to Cherry Susan's. No; but what *are* you?"

The rickshaws had carried them off one after the other, and, in this extended order, conversation became difficult. They ascended an abrupt hill, where the rickshawmen insisted that their passengers must get out and walk, much to the stranger's disgust.

"Lazy barstards!" he exclaimed, as he panted up the slope.

They passed through a snug suburb of prosperous European houses. Sounds of piano music floated from the open windows; and at garden gates evening parties were breaking up with a few last jokes. Then they seemed to glide downhill again into another world, dark and sinister. They were in a village of small wooden houses, degenerating towards the native type. Some of these were labelled "Hotel" or "Bar"; and girls, painted and powdered, were standing at the doorways or peeping out of the windows. In this weird hollow among the hills there seemed to be no air, only a sickly smell of scent, powder and spirits.

The rickshaws turned off the main road up a short lane. This ended in a curved wooden arch, upon the span of which were inscribed in large golden lettering the words—LILY BAR. Dick and his new friend rolled out of their little cars. Dick paid the rickshawmen; and the stranger lurched through the gate under the arch. Within was a square wooden house of two storeys, painted a dismal green and standing by itself

in a shingly garden. At the open door stood a Japanese woman in a blue and white *kimono*. Her sleeves were braced back as though for housework, and her brawny brown arms were folded across her chest. She was tall and sturdy for a Japanese. She had a heavy, square, determined face with skin innocent of powder and brown as a coffee-berry.

"Hallo, Susan!" said the loafer. "How's how?"

"What you got?" the woman asked.

"A friend."

"What's he got?"

In reply, the man nudged Susan with his elbow and winked.

"Swell," he whispered under his fiery breath; then, aloud, he asked:

"Any drinks?"

"Come in!" said the woman.

She had none of the soft mannerisms of the Japanese female, but spoke rather as one man to another. Indeed, "Cherry Susan" was one of the famous characters of Yokohama, and as familiar a landmark to the vagrant sailor as the Bluff or Number Nine. She was a much-travelled lady, having been born near Nagasaki in the island of Amakusa, which the Japanese call "Women's Island," some forty years ago. For generations the girls of Amakusa have staffed the Japanese brothels overseas with a reliable, obedient and, on the whole, remarkably healthy stock. Some have risen to high positions in their calling. Some have retired to their native island with wealth and reputation. Many have fallen by the way. "Cherry Susan" was a typical daughter of Amakusa and a credit to her race.

She had been exported from Japan at the age of fourteen to a small town in the Malay Peninsula, where she had been broken in to her trade. She had been in Malay Street in Singapore, thence to Calcutta and thence up-country to Quetta. She had drifted through Karachi to Bombay, and overseas to Zanzibar. This was her farthest West. She returned to Singapore

via Colombo; and thence paid a visit to the pearl-divers at Broome, a ghastly wind-bitten, sand-bitten spot on the North-West coast of Australia. From extreme South she migrated to extreme North, having learned from headquarters at Amakusa that trade was good in the new countries, which the Russians were beginning to develop. She sojourned in Vladivostock, in Harbin, in Mukden and in Port Arthur, where she did no small service for her country just before the outbreak of the Russian War; and she made enough money to undertake the voyage to America. She was becoming a woman of wisdom, experience and character. She had learned that better money could be made in America than in any other country; and so she betook herself to San Francisco, where she tarried awhile in a House of All Nations. Thence a sentimental American, who had seen "Madame Butterfly," rescued her, and offered her semi-respectability. It was not to her taste. She preferred the chatter and the gossip and the companionship of the brothel. But in America she had made money fast, and within a few years she returned to Japan with a capital which she invested in the "Lily Bar" and in the purchase of five or six girls who would henceforth work for her as she had worked for others. Thus, Cherry Susan became one of the institutions of Yokohama.

Passionless, merciless, mechanical and avid—there was yet a certain grandeur in this intriguing figure. Tall as a man, strong as a man, and more cunning than fifty men, she was the type and the embodiment of a primitive force, older than any social problem, older than Love itself—the force of sexual necessity. She was akin to those High Priestesses who had presided at Paphos and at Cythera and in the groves of Antioch. No one could have counted the number or the variety of the men whom she had had. She had survived disease and motherhood; and these experiences had left her immune from the attacks of physical infection

and from the germs of human sympathy. She was above all these ephemeral anxieties; and she could give to her lovers the empty satisfaction of cohabitation with an immortal.

The rough sailors and the beachcombers who frequented the Lily Bar were vaguely aware of her superiority; and they treated Cherry Susan with a respect which she did not reciprocate.

Inside the "Lily" was a bar-room with window benches and round tables and wicker chairs, a sanded floor and spittoons. On the walls hung an N.Y.K. calendar and some pictures of stout blonde naked ladies lying on ample couches. There was also a trophy composed of a British, a Japanese and an American flag.

Dick's friend ordered whisky.

"Where's your money?" asked Susan.

"They want to be paid first," he explained sheepishly.

"Why not? Got plenty," said Dick. He automatically pulled out a ten yen note from his trouser pocket, which Susan grabbed with lightning-like rapidity.

"More one for girl," she said.

"Why not?" Dick agreed; and handed over another note.

"There!" she said, when she had locked the cash away. "Now I give you plenty drink and nice girl if you want. This one—no good already."

She caught Dick by the scruff of his collar, and pushed him into a window corner as though he were a sack.

"*Jya!*" he whined in feeble Japanese.

Then she retired behind the bar and poured out drinks from a bottle labelled "Jolly England Wisuki, product of George V. and Son, Skotland, England."

Two girls in nightdresses, painted and scented, served the raw but "stretched" intoxicant. They murmured their little stock of blandishments in English, learned parrot-like—"I love you," "Please kiss," "You love me, dear," "God dam!" This last endearment was a stock joke of the Lily Bar; and customers were expected to laugh.

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Dick pushed away a girl who was trying to wind her arms round his neck.

"Lemme alone. 'Nother drink," he gurgled.

His companion, however, had taken the other girl on to his knee, and was poking his fingers into the meaty parts of her body, as though he were appraising a fattened beast.

"You like that girl?" asked Cherry Susan from behind the counter. The loafer dropped his damsel, and lurched across to the bar.

"No, I want you, Susan!"

He thrust his heavy bearded face at her; and she retorted with a resounding smack upon it. Her suitor drew back, disconcerted.

"Didn't know I was offendin' you!" he said.

"Don't want you," Susan continued in businesslike tones. "You can have these girls, or more three toside."

"I'll look 'em over," growled the beachcomber, who was fastidious.

But first he sheered off to where Dick was stretched along the window-seat, quite insensible now. He went straight for the young man's trouser pockets, and pulled out a bundle of notes and a handful of silver and copper coins.

"Cor!" he exclaimed. "That's all right!"

At the sight of the money Susan had abandoned the bar.

"Gimme half," she demanded.

"Why should I? It's mine. I'm takin' care of it for 'im."

He dangled it temptingly over her head.

"Gimme half, you bum," she cried.

He relented; and, counting out the notes—there were sixty yen's worth—he pushed over thirty to Susan. Then he was proceeding to deal with the silver and the smaller notes.

"Put it back," ordered Susan. "We say he drunk he lose his yens."

There was wisdom in this moderation, and he let

Susan shovel the coins back into Dick's pocket. Then he turned away to go upstairs and inspect the other girls. It was more than an hour before he left. He had had a most successful evening in every way, and he was actually leaving a brothel richer than when he entered it. This was cause for self-congratulation and a transient belief in Providence; but he preferred not to await his benefactor's awakening. He took a tender farewell of Susan, who replied:

"You lucky to-night, you stiff;" and pushed him out of the door. Then she turned to her two odalisques.

"How we do that?" she asked, pointing to Dick. Cherry Susan prided herself on never speaking Japanese; and she would talk in her pidgin English even to her compatriots.

"Put him in small room with *tatami*," she ordered. "No bed there. Him sick no matter."

She felt through all his pockets once more and examined the contents. She opened his shirt and caught sight of Chloe's locket. Real diamonds and real gold. She unhooked it quickly and concealed it somewhere on her own person. Then the two girls carried him off as if for burial to some depository at the back of the house. His limbs were limp and flabby; his eyes were closed; his mouth was open and dribbling. He was an ungracious sight even for the Lily Bar.

The night was so warm and the air so close that Cherry Susan pulled her rocking-chair out into her gravelled garden; and, as no more custom came, she rocked herself into a doze. Shortly after midnight she awoke at the opening of her front gate. A tall figure was standing in the moonlight. Susan thought she recognised him; but she went on rocking and did not speak.

"Hallo, Susan! Good evening!" called out a deep, resonant voice. "Is Thomson here?"

"Nobody here, Captain Barter."

"I'm coming in to see, all the same."

The tall man led the way into the bar-room, Susan following. He wore a double-breasted pilot's jacket,

dark trousers and a kind of yachting cap rather bent about the brim. He was so tall that he had to stoop to enter the room. He had a short white beard, a prominent aquiline nose, and wide blue eyes—the eyes of a child, a fanatic and a seaman. There was something about him which suggested a Don Quixote of the Ocean. It was Bibleman Baxter, the evangelist of the Inland Sea. He had come on a cruise to Yokohama, and was doing his customary round of the brothels on a search for lost souls.

Cherry Susan knew the captain and respected him. Perhaps he was the only man whom she had ever respected. He, too, belonged to an ancient and adventurous tradition; and had been nourished on primal and simple conceptions of life. He, too, was an epic figure from a modern Odyssey—a vagabond of vagabonds, a fighter and a Viking. But he had found a secret source of illumination—of hallucination, perhaps; and this had transformed his restless, lawless energy. Instead of chasing slaves for the Queensland plantations, he was chasing souls for the Lord's garden.

"Nobody here, Susan? What's that hat and stick?" Baxter's eyes missed little.

"One drunk," the woman answered.

"No good to you?"

Susan shook her head.

"I'll take him, then. Where is he?"

He disappeared into the inner rooms, and presently emerged with Dick in his arms. The drunken man was groaning and muttering; and Baxter carried him as tenderly as though he were a sick child. He laid him out on the window-seat, looked into his face and seemed to recognise him. He examined the papers in his pocket and confirmed his identification.

"Lord Almighty!" he ejaculated out of piety or surprise. He had recognised the former ornament of St George's at Tokyo.

"Do you know this man, Susan?"

"No. Fus' time," she answered.

"I take him."

"He pay fus'."

Captain Baxter drew the silver out of Dick's pocket, and shook his head.

"He's paid well, or you wouldn't have left him this."

Cherry Susan realised once more that she was in the presence of a superior intelligence.

"Call a *kuruma* (rickshaw)," Baxter commanded; and one of Susan's little flock, who had gathered in their paint and nightdresses to watch these unwonted happenings, ran out like a ghost into the night to summon a car from round the corner.

So Dick left the Lily Bar, not knowing that he had ever entered it, and was wheeled back to Yokohama, his rescuer striding along in silence at his side. When the procession reached the pier, they were challenged by the harbour police; but Baxter explained that this was one of his men, and, as the police knew Baxter and his doings, they let him through.

He paid off the rickshaw, picked up his bundle—which was Dick—and transferred him to a *sampan*, one of those shallow, sharp-prowed native boats, which move like beetles across the smooth waters of the inner harbour. He directed the boatman towards the place where the *Seisko Maru* was moored. The boat of the Gospel was painted white, and could be seen from a distance even in the darkness.

When the *sampan* came alongside, Baxter called out: "Oi! Oi! Masa!" Whereupon, a dark stoutish figure appeared on deck and let down a rope ladder over the side. The old man climbed on board his ship with remarkable agility, carrying Dick like a sack over his right shoulder. Once aboard, he spoke to the sailor in Japanese:

"Help me to carry him, Masa!"

And as, one at the head and one at the feet, they carried him down the narrow companion into the bowels of the ship, Baxter added by way of enlightenment:

"Stuff for Salvation!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

BIBLEMAN BAXTER

WHEN Dick awoke next morning with a bitter headache and a distaste for everything which this world has to offer, he found himself lying on a settee in a narrow cabin, with his face slightly below the level of a polished table at which a formidable old man—possibly Calvin or Zwingli or John Knox—was consuming large quantities of coffee and Boston beans.

As this was evidently a dream, Dick closed his eyes again; but a disquieting sense of the world around him—an unsteady and tremulous world—prevented him from sleeping. This oscillation communicated itself to his stomach; and a whiff from the plate of beans made him retch.

"Hungry?" asked the old man grimly.

The very word and its implications were enough to make Dick retch again; but he was beginning to draw conclusions. The odd shape of the apartment, the nautical appearance of his companion and the curious movement around (and within) him, convinced him that he was on board ship. A sudden leap of the mind suggested that perhaps he had caught the *Tenyo Maru* bound for San Francisco, and that Chloe de Vesta was in the company.

"Is this the *Tenyo Maru*?" he asked.

The old man laughed with a gusto unexpected among the early reformers.

"No, boy; it's the *Seisho Maru*," he answered.

"And where are we going?" Dick asked.

"To the haven of God's grace."

Dick seemed satisfied with this assurance. Conversation lapsed; and from a cupboard in the wall the old

mariner took down a chart and began measuring distances with a pair of compasses. After a time he left the room; and a Japanese sailor, who came in to clear away the remains of the breakfast, inquired whether *danna san* had need of anything.

"I should like to wash," said Dick.

The sailor supported him through a door into the cook's galley, where he was supplied with a shallow bucket, fresh water and soap. The wash made him feel a little better; but this was counteracted by the smells of the galley. He staggered back to the cabin, for he was feeling very ill. If only his head would stop aching!

Seisho Maru! Bible ship! Suddenly the identity of the grey-bearded conquistador became clear to him. This must be Bibleman Baxter, whom he had met at Karuizawa, and whose missionary work with the *Seisho Maru* was famous throughout Japan. But how had he, Dick Aylmer, arrived on board this ark? The events of the last few days were so confused: Cloc, the Bishop, Kato and O Yuki, Hogen Shonin, Ako—and then more dreams saturated with a reek of powder and cheap scent and whisky. He would never touch whisky again, so long as he lived—no, nor any other drink.

Baxter's heavy steps clattered down the companion ladder. He came over to Dick, and laid his hand on the fevered forehead.

"Hurts?" he asked.

"Yes," Dick replied.

The captain opened another of the mysterious cupboards which panelled the little cabin. This one was full of bottles and jars. He shook out some powder on to a sheet of paper, and gave it to Dick to take with a glass of water.

"Where are we going?" Dick asked.

"West South West along the coast of Japan."

"Why am I here?"

"I found you at the gate of Hell, boy—no place for such as you."

"But why did you bring me here?"

"Sea air's good medicine for body and mind."

Dick slept for most of the day; but towards evening he was well enough to crawl on deck. Seated on a coil of rope, he took stock of the white sails above him, the dancing blue waves below, the cry of the gulls, the scudding gusts of flying-fish, and the mountainous outline of the coasts of Japan, ahead and to starboard. On the port side lay the island volcano of Oshima, crowned with a wreath of its own smoke. The air was clear and the sky unclouded, save where a little flock of cirrus was herded about the peak of Fujiyama.

Captain Baxter came striding along the deck with his hands in his pockets.

"Wind falling, but fair speed maintained," he announced. "There's not a ship afloat with so stout a heart as this one."

"Where are we making for?" Dick inquired.

"Ito—a port in the Izu Peninsula. We put in for the night and we round the point to-morrow."

At Ito the captain went ashore. He had friends and business in every port in Japan. But Dick turned in to his bunk on the cabin settle. It was a cabin which served many uses, as a chart-room, a dining-room, a dispensary, a reception-room, a chapel, and at times a doss-house. There was a table in the middle, a door at each end, a porthole at each side, and under each porthole a settle fixed in the wall, one of which served as a bunk for Dick. Over one door hung the text, "Peace, be still!" and over the other the words "Lord with us!"—the initial letter in each case being smothered in a festoon of roses and forget-me-nots.

The *Seisho Maru* left Ito at dawn next morning; and as soon as the preparations for the departure were finished, Masa served breakfast for two in the cabin, and Dick was eating with relish the beans which, twenty-four hours ago, had seemed to him the most disgusting form of food imaginable.

"What can you do?" asked the captain across the table.

"How do you mean?" said Dick.

"Can you sail a ship?"

"No."

"Can you build a house?"

"No."

"Can you cut a tree down?"

"Perhaps."

"Do you know any doctoring?"

"No."

"Then what did you come to teach to the Japanese?"

"The message of Jesus Christ and His Sacraments."

"And do you believe in that message now, yourself?"

Dick shook his head.

"I believe in nothing at all," he answered. "I have come to the end."

"Or to the beginning," said the old evangelist.

"They resemble each other so much that many have made that mistake."

Dick told his rescuer the outline of his story. He concluded:

"I've done my best, and I've done no good. I've brought despair and death where I tried to bring light and comfort. My family in England are against me; my church will cast me out. What can I do?"

"Work!" said the captain. "Can you cook?"

Dick shook his head sadly; he was of no kind of use.

"Masa will teach you. We want a cook in the *Seisho Maru*."

Like Naaman of old, Dick had expected a more dramatic form of treatment. It was not to commence immediately, however; and he spent most of the day on deck watching the swift cut of the ship through the water, the slow evolution of the indented coastline, and the stately beauty of Fujiyama. Masa showed him how to trawl over the side for fish; but he caught none.

In the afternoon they were going to put in at that

very port upon which Dick had looked down from the summit of Mitaké San only a few days before. Dick could recognise the scarf of forest which marked the hermit's mountain. Somewhere up there, Hogen Shonin was looking down in peace upon the world which he had cast away. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Dick felt that he had no treasure—and perhaps no heart either.

Captain Baxter's head appeared like a ninepin on the level of the deck.

"Can you play chess?" he shouted.

Dick had to admit a still further deficiency. He knew only *shogi*, the Japanese variant.

"Come down, then. I'll teach you."

Masa and the two sailors were left to bring the ship into harbour. But before settling down to his game, the captain took out of one of his numerous cupboards a large black flag, which he handed out to Masa with instructions that he was to run it up as soon as ever they arrived in the port.

"No, we're not pirates," was the only explanation then given to Dick.

Later, when the Customs' officer came on board, there was a long discussion about some matter other than revenue, which Dick could not follow. When the captain returned to his game Dick asked him if he were going ashore. The old man frowned.

"I don't go ashore in this ungodly place," he answered. "The last time I was here, I found that there was a poor girl in a brothel in the town who was being tortured. She had come to the end of her term of service, and she wanted to go home; and her masters were trying to terrify her to renew her contract and to stay on. I spoke to the Chief of Police, and he pretended that he did not understand. Then I told the people that I was leaving their town, and why, and that God would surely punish them; and I hoisted my black flag and sailed. And a few weeks later a storm and a tidal wave destroyed a part of the town,

so that even these poor heathen could see that it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in their eyes. I have sent Masa ashore; but I shall not go myself until I have heard his report."

They started a fresh game. Dick was beginning to know the moves, and no longer confused his pieces with those of the Japanese chess which he had played during the long winter evenings of Ako.

When Masa returned, there was renewed whispering. Masa, a round, sun-burned son of the Inland Sea, appeared to have had his voice scorched out of him, and seldom spoke above a whisper.

"It is well. Show them in," ordered the captain. Then he explained to Dick, his old face grinning with satisfaction. "The Mayor and the Chief of Police have come. The girl is free."

The two dignitaries were received in the cabin, and regaled with green tea and rice cakes. The talk was about the weather, the sea, the storm, the business prosperity of the town, the tea trade and the Army manoeuvres—many and various subjects, but never that which was uppermost in the minds of all the speakers. However, when the time came to escort them to their launch, they all glanced up at the mainmast. The black flag had disappeared.

Late that night, Dick and the captain were sitting on deck discussing theology. The *Seisho Maru* rolled gently at her moorings. In front of them were the starry lights of the town; behind them, a dark screen of pine-trees shut off the open sea. Dick was feeling more confident, for the captain had praised the fluency of his Japanese talk.

"It is a pity," the old seaman had said; "if you go back to England, you will lose what you have learned."

Then he added:

"It's a gift of the Lord. If I could have talked the lingo like that, like a gentleman and a scholar, I'd have won many more souls for salvation."

"What's the use?" Dick had challenged him; "they call themselves Christian, but they remain what they are. What's the use of missions?"

"When men light a candle," quoted Bibleman Baxter, "they do not place it under a bushel, but on a candlestick. So shine that ye may lighten the world. That was the Lord's command."

"But so many of these missionaries have no light in them. Look at Paul; look at Porter; look at myself!"

"The light is *there*," said the captain, taking a small Testament out of his jacket pocket, and laying it in the palm of his left hand as though it were a sample.

"The light is *there*," he repeated. "There is no light in you or me. We are just instruments of His Will. We can do little or we can do much, but we can all try. . . . Those services, and prayer-books, and candles and the rest are all very fine for people who live quietly in the home countries and have time to amuse themselves with all those things. . . . But out at sea, when the night is dark and the stars are covered, what do we want? Just one light. That will give you your bearing."

The old man was silent. Then, after a pause he continued:

"Just one light! How many and many a time have I prayed for that! I don't want to understand too much. That would mean confusion and error for such as me. Just one light!"

"And the others?" Dick asked; "the other people in the world?"

"A little sympathy, a little doctoring, a little feeding, a little morality, a little honest dealing . . . telling husbands not to beat their wives, telling wives not to nag their husbands . . . a chance for the kiddies . . . helping lame dogs over stiles. . . . So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father that is in Heaven."

"It sounds very simple," said Dick, "simpler than ever I thought."

It took about a week for the *Seisho Maru* to creep down the coasts of Japan to the great port of Kobé at the entrance to the Inland Sea. Through the maze of shipping and the wheeling, sorrowing sea-gulls and the puffy launches and the waddling *sampan*s and the clatter and smoke of the great dockyards, the Bible-Ship threaded her way like a white soul astray in the circles of purgatory. An official who came on board from the harbour-office brought an urgent message for Dick. It was from his sister.

"We are here, at the Eastern Hotel," she had scrawled on the back of a dinner-ménu. "As soon as you get this you must come and see me at once. It is most urgent. GRACE."

Dick handed the note to his captain.

"You can go off in the harbour-office launch," said Baxter.

He watched Dick's grey figure pass out of sight among the crowded shipping. He shrugged his shoulders, sighed and returned to his work. He was preparing for a protracted cruise round the innumerable islands of the Inland Sea.

His was a lonely life, among these alien people—lonely, and at times dangerous. He was an old man, too; and he would have liked to have passed on something of his faith and of his experience to some younger disciple, who could have continued the tradition of the *Seisho Maru*, when he was gone. In the few days that had elapsed, he had grown to be fond of Dick; for had he not lifted the lad, body and soul, out of a veritable hell?—a hell, too, not entirely of his own making. Baxter knew little enough of Dick's home surroundings, nor could he gauge the desolating influence of the false values among which he had been brought up; but the old seaman knew life, and knew it to its dregs, and he could see that here was an immature boy, shot forth into its appalling vortex

without any ballast of any kind. And what were those Bishops and Archdeacons and the rest of them about in launching such frail craft upon the high seas? Bibleman Baxter saw light more clearly there, or thought that he could see it. He muttered something about "a pack of fool parsons!"—meaning thereby that he held the powers behind the Bishop to be directly responsible for the lad's shipwreck. What business had they to confer an irrevocable vocation upon him, and to send him out to the Farthest East, to the Land of Inverted Thought, with all his green enthusiasms wholly untutored, wholly undisciplined, to make good as best he might in a world whose perplexities and temptations could well make havoc of the most tempered characters?

"Twelve doz. cans Boston Beans," wrote Captain Baxter in his round schoolboy fist.

Something was altogether wrong here—a system at fault. Baxter's business was not to remedy that, but he knew two things—Dick Aylmer had been possessed of a certain courage and a certain faith, and, besides, he was very young. In the latter fact lay its own irresistible appeal. And now—Dick was on his way to rejoin the sister who would doubtless take him back to England. The old man felt a certain weariness at heart, as he ploddingly listed the provisions for his solitary cruise.

"The Lord hath given," he murmured. "The Lord hath taken away!"

Dick, meanwhile, had found his way to the Eastern Hotel, that ostentatious hostelry, which opens on to the Bund, or sea-front, of Kobé. He was ushered through the pretentious hall to the Careys' suite on the first floor. Grace rose, as her brother entered, and gathered him into an embrace more motherly than usual.

"My poor Dick," she said, kissing him on the forehead. She had heard all about the tragedy at Ako; and Dick himself had telegraphed to her his whereabouts on board the *Seisho Maru*.

"We are going back at once," she continued, "by the shortest way—across Siberia. We have only been waiting for you."

Then Dick realised that he was once again at the choosing of the ways; and his thoughts turned back to the words of Hogen Shonin, and the vigil on the summit of Mitaké San. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The words were dancing in front of his eyes; and his attention seemed to be astrain to watch the direction of their flight and the auspices of the future.

"Dick—just after you left, we had a cable from Hernwood."

The association of Hernwood with anything so cosmopolitan and progressive as a cable was startling; it portended grave news.

"Father is dead."

Dick sat down; so did his sister. They stared at each other across a bowl of pink gladioles. Grace was dressed in a *kimono* of black crinkly silk, with a dance of little blue butterflies embroidered round the skirts.

"So, you see," she was saying, "we must all go home at once."

Dick shook his head.

"Of course you are coming," Grace insisted; "there's mother to be considered."

"She doesn't want me," said Dick; "and I can do nothing for her. They preferred to believe lies about me rather than my own word. And now, if father is dead, he can never tell me that he is sorry; and I can never explain!"

"But you can't stop here, Dick," his sister urged. "You are a rich man, comparatively. There is the property to attend to."

"You can see to that. You are better at business than I. I shall want a little—but not much."

"You don't mean that you are going to stop in this depressing country—where everything goes wrong!"

Dick nodded his intention.

"Out of a distorted sense of duty?"

The young man laughed, rather harshly.

"Duty!" he exclaimed. "I shall never do anything again because it's duty. Duty is an excuse—or a nasty kind of conceit—or an argument to make other people do what we want. The Japanese understand Duty; but we don't. Henceforth, I am going to do just what I wish to do. I am not going to ask myself, Is this right? Ought I to do that?"

"Dick, dear, I don't quite understand you. You seem to have learned a great deal in Japan, as I always thought you would. You are out of my depth altogether. But do you really mean that, after all your bitter experience here, you still do not want to come back to England? Dick—Dick!"

There was something clerical and unctuous about Grace, her brother thought, which she had never shaken off, in spite of her agnosticism and her Bohemian life. She was still as tortuous, too, as any bishop.

"Grace, you want me to come back to England for some inscrutable purpose of your own?"

"For your own sake, Dick dear."

"You deliberately schemed to take me away from Ako by dangling in front of me that woman, whom you must have known to be a rotter. You tried to persuade me that I was saving her soul, when I was much nearer to losing my own. And now that she has gone back to the man who bought her, you tell me that, because of father's death, I must come back to England. What is the use of it? Here, I am beginning to understand; but, back in England, I should be like a fish out of water again. Besides, I am unrocked—a disgraced clergyman! Is *that* wanted in Hernwood?"

Bronzed with the sun and the sea-air, his hands in his pockets and his mop of hair bleached to the palest gold, Grace could not help admiring this cantankerous brother of hers, who had certainly developed surprisingly since his curate days at Bethnal Green.

"I am going back to the ship," he said. "I shall send in my resignation to the Bishop, after all. I have made an awful mess of my life, but I have learned a lot; and now I shall begin all over again—at the beginning, this time, which is where every one ought to begin. I shall go back to the ship."

"And have you found God there?" Grace laughed impatiently.

"I don't know yet; but anyhow I've found a man."

"And whatever do you do?"

"I cook," he answered.

He was bending over her; and she could see, in his eyes, how very fond he was of her. Very quietly, she began to cry. Dick had never seen such a phenomenon before. He had believed his sister to be impervious to such weaknesses. He smoothed her hair with his hand, and kissed her tears away.

"Dear Grace, don't—please! You know I love you. I always shall. But you are married; you have your husband and your own life. You must leave me free to choose mine. It is sweet of you to think that you want me so much to come back to England; but you don't, really."

There was silence for a few minutes in the vulgar, over-upholstered room. Then Dick said:

"I am going now—back to the ship. But I shall see you again before we leave for the Inland Sea. God bless you, Grace dearest."

He kissed her again; and then stole from the room as though he were leaving the bedside of an invalid.

Outside, in the harbour, the sailing-boats were swaying to and fro upon a sea of roseate reflections. One of them had already hoisted a light—just one light!

Dick hailed a *sampan*.

"*Seisho Maru yé!*" he directed.

His mission had begun.

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