



## 1. The Paulownia Court

In a certain reign there was a lady not of the first rank whom the emperor loved more than any of the others. The grand ladies with high ambitions thought her a presumptuous upstart, and lesser ladies were still more resentful. Everything she did offended someone. Probably aware of what was happening, she fell seriously ill and came to spend more time at home than at court. The emperor's pity and affection quite passed bounds. No longer caring what his ladies and courtiers might say, he behaved as if intent upon stirring gossip.

His court looked with very great misgiving upon what seemed a reckless infatuation. In China just such an unreasoning passion had been the undoing of an emperor and had spread turmoil through the land. As the resentment grew, the example of Yang Kuei-fei was the one most frequently cited against the lady.

She survived despite her troubles, with the help of an unprecedented bounty of love. Her father, a grand councillor, was no longer living. Her mother, an old-fashioned lady of good lineage, was determined that matters be no different for her than for ladies who with paternal support were making careers at court. The mother was attentive to the smallest detail of etiquette and deportment. Yet there was a limit to what she could do. The sad fact was that the girl was without strong backing, and each time a new incident arose she was next to defenseless.

It may have been because of a bond in a former life that she bore the emperor a beautiful son, a jewel beyond compare. The emperor was in a fever of impatience to see the child, still with the mother's family; and when, on the earliest day possible, he was brought to court, he did indeed prove to be a most marvelous babe. The emperor's eldest son was the grandson of the Minister of the Right. The world assumed that with this powerful support he would one day be named crown prince; but the new child was far more beautiful. On public occasions the emperor continued to favor his eldest son. The new child was a private treasure, so to speak, on which to lavish uninhibited affection.

The mother was not of such a low rank as to attend upon the emperor's personal needs. In the general view she belonged to the upper classes. He insisted on having her always beside him, however, and on nights when there was music or other entertainment he would require that she be present. Sometimes the two of them would sleep late, and even after they had risen he would not let her go. Because of his unreasonable demands she was widely held to have fallen into immoderate habits out of keeping with her rank.

With the birth of the son, it became yet clearer that she was the emperor's favorite. The mother of the eldest son began to feel uneasy. If she did not manage carefully, she might see the new son designated crown prince. She had come to court before the emperor's other ladies, she had once been favored over the others, and she had borne several of his children. However much her complaining might trouble and annoy him, she was one lady whom he could not ignore.

Though the mother of the new son had the emperor's love, her detractors were numerous and alert to the slightest inadvertency. She was in continuous torment, feeling that she had nowhere to turn. She lived in the paulownia Court. The emperor had to pass the apartments of other ladies to reach hers, and it must be admitted that their resentment at his constant comings and goings was not unreasonable. Her visits to the royal chambers were equally frequent. The robes of her women were in a scandalous state from trash strewn along bridges and galleries. Once some women conspired to have both doors of a gallery she must pass bolted shut, and so she found herself unable to advance or retreat. Her anguish over the mounting list of insults was presently more than the emperor could bear. He moved a lady out of rooms adjacent to his own and assigned them to the lady of the paulownia Court and so, of course, aroused new resentment.

When the young prince reached the age of three,\* the resources of the treasury and the stewards' offices were exhausted to make the ceremonial bestowing of trousers as elaborate as that for the eldest son. Once more there was malicious talk; but the prince himself, as he grew up, was so superior of mien and disposition that few could find it in themselves to dislike him. Among the more discriminating, indeed, were some who marvelled that such a paragon had been born into this world.

In the summer the boy's mother, feeling vaguely unwell, asked that she be allowed to go home. The emperor would not hear of it. Since they were by now used to these indispositions, he begged her to stay and see what course her health would take. It was steadily worse, and then, suddenly,

everyone could see that she was failing. Her mother came pleading that he let her go home. At length he agreed.

Fearing that even now she might be the victim of a gratuitous insult, she chose to go off without ceremony, leaving the boy behind. Everything must have an end, and the emperor could no longer detain her. It saddened him inexpressibly that he was not even permitted to see her off. A lady of great charm and beauty, she was sadly emaciated. She was sunk in melancholy thoughts, but when she tried to put them into words her voice was almost inaudible. The emperor was quite beside himself, his mind a confusion of things that had been and things that were to come. He wept and vowed undying love, over and over again. The lady was unable to reply. She seemed listless and drained of strength, as if she scarcely knew what was happening. Wanting somehow to help, the emperor ordered that she be given the honor of a hand-drawn carriage. He returned to her apartments and still could not bring himself to the final parting.

"We vowed that we would go together down the road we all must go. You must not leave me behind."

She looked sadly up at him. "If I had suspected that it would be so--" She was gasping for breath.

"I leave you, to go the road we all must go.

The road I would choose, if only I could, is the other."

It was evident that she would have liked to say more; but she was so weak that it had been a struggle to say even this much.

The emperor was wondering again if he might not keep her with him and have her with him to the end.

But a message came from her mother, asking that she hurry. "We have obtained the agreement of eminent ascetics to conduct the necessary services, and I fear that they are to begin this evening."

So, in desolation, he let her go. He passed a sleepless night.

He sent off a messenger and was beside himself with impatience and apprehension even before there had been time for the man to reach the lady's house and return. The man arrived to find the house echoing with laments. She had died at shortly past midnight. He returned sadly to the palace. The emperor closed himself up in his private apartments. <N 5> He would have liked at least to keep the boy with him, but no precedent could be found for having him away from his mother's house through the mourning. The boy looked in bewilderment at the weeping courtiers, at his father too, the tears streaming over his face. The death of a parent is sad under any circumstances, and this one was indescribably sad.

But there must be an end to weeping, and orders were given for the funeral. If only she could rise

to the heavens with the smoke from the pyre, said the mother between her sobs. She rode in the hearse with several attendants, and what must her feelings have been when they reached Mount Otaki? It was there that the services were conducted with the utmost solemnity and dignity.

She looked down at the body. "With her before me, I cannot persuade myself that she is dead. At the sight of her ashes I can perhaps accept what has happened."

The words were rational enough, but she was so distraught that she seemed about to fall from the carriage. The women had known that it would be so and did what they could for her.

A messenger came from the palace with the news that the lady had been raised to the Third Rank, and presently a nunciary arrived to read the official order. For the emperor, the regret was scarcely bearable that he had not had the courage of his resolve to appoint her an imperial consort, and he wished to make amends by promoting her one rank. There were many who resented even this favor. Others, however, of a more sensitive nature, saw more than ever what a dear lady she had been, simple and gentle and difficult to find fault with. It was because she had been excessively favored by the emperor that she had been the victim of such malice. The grand ladies were now reminded of how sympathetic and unassuming she had been. It was for just such an occasion, they remarked to one another, that the phrase "how well one knows" \* had been invented.

The days went dully by. The emperor was careful to send offerings for the weekly memorial services. His grief was unabated and he spent his nights in tears, refusing to summon his other ladies. His serving women were plunged into dew-drenched autumn.

There was one lady, however, who refused to be placated. "How ridiculous," said the lady of the Kokiden pavilion, mother of his eldest son, "that the infatuation should continue even now."

The emperor's thoughts were on his youngest son even when he was with his eldest. He sent off intelligent nurses and serving women to the house of the boy's grandmother, where he was still in residence, and made constant inquiry after him.

The autumn tempests blew and suddenly the evenings were chilly. Lost in his grief, the emperor sent off a note to the grandmother. His messenger was a woman of middle rank called Myo~bu, whose father was a guards officer. It was on a beautiful moonlit night that he dispatched her, a night that brought memories. On such nights he and the dead lady had played the koto for each other. Her koto had somehow had overtones lacking in other instruments, and when she would interrupt the music to speak, the words too carried echoes of their own. Her face, her manner--they seemed to cling to him, but with "no more substance than the lucent dream."

Myo~bu reached the grandmother's house. Her carriage was drawn through the gate--and what a lonely place it was! The old lady had of course lived in widowed retirement, but, not wishing to distress her only daughter, she had managed to keep the place in repair. Now all was plunged into darkness. The weeds grew ever higher and the autumn winds tore threateningly at the garden. Only the rays of the moon managed to make their way through the tangles.

The carriage was pulled up and Myo~bu alighted.

The grandmother was at first unable to speak. "It has been a trial for me to go on living, and now to have one such as you come through the dews of this wild garden--I cannot tell you how much it shames me."

"A lady who visited your house the other day told us that she had to see with her own eyes before she could really understand your loneliness and sorrow. I am not at all a sensitive person, and yet I am unable to control these tears."

After a pause she delivered a message from the emperor. "He has said that for a time it all seemed as if he were wandering in a nightmare, and then when his agitation subsided he came to see that the nightmare would not end. If only he had a companion in his grief, he thought--and it occurred to him that you, my lady, might be persuaded to come unobtrusively to court. He cannot bear to think of the child languishing in this house of tears, and hopes that you will come quickly and bring him with you. He was more than once interrupted by sobs as he spoke, and it was apparent to all of us that he feared having us think him inexcusably weak. I came away without hearing him to the end."

"I cannot see for tears," said the old lady. "Let these sublime words bring me light."

This was the emperor's letter: "It seems impossibly cruel that although I had hoped for comfort with the passage of time my grief should only be worse. I am particularly grieved that I do not have the boy with me, to watch him grow and mature. Will you not bring him to me? We shall think of him as a memento."

There could be no doubting the sincerity of the royal petition. A poem was appended to the letter, but when she had come to it the old lady was no longer able to see through her tears:

"At the sound of the wind, bringing dews to Miyagi plain, I think of the tender hagi\* upon the moor."

"Tell His Majesty," said the grandmother after a time, "that it has been a great trial for me to live so long. Ashamed before the Takasago pines + I think that it is not for me to be seen at court. Even if the august invitation is repeated, I shall not find it possible to accept. As for the boy, I do not know what his wishes are. The indications are that he is eager to go. It is sad for me, but as it should be, please tell His Majesty of these thoughts, secret until now. I fear that I bear a curse from a previous existence and that it would be wrong and even terrible to keep the child with me."

"It would have given me great pleasure to look in upon him," said Myo~bu, getting up to leave. The child was asleep. "I should have liked to report to his royal father. But he will be waiting up for me, and it must be very late."

"May I not ask you to come in private from time to time? The heart of a bereaved parent may not be darkness, perhaps, but a quiet talk from time to time would do much to bring light. # You have done honor to this house on so many happy occasions, and now circumstances have required that you come with a sad message. The fates have not been kind. All of our hopes were on the girl, I must say again, from the day she was born, and until he died her father did not let me forget that she must go to court, that his own death, if it came early, should not deter me. I knew that another sort of life would be happier for a girl without strong backing, but I could not forget his wishes and sent her to court as I had promised. Blessed with favors beyond her station, she was the object of insults such as no one can be asked to endure. Yet endure them she did until finally the strain and the resentment were too much for her. And so, as I look back upon them, I know that those favors should never have been. Well, put these down, if you will, as the mad wanderings of a heart that is dark- ness." \* She was unable to go on.

It was late.

"His Majesty says much the same thing," replied Myo~bu. "it was, he says, an intensity of passion such as to startle the world, and perhaps for that very reason it was fated to be brief. He cannot think of anything he has done to arouse such resentment, he says, and so he must live with resentment which seems without proper cause. Alone and utterly desolate, he finds it impossible to face the world. He fears that he must seem dreadfully eccentric. How very great--he has said it over and over again --how very great his burden of guilt must be. One scarcely ever sees him that he is not weeping." Myo~bu too was in tears. "It is very late. I must get back before the night is quite over and tell him what I have seen." The moon was sinking over the hills, the air was crystal clear, the wind was cool, and the songs of the insects among the autumn grasses would by themselves have brought tears. It was a scene from which Myo~bu could not easily pull herself.

"The autumn night is too short to contain my tears

Though songs of bell cricket weary, fall into silence."

This was her farewell poem. Still she hesitated, on the point of getting into her carriage.

The old lady sent a reply:

"Sad are the insect songs among the reeds. More sadly yet falls the dew from above the clouds.

"I seem to be in a complaining mood."

Though gifts would have been out of place, she sent as a trifling memento of her daughter a set of robes, left for just such an occasion, and with them an assortment of bodkins and combs.

The young women who had come from court with the little prince still mourned their lady, but those of them who had acquired a taste for court life yearned to be back. The memory of the emperor made them join their own to the royal petitions.

But no--a crone like herself would repel all the fine ladies and gentlemen, said the grandmother, while on the other hand she could not bear the thought of having the child out of her sight for even a moment.

Myo~bu was much moved to find the emperor waiting up for her. Making it seem that his attention was on the small and beautifully plant garden before him, now in full autumn bloom, he was talking quietly with four or five women, among the most sensitive of his attendants. He had become addicted to illustrations by the emperor Uda for "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" \* and to poems by Ise and Tsurayuki on that subject, and to Chinese poems as well.

He listened attentively as Myo~bu described the scene she had found so affecting. He took up the letter she had brought from the grandmother. "I am so awed by this august message that I would run away and hide; and so violent are the emotions it gives rise to that I scarcely know what to say.

"The tree that gave them shelter has withered and died. One fears for the plight of the hagi shoots beneath."

A strange way to put the matter, thought the emperor; but the lady must still be dazed with grief. He chose to overlook the suggestion that he himself could not help the child.

He sought to hide his sorrow, not wanting these women to see him in such poor control of himself. But it was no use. He reviewed his memories over and over again, from his very earliest days with the dead lady. He had scarcely been able to bear a moment away from her while she lived. How strange that he had been able to survive the days and months since on memories alone. He had hoped to reward the grandmother's sturdy devotion, and his hopes had come to nothing.

"Well," he sighed, "she may look forward to having her day, if she will only live to see the boy grow up."

Looking at the keepsakes Myo~bu had brought back, he thought what a comfort it would be if some wizard were to bring him, like that Chinese emperor, a comb from the world where his lost love was dwelling. He whispered:

"And will no wizard search her out for me,

That even he may tell me where she is?"

There are limits to the powers of the most gifted artist. The Chinese lady in the paintings did not have the luster of life. Yang Kuei-fei was said to have resembled the lotus of the Sublime Pond, the willows of the Timeless Hall. No doubt she was very beautiful in her Chinese finery.

When he tried to remember the quiet charm of his lost lady, he found that there was no color of flower, no song of bird, to summon her up. Morning and night, over and over again, they had

repeated to each other the lines from "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" :

"In the sky, as birds that share a wing.

On earth, as trees that share a branch."

It had been their vow, and the shortness of her life had made it an empty dream.

Everything, the moaning of the wind, the humming of autumn insects, added to the sadness. But in the apartments of the Kokiden lady matters were different. It had been some time since she had last waited upon the emperor. The moonlight being so beautiful, she saw no reason not to have music deep into the night. The emperor muttered something about the bad taste of such a performance at such a time, and those who saw his distress agreed that it was an unnecessary injury. Kokiden was of an arrogant and intractable nature and her behavior suggested that to her the emperor's grief was of no importance.

The moon set. The wicks in the lamps had been trimmed more than once and presently the oil was gone. Still he showed no sign of retiring. His mind on the boy and the old lady, he jotted down a verse: "Tears dim the moon, even here above the clouds.\*

Dim must it be in that lodging among the reeds."

Calls outside told him that the guard was being changed. It would be one or two in the morning. people would think his behavior strange in deed. He at length withdrew to his bedchamber. He was awake the whole night through, and in dark morning, his thoughts on the blinds that would not open,\* he was unable to interest himself in business of state. He scarcely touched his breakfast, and lunch seemed so remote from his inclinations that his attendants exchanged looks and whispers of alarm. Not all voices were sympathetic. perhaps, some said, it had all been foreordained, but he had dismissed the talk and ignored the resentment and let the affair quite pass the bounds of reason; and now to neglect his duties so--it was altogether too much. Some even cited the example of the Chinese emperor who had brought ruin upon himself and his country.+

The months passed and the young prince returned to the palace. He had grown into a lad of such beauty that he hardly seemed meant for this world--and indeed one almost feared that he might only briefly be a part of it. When, the following spring, it came time to name a crown prince, the emperor wanted very much to pass over his first son in favor of the younger, who, however, had no influential maternal relatives. It did not seem likely that the designation would pass unchallenged. The boy might, like his mother, be destroyed by immoderate favors. The emperor told no one of his wishes. There did after all seem to be a limit to his affections, people said; and Kokiden regained her confidence.

The boy's grandmother was inconsolable. Finally, because her prayer to be with her daughter had been answered, perhaps, she breathed her last. Once more the emperor was desolate. The boy, now six, was old enough to know grief himself. His grandmother, who had been so good to him over



the years, had more than once told him what pain it would cause her, when the time came, to leave him behind.

He now lived at court. When he was seven he went through the ceremonial reading of the Chinese classics, and never before had there been so fine a performance. Again a tremor of apprehension passed over the emperor--might it be that such a prodigy was not to be long for this world? "No one need be angry with him now that his mother is gone." He took the boy to visit the Kokiden Pavilion. "And now most especially I hope you will be kind to him."

Admitting the boy to her inner chambers, even Kokiden was pleased. Not the sternest of warriors or the most unbending of enemies could have held back a smile. Kokiden was reluctant to let him go. She had two daughters, but neither could compare with him in beauty. The lesser ladies crowded about, not in the least ashamed to show their faces, all eager to amuse him, though aware that he set them off to disadvantage. I need not speak of his accomplishments in the compulsory subjects, the classics and the like. When it came to music his flute and koto made the heavens echo--but to recount all his virtues would, I fear, give rise to a suspicion that I distort the truth.

An embassy came from Korea. Hearing that among the emissaries was a skilled physiognomist, the emperor would have liked to summon him for consultation. He decided, however, that he must defer to the emperor Uda's injunction against receiving foreigners, and instead sent this favored son to the Ko-ro mansion,\* where the party was lodged. The boy was disguised as the son of the grand moderator, his guardian at court. The wise Korean cocked his head in astonishment.

"It is the face of one who should ascend to the highest place and be father to the nation," he said quietly, as if to himself. "But to take it for such would no doubt be to predict trouble. Yet it is not the face of the minister, the deputy, who sets about ordering public affairs." The moderator was a man of considerable learning. There was much of interest in his exchanges with the Korean. There were also exchanges of Chinese poetry, and in one of his poems the Korean succeeded most skillfully in conveying his joy at having been able to observe such a countenance on this the eve of his return to his own land, and sorrow that the parting must come so soon. The boy offered a verse that was received with high praise. The most splendid of gifts were bestowed upon him. The wise man was in return showered with gifts from the palace.

Somehow news of the sage's remarks leaked out, though the emperor himself was careful to say nothing. The Minister of the Right, grandfather of the crown prince and father of the Kokiden lady, was quick to hear, and again his suspicions were aroused. In the wisdom of his heart, the emperor had already analyzed the boy's physiognomy after the Japanese fashion and had formed tentative plans. He had thus far refrained from bestowing imperial rank on his son, and was delighted that the Korean view should so accord with his own. Lacking the support of maternal relatives, the boy would be most insecure as a prince without court rank, and the emperor could not be sure how long his own reign would last. As a commoner he could be of great service. The emperor therefore encouraged the boy in his studies, at which he was so proficient that it seemed a waste to reduce him to common rank. And yet--as a prince he would arouse the hostility of those who had cause to fear his becoming emperor. Summoning an astrologer of the Indian school, the emperor was

pleased to learn that the Indian view coincided with the Japanese and the Korean; and so he concluded that the boy should become a commoner with the name Minamoto or Genji.

The months and the years passed and still the emperor could not forget his lost love. He summoned various women who might console him, but apparently it was too much to ask in this world for one who even resembled her. He remained sunk in memories, unable to interest himself in anything. Then he was told of the Fourth Princess, daughter of a former emperor, a lady famous for her beauty and reared with the greatest care by her mother, the empress. A woman now in attendance upon the emperor had in the days of his predecessor been most friendly with the princess, then but a child, and even now saw her from time to time. "I have been at court through three reigns now," she said, "and never had I seen anyone who genuinely resembled my lady. But now the daughter of the empress dowager is growing up, and the resemblance is most astonishing. One would be hard put to find her equal."

Hoping that she might just possibly be right, the emperor asked most courteously to have the princess sent to court. Her mother was reluctant and even fearful, however. One must remember, she said, that the mother of the crown prince was a most willful lady who had subjected the lady of the Paulownia Court to open insults and presently sent her into a fatal decline. Before she had made up her mind she followed her husband in death, and the daughter was alone. The emperor renewed his petition. He said that he would treat the girl as one of his own daughters.

Her attendants and her maternal relatives and her older brother, Prince Hyō-bu, consulted together and concluded that rather than languish at home she might seek consolation at court; and so she was sent off. She was called Fujitsubo. The resemblance to the dead lady was indeed astonishing. Because she was of such high birth (it may have been that people were imagining things) she seemed even more graceful and delicate than the other. No one could despise her for inferior rank, and the emperor need not feel shy about showing his love for her. The other lady had not particularly encouraged his attentions and had been the victim of a love too intense; and now, though it would be wrong to say that he had quite forgotten her, he found his affections shifting to the new lady, who was a source of boundless comfort. So it is with the affairs of this world.

Since Genji never left his father's side, it was not easy for this new lady, the recipient of so many visits, to hide herself from him. The other ladies were disinclined to think themselves her inferior, and indeed each of them had her own merits. They were all rather past their prime, however. Fujitsubo's beauty was of a younger and fresher sort. Though in her childlike shyness she made an especial effort not to be seen, Genji occasionally caught a glimpse of her face. He could not remember his own mother and it moved him deeply to learn, from the lady who had first told the emperor of Fujitsubo, that the resemblance was striking. He wanted to be near her always.

"Do not be unfriendly," said the emperor to Fujitsubo. "Sometimes it almost seems to me too that you are his mother. Do not think him forward, be kind to him. Your eyes, your expression: you are really so uncommonly like her that you could pass for his mother." Genji's affection for the new lady grew, and the most ordinary flower or tinted leaf became the occasion for expressing it. Kokiden was not pleased. She was not on good terms with Fujitsubo, and all her old resentment

at Genji came back. He was handsomer than the crown prince, her chief treasure in the world, well thought of by the whole court. People began calling Genji "the shining one." Fujitsubo, ranked beside him in the emperor's affections, became "the lady of the radiant sun."

It seemed a pity that the boy must one day leave behind his boyish attire; but when he reached the age of twelve he went through his initiation ceremonies and received the cap of an adult.

Determined that the ceremony should be in no way inferior to the crown prince's, which had been held some years earlier in the Grand Hall, the emperor himself busied about adding new details to the established forms. As for the banquet after the ceremony, he did not wish the custodians of the storehouses and granaries to treat it as an ordinary public occasion.

The throne faced east on the east porch, and before it were Genji's seat and that of the minister who was to bestow the official cap. At the appointed hour in midafternoon Genji appeared. The freshness of his face and his boyish coiffure were again such as to make the emperor regret that the change must take place. The ritual cutting of the boy's hair was performed by the secretary of the treasury. As the beautiful locks fell the emperor was seized with a hopeless longing for his dead lady. Repeatedly he found himself struggling to keep his composure. The ceremony over, the boy withdrew to change to adult trousers and descended into the courtyard for ceremonial thanksgiving. There was not a person in the assembly who did not feel his eyes misting over. The emperor was stirred by the deepest of emotions. He had on brief occasions been able to forget the past, and now it all came back again. Vaguely apprehensive lest the initiation of so young a boy bring a sudden aging, he was astonished to see that his son delighted him even more.

The Minister of the Left, who bestowed the official cap, had only one daughter, his chief joy in life. Her mother, the minister's first wife, was a princess of the blood. The crown prince had sought the girl's hand, but the minister thought rather of giving her to Genji. He had heard that the emperor had similar thoughts. When the emperor suggested that the boy was without adequate sponsors for his initiation and that the support of relatives by marriage might be called for, the minister quite agreed. The company withdrew to outer rooms and Genji took his place below the princes of the blood. The minister hinted at what was on his mind, but Genji, still very young, did not quite know what to say. There came a message through a chamberlain that the minister was expected in the royal chambers. A lady-in-waiting brought the customary gifts for his services, a woman's cloak, white and of grand proportions, and a set of robes as well. As he poured wine for his minister, the emperor recited a poem which was in fact a deeply felt admonition: "The boyish locks are now bound up, a man's. And do we tie a lasting bond for his future?"

This was the minister's reply: "Fast the knot which the honest heart has tied. May lavender, the hue of the truth, be as fast." \*

The minister descended from a long garden bridge to give formal thanks. He received a horse from the imperial stables and a falcon from the secretariat. In the courtyard below the emperor, princes and high courtiers received gifts in keeping with their stations. The moderator, Genji's guardian, had upon royal command prepared the trays and baskets now set out in the royal presence. As for Chinese chests of food and gifts, they overflowed the premises, in even larger numbers than for the

crown prince's initiation. It was the most splendid and dignified of ceremonies. Genji went home that evening with the Minister of the Left. The nuptial observances were conducted with great solemnity. The groom seemed to the minister and his family quite charming in his boyishness. The bride was older, and somewhat ill at ease with such a young husband.

The minister had the emperor's complete confidence, and his principal wife, the girl's mother, was the emperor's sister. Both parents were therefore of the highest standing. And now they had Genji for a son-in-law. The Minister of the Right, who as grandfather of the crown prince should have been without rivals, was somehow eclipsed. The Minister of the Left had numerous children by several ladies. One of the sons, a very handsome lad by his principal wife, was already a guards lieutenant. Relations between the two ministers were not good; but the Minister of the Right found it difficult to ignore such a talented youth, to whom he offered the hand of his fourth and favorite daughter. His esteem for his new son-in-law rivaled the other minister's esteem for Genji. To both houses the new arrangements seemed ideal.

Constantly at his father's side, Genji spent little time at the Sanjo~ mansion of his bride. Fujitsubo was for him a vision of sublime beauty. If he could have someone like her--but in fact there was no one really like her. His bride too was beautiful, and she had had the advantage of every luxury; but he was not at all sure that they were meant for each other. The yearning in his young heart for the other lady was agony. Now that he had come of age, he no longer had his father's permission to go behind her curtains. On evenings when there was music, he would play the flute to her koto and so communicate something of his longing, and take some comfort from her voice, soft through the curtains. Life at court was for him much preferable to life at Sanjo~. Two or three days at Sanjo~ would be followed by five or six days at court. For the minister, youth seemed sufficient excuse for this neglect. He continued to be delighted with his son-in-law

The minister selected the handsomest and most accomplished of ladies to wait upon the young pair and planned the sort of diversions that were most likely to interest Genji. At the palace the emperor assigned him the apartments that had been his mother's and took care that her retinue was not dispersed. Orders were handed down to the offices of repairs and fittings to remodel the house that had belonged to the lady's family. The results were magnificent. The plantings and the artificial hills had always been remarkably tasteful, and the grounds now swarmed with workmen widening the lake. If only, thought Genji, he could have with him the lady he yearned for. The sobriquet "the shining Genji," one hears, was bestowed upon him by the Korean.

“見通しあらはなる廂の御座にゐたまへる人、ものに紛るべくもあらず、気高くきよらに、さとにほふ心地して、春の曙の霞の間より、おもしろき樺桜の咲き乱れたるを見る心地す。”

## 2.The Broom Tree

"The shining Genji" : it was almost too grand a name. Yet he did not escape criticism for his little adventures. It seemed indeed that his indiscretions might give him a name for frivolity

he did what he could to hide them. But his most secret affairs (such is the malicious work of the gossips) became common talk. If, on the other hand, he were to go through life concerned only for his name and avoid all these interesting and amusing little affairs, then he would be laughed to shame by the likes of the lieutenant of Katano.\*

Still a guards captain, Genji spent most of his time at the palace, going infrequently to the Sanjo~ mansion of his father-in-law. The people there feared that he might have been stained by the lavender of Kasugano + Though in fact he had an instinctive dislike for the promiscuity he saw all around him, he had a way of sometimes turning against his own better inclinations and causing unhappiness.

The summer rains came, the court was in retreat, and an even longer interval than usual had passed since his last visit to Sanjo~. Though the minister and his family were much put out, they spared no effort to make him feel welcome. The minister's sons were more attentive than to the emperor himself. Genji was on particularly good terms with To~ no Chu~jo~. They enjoyed music together and more frivolous diversions as well. To~ no Chu~jo~ was of an amorous nature and not at all comfortable in the apart-ments which his father-in-law, the Minister of the Right, had at great expense provided for him. At Sanjo~ with his own family, on the other hand, he took very good care of his rooms, and when Genji came and went the two of them were always together. They were a good match for each other in study and at play. Reserve quite disappeared between them. It had been raining all day. There were fewer courtiers than usual in the royal presence. Back in his own palace quarters, also unusually quiet, Genji pulled a lamp near and sought to while away the time with his books. He had To~ no Chu~jo~ with him. Numerous pieces of colored paper, obviously letters, lay on a shelf. To~ no Chu~jo~ made no attempt to hide his curiosity.

"Well," said Genji, "there are some I might let you see. But there are some I think it better not to."

"You miss the point. The ones I want to see are precisely the ones you want to hide. The ordinary ones--I'm not much of a hand at the game, you know, but even I am up to the ordinary give and take. But the ones from ladies who think you are not doing right by them, who sit alone through an evening and wait for you to come--those are the ones I want to see." It was not likely that really delicate letters would be left scattered on a shelf, and it may be assumed that the papers treated so carelessly were the less important ones.

"You do have a variety of them," said To~ no Chu~jo~, reading the corre-spondence through piece by piece. This will be from her, and this will be from her, he would say. Sometimes he guessed correctly and sometimes he was far afield, to Genji's great amusement. Genji was brief with his replies and let out no secrets.

"It is I who should be asking to see your collection. No doubt it is huge. When I have seen it I shall be happy to throw my files open to you." "I fear there is nothing that would interest you." To~ no Chu~jo~ was in a contemplative mood. "It is with women as it is with everything else: the flawless ones are very few indeed. This is a sad fact which I have learned over the years. All manner of women seem presentable enough at first. Little notes, replies to this and that, they all suggest

sensibility and cultivation. But when you begin sorting out the really superior ones you find that there are not many who have to be on your list. Each has her little tricks and she makes the most of them, getting in her slights at rivals, so broad sometimes that you almost have to blush. Hidden away by loving parents who build brilliant futures for them, they let word get out of this little talent and that little accomplishment and you are all in a stir. They are young and pretty and amiable and carefree, and in their boredom they begin to pick up a little from their elders, and in the natural course of things they begin to concentrate on one particular hobby and make something of it. A woman tells you all about it and hides the weak points and brings out the strong ones as if they were everything, and you can't very well call her a liar. So you begin keeping company, and it is always the same. The fact is not up to the advance notices."

To~ no Chu~jo~ sighed, a sigh clearly based on experience. Some of what he had said, though not all, accorded with Genji's own experience. "And have you come upon any," said Genji, smiling, "who would seem to have nothing at all to recommend them?"

"Who would be fool enough to notice such a woman? And in any case, I should imagine that women with no merits are as rare as women with no faults. If a woman is of good family and well taken care of, then the things she is less than proud of are hidden and she gets by well enough. When you come to the middle ranks, each woman has her own little inclinations and there are thousands of ways to separate one from another. And when you come to the lowest--well, who really pays much attention?"

He appeared to know everything. Genji was by now deeply interested.

"You speak of three ranks," he said, "but is it so easy to make the division? There are well-born ladies who fall in the world and there are people of no background who rise to the higher ranks and build themselves fine houses as if intended for them all along. How would you fit such people into your system?"

At this point two young courtiers, a guards officer and a functionary in the ministry of rites, appeared on the scene, to attend the emperor in his retreat. Both were devotees of the way of love and both were good talkers. To~ no Chu~jo~, as if he had been waiting for them, invited their views on the question that had just been asked. The discussion progressed, and included a number of rather unconvincing points.

"Those who have just arrived at high position," said one of the new-comers, "do not attract the same sort of notice as those who were born to it. And those who were born to the highest rank but somehow do not have the right backing--in spirit they may be as proud and noble as ever, but they cannot hide their deficiencies. And so I think that they should both be put in your middle rank.

"There are those whose families are not quite of the highest rank but who go off and work hard in the provinces. They have their place in the world, though there are all sorts of little differences among them. Some of them would belong on anyone's list. So it is these days. Myself, I would take a woman from a middling family over one who has rank and nothing else. Let us say someone

whose father is almost but not quite a councillor. Someone who has a decent enough reputation and comes from a decent enough family and can live in some luxury. Such people can be very pleasant. There is nothing wrong with the household arrangements, and indeed a daughter can sometimes be set out in a way that dazzles you. I can think of several such women it would be hard to find fault with. When they go into court service, they are the ones the unexpected favors have a way of falling on. I have seen cases enough of it, I can tell you.' Genji smiled. "And so a person should limit himself to girls with money?"

"That does not sound like you," said To~ no Chu~jo~.

"When a woman has the highest rank and a spotless reputation," continued the other, "but something has gone wrong with her upbringing, something is wrong in the way she puts herself forward, you wonder how it can possibly have been allowed to happen. But when all the conditions are right and the girl herself is pretty enough, she is taken for granted. There is no cause for the least surprise. Such ladies are beyond the likes of me, and so I leave them where they are, the highest of the high. There are surprisingly pretty ladies wasting away behind tangles of weeds, and hardly anyone even knows of their existence. The first surprise is hard to forget. There she is, a girl with a fat, sloppy old father and boorish brothers and a house that seems common at best. Off in the women's rooms is a proud lady who has acquired bits and snatches of this and that. You get wind of them, however small the accomplishments may be, and they take hold of your imagination. She is not the equal of the one who has every- thing, of course, but she has her charm. She is not easy to pass by." He looked at his companion, the young man from the ministry of rites. The latter was silent, wondering if the reference might be to his sisters, just then coming into their own as subjects for conversation. Genji, it would seem, was thinking that on the highest levels there were sadly few ladies to bestow much thought upon. He was wearing several soft white singlets with an informal court robe thrown loosely over them. As he sat in the lamplight leaning against an armrest, his companions almost wished that he were a woman. Even the "highest of the high" might seem an inadequate match for him.

They talked on, of the varieties of women.

"A man sees women, all manner of them, who seem beyond reproach," said the guards officer, "but when it comes to picking the wife who must be everything, matters are not simple. The emperor has trouble, after all, finding the minister who has all the qualifications. A man may be very wise, but no man can govern by himself. Superior is helped by subordinate, subordinate defers to superior, and so affairs proceed by agreement and concession. But when it comes to choosing the woman who is to be in charge of your house, the qualifications are altogether too many. A merit is balanced by a defect, there is this good point and that bad point, and even women who though not perfect can be made to do are not easy to find. I would not like to have you think me a profligate who has to try them all. But it is a question of the woman who must be everything, and it seems best, other things being equal, to find someone who does not require shaping and training, someone who has most of the qualifications from the start. The man who begins his search with all this in mind must be reconciled to searching for a very long time.

"He comes upon a woman not completely and in every way to his liking but he makes certain promises and finds her hard to give up. The world praises him for his honest heart and begins to note good points in the woman too; and why not? But I have seen them all, and I doubt that there are any genuinely superior specimens among them. What about you gentlemen so far above us? How is it with you when you set out to choose your ladies?"

"There are those who are young enough and pretty enough and who take care of themselves as if no particle of dust were allowed to fall upon them. When they write letters they choose the most inoffensive words, and the ink is so faint a man can scarcely read them. He goes to visit, hoping for a real answer. She keeps him waiting and finally lets him have a word or two in an almost inaudible whisper. They are clever, I can tell you, at hiding their defects.

"The soft, feminine ones are likely to assume a great deal. The man seeks to please, and the result is that the woman is presently looking elsewhere. That is the first difficulty in a woman.

"In the most important matter, the matter of running his household, a man can find that his wife has too much sensibility, an elegant word and device for every occasion. But what of the too domestic sort, the wife who bustles around the house the whole day long, her hair tucked up behind her ears, no attention to her appearance, making sure that everything is in order? There are things on his mind, things he has seen and heard in his comings and goings, the private and public demeanor of his colleagues, happy things and sad things. Is he to talk of them to an outsider? Of course not. He would much prefer someone near at hand, someone who will immediately understand. A smile passes over his face, tears well up. Or some event at court has angered him, things are too much for him. What good is it to talk to such a woman? He turns his back on her, and smiles, and sighs, and murmurs something to himself. 'I beg your pardon?' she says, finally noticing. Her blank expression is hardly what he is looking for. "When a man picks a gentle, childlike wife, he of course must see to training her and making up for her inadequacies. Even if at times she seems a bit unsteady, he may feel that his efforts have not been wasted. When she is there beside him her gentle charm makes him forget her defects. But when he is away and sends asking her to perform various services, it becomes clear, however small the service, that she has no thoughts of her own in the matter. Her uselessness can be trying.

"I wonder if a woman who is a bit chilly and unfeeling cannot at times seem preferable."

His manner said that he had known them all; and he sighed at his inability to hand down a firm decision.

"No, let us not worry too much about rank and beauty. Let us be satisfied if a woman is not too demanding and eccentric. It is best to settle on a quiet, steady girl. If she proves to have unusual talent and discrimination--well, count them an unexpected premium. Do not, on the other hand, worry too much about remedying her defects. If she seems steady and not given to tantrums, then the charms will emerge of their own accord.

"There are those who display a womanly reticence to the world, as if they had never heard of



complaining. They seem utterly calm. And then when their thoughts are too much for them they leave behind the most horrendous notes, the most flamboyant poems, the sort of keepsakes certain to call up dreadful memories, and off they go into the mountains or to some remote seashore. When I was a child I would hear the women reading romantic stories, and I would join them in their sniffing and think it all very sad, all very profound and moving. Now I am afraid that it suggests certain pretenses.

"It is very stupid, really, to run off and leave a perfectly kind and sympathetic man. He may have been guilty of some minor dereliction, but to run off with no understanding at all of his true feelings, with no purpose other than to attract attention and hope to upset him--it is an unpleasant sort of memory to have to live with. She gets drunk with admiration for herself and there she is, a nun. When she enters her convent she is sure that she has found enlightenment and has no regrets for the vulgar world. 'Her women come to see her. 'How very touching,' they say. 'How brave of you.'

"But she no longer feels quite as pleased with herself. The man, who has not lost his affection for her, hears of what has happened and weeps, and certain of her old attendants pass this intelligence on to her. 'He is a man of great feeling, you see. What a pity that it should have come to this.' The woman can only brush aside her newly cropped hair to reveal a face on the edge of tears. She tries to hold them back and cannot, such are her regrets for the life she has left behind; and the Buddha is not likely to think her one who has cleansed her heart of passion. probably she is in more danger of brimstone now in this fragile vocation than if she had stayed with us in our sullied world.

"The bond between husband and wife is a strong one. Suppose the man had hunted her out and brought her back. The memory of her acts would still be there, and inevitably, sooner or later, it would be cause for rancor. When there are crises, incidents, a woman should try to overlook them, for better or for worse, and make the bond into something durable. The wounds will remain, with the woman and with the man, when there are crises such as I have described. It is very foolish for a woman to let a little dalliance upset her so much that she shows her resentment openly. He has his adventures--but if he has fond memories of their early days together, his and hers, she may be sure that she matters. A commotion means the end of everything. She should be quiet and generous, and when something comes up that quite properly arouses her resentment she should make it known by delicate hints. The man will feel guilty and with tactful guidance he will mend his ways. Too much lenience can make a woman seem charmingly docile and trusting, but it can also make her seem some- what wanting in substance. We have had instances enough of boats abandoned to the winds and waves. Do you not agree?"

To~ no Chu~jo~ nodded. "It may be difficult when someone you are especially fond of, someone beautiful and charming, has been guilty of an indiscretion, but magnanimity produces wonders. They may not always work, but generosity and reasonableness and patience do on the whole seem best."

His own sister was a case in point, he was thinking, and he was somewhat annoyed to note that Genji was silent because he had fallen asleep. Meanwhile the young guards officer talked on, a

dedicated student of his subject. To~ no Chu~jo~ was determined to hear him out.

"Let us make some comparisons," said the guardsman. "Let us think of the cabinetmaker. He shapes pieces as he feels like shaping them. They may be only playthings, with no real plan or pattern. They may all the same have a certain style for what they are--they may take on a certain novelty as times change and be very interesting. But when it comes to the genuine object, something of such undeniable value that a man wants to have it always with him--the perfection of the form announces that it is from the hand of a master.

"Or let us look at painting. There are any number of masters in the academy. It is not easy to separate the good from the bad among those who work on the basic sketches. But let color be added. The painter of things no one ever sees, of paradises, of fish in angry seas, raging beasts in foreign lands, devils and demons -- the painter abandons himself to his fancies and paints to terrify and astonish. What does it matter if the results seem somewhat remote from real life? It is not so with the things we know, mountains, streams, houses near and like our own. The soft, unspoiled, wooded hills must be painted layer on layer, the details added gently, quietly, to give a sense of affectionate familiarity. And the foreground too, the garden inside the walls, the arrangement of the stones and grasses and waters. It is here that the master has his own power. There are details a lesser painter cannot imitate.

"Or let us look at calligraphy. A man without any great skill can stretch out this line and that in the cursive style and give an appearance of boldness and distinction. The man who has mastered the principles and writes with concentration may, on the other hand, have none of the eye-catching tricks; but when you take the trouble to compare the two the real thing is the real thing.

"So it is with trivialities like painting and calligraphy. How much more so with matters of the heart! I put no trust in the showy sort of affection that is quick to come forth when a suitable occasion presents itself. Let me tell you of something that happened to me a long time ago. You may find the story a touch wanton, but hear me through all the same." He drew close to Genji, who awoke from his slumber. To~ no Chu~jo~, chin in hand, sat opposite, listening with the greatest admiration and attention. There was in the young man's manner something slightly comical, as if he were a sage expostulating upon the deepest truths of the universe, but at such times a young man is not inclined to conceal his most intimate secrets.

"It happened when I was very young, hardly more than a page. I was attracted to a woman. She was of a sort I have mentioned before, not the most beautiful in the world. In my youthful frivolity, I did not at first think of making her my wife. She was someone to visit, not someone who deserved my full attention. Other places interested me more. She was violently jealous. If only she could be a little more understanding, I thought, wanting to be away from the interminable quarreling. And on the other hand it sometimes struck me as a little sad that she should be so worried about a man of so little account as myself. In the course of time I began to mend my -----

"For my sake, she would try to do things for which her talent and nature did not suit her, and she was determined not to seem inferior even in matters for which she had no great aptitude. She

served me diligently in everything. She did not want to be guilty of the smallest thing that might go against my wishes. I had at first thought her rather strong-willed, but she proved to be docile and pliant. She thought constantly about hiding her less favorable qualities, afraid that they might put me off, and she did what she could to avoid displaying herself and causing me embarrassment. She was a model of devotion. In a word, there was nothing wrong with her--save the one thing I found so trying.

"I told myself that she was devoted to the point of fear, and that if I led her to think I might be giving her up she might be a little less suspicious and given to nagging. I had had almost all I could stand. If she really wanted to be with me and I suggested that a break was near, then she might reform. I behaved with studied coldness, and when, as always, her resentment exploded, I said to her: 'Not even the strongest bond between husband and wife can stand an unlimited amount of this sort of thing. It will eventually break, and he will not see her again. If you want to bring matters to such a pass, then go on doubting me as you have. If you would like to be with me for the years that lie ahead of us, then bear the trials as they come, difficult though they may be, and think them the way of the world. If you manage to overcome your jealousy, my affection is certain to grow. It seems likely that I will move ahead into an office of some distinction, and you will go with me and have no one you need think of as a rival.' I was very pleased with myself. I had performed brilliantly as a preceptor.

"But she only smiled. 'Oh, it won't be all that much trouble to put up with your want of consequence and wait till you are important. It will be much harder to pass the months and the years in the barely discernible hope that you will settle down and mend your fickle ways. Maybe you are right. Maybe this is the time to part.'

"I was furious, and I said so, and she answered in kind. Then, suddenly, she took my hand and bit my finger. 'I reprov'd her somewhat extravagantly. 'You insult me, and now you have wounded me. Do you think I can go to court like this? I am, as you say, a person of no consequence, and now, mutilated as I am, what is to help me get ahead in the world? There is nothing left for me but to become a monk.' That meeting must be our last, I said, and departed, flexing my wounded finger.

"I count them over, the many things between us.

One finger does not, alas, count the sum of your failures.

"I left the verse behind, adding that now she had nothing to complain about.

"She had a verse of her own. There were tears in her eyes. "I have counted them up myself, be assured, my failures. For one bitten finger must all be bitten away?"

"I did not really mean to leave her, but my days were occupied in wanderings here and there, and I sent her no message. Then, late one evening toward the end of the year--it was an evening of rehearsals for the Kamo festival--a sleet was falling as we all started for home. Home. It came to

me that I really had nowhere to go but her house. It would be no pleasure to sleep alone at the palace, and if I visited a woman of sensibility I would be kept freezing while she admired the snow. I would go look in upon her, and see what sort of mood she might be in. And so, brushing away the sleet, I made my way to her house. I felt just a little shy, but told myself that the sleet melting from my coat should melt her resentment. There was a dim light turned toward the wall, and a comfortable old robe of thick silk lay spread out to warm. The curtains were raised, everything suggested that she was waiting for me. I felt that I had done rather well.

"But she was nowhere in sight. She had gone that evening to stay with her parents, said the women who had been left behind. I had been feeling somewhat unhappy that she had maintained such a chilly silence, sending no amorous poems or queries. I wondered, though not very seriously, whether her shrillness and her jealousy might not have been intended for the precise purpose of disposing of me; but now I found clothes laid out with more attention to color and pattern than usual, exactly as she knew I liked them. She was seeing to my needs even now that I had apparently discarded her.

"And so, despite this strange state of affairs, I was convinced that she did not mean to do without me. I continued to send messages, and she neither protested nor gave an impression of wanting to annoy me by staying out of sight, and in her answers she was always careful not to anger or hurt me. Yet she went on saying that she could not forgive the behavior I had been guilty of in the past. If I would settle down she would be very happy to keep company with me. Sure that we would not part, I thought I would give her another lesson or two. I told her I had no intention of reforming, and made a great show of independence. She was sad, I gathered, and then without warning she died. And the game I had been playing to seem rather inappropriate.

"She was a woman of such accomplishments that I could leave everything to her. I continue to regret what I had done. I could discuss trivial things with her and important things. For her skills in dyeing she might have been compared to Princess Tatsuta and the comparison would not have seemed ridiculous, and in sewing she could have held her own with princess Tanabata." \*

The young man sighed and sighed again.

To no Chu~jo~ nodded. "Leaving her accomplishments as a seamstress aside, I should imagine you were looking for someone as faithful as Princess Tanabata. And if she could embroider like princess Tatsuta, well, it does not seem likely that you will come on her equal again. When the colors of a robe do not match the seasons, the flowers of spring and the autumn tints, when they are somehow vague and muddy, then the whole effort is as futile as the dew. So it is with women. It is not easy in this world to find a perfect wife. We are all pursuing the ideal and failing to find it."

The guards officer talked on. "There was another one. I was seeing her at about the same time. She was more amiable than the one I have just described to you. Everything about her told of refinement. Her poems, her handwriting when she dashed off a letter, the koto she plucked a note on -- everything seemed right. She was clever with her hands and clever with words. And her looks

were adequate. The jealous woman's house had come to seem the place I could really call mine, and I went in secret to the other woman from time to time and became very fond of her. The jealous one died, I wondered what to do next. I was sad, of course, but a man cannot go on being sad forever. I visited the other more often. But there was something a little too aggressive, a little too sensuous about her. As I came to know her well and to think her a not very dependable sort, I called less often. And I learned that I was not her only secret visitor. "One bright moonlit autumn night I chanced to leave court with a friend. He got in with me as I started for my father's. He was much concerned, he said, about a house where he was sure someone would be waiting. It happened to be on my way.

"Through gaps in a neglected wall I could see the moon shining on a pond. It seemed a pity not to linger a moment at a spot where the moon seemed so much at home, and so I climbed out after my friend. It would appear that this was not his first visit. He proceeded briskly to the veranda and took a seat near the gate and looked up at the moon for a time. The chrysanthemums were at their best, very slightly touched by the frost, and the red leaves were beautiful in the autumn wind. He took out a flute and played a tune on it, and sang 'The Well of Asuka'\* and several other songs. Blending nicely with the flute came the mellow tones of a Japanese koto.+ It had been tuned in advance, apparently, and was waiting. The ritsu scale# had a pleasant modern sound to it, right for a soft, womanly touch from behind blinds, and right for the clear moonlight too. I can assure you that the effect was not at all unpleasant.

"Delighted, my friend went up to the blinds.

"I see that no one has yet broken a path through your fallen leaves,' he said, somewhat sarcastically. He broke off a chrysanthemum and pushed it under the blinds.

"Uncommonly fine this house, for moon, for koto.

Does it bring to itself indifferent callers as well?

"Excuse me for asking. You must not be parsimonious with your music. You have a by no means indifferent listener.' "He was very playful indeed. The woman's voice, when she offered a verse of her own, was suggestive and equally playful.

"No match the leaves for the angry winter winds.

Am I to detain the flute that joins those winds?"

"Naturally unaware of resentment so near at hand, she changed to a Chinese koto in an elegant \_banjiki\_. \* \* Though I had to admit that she had talent, I was very annoyed. It is amusing enough, if you let things go no further, to exchange jokes from time to time with fickle and frivolous ladies; but as a place to take seriously, even for an occasional visit, matters here seemed to have gone too far. I made the events of that evening my excuse for leaving her.

"I see, as I look back on the two affairs, that young though I was the second of the two women did not seem the kind to put my trust in. I have no doubt that the wariness will grow as the years go by. The dear, uncertain ones--the dew that will fall when the \_hagi\_ branch is bent, the speck of frost that will melt when it is lifted from the bamboo leaf--no doubt they can be interesting for a time. You have seven years to go before you are my age," he said to Genji. "Just wait and you will understand. perhaps you can take the advice of a person of no importance, and avoid the uncertain ones. They stumble sooner or later, and do a man's name no good when they do."

To~ no Chu~jo~ nodded,as always. Genji, though he only smiled, seemed to agree.

"Neither of the tales you have given us has been a very happy one," he said.

"Let me tell you a story about a foolish woman I once knew," said To~ no Chu~jo~. "I was seeing her in secret, and I did not think that the affair was likely to last very long. But she was very beautiful, and as time passed I came to think that I must go on seeing her, if only infrequently. I sensed that she had come to depend on me. I expected signs of jealousy. There were none. She did not seem to feel the resentment a man expects from a woman he visits so seldom. She waited quietly, morning and night. My affection grew, and I let it be known that she did indeed have a man she could depend on. There was something very appealing about her (she was an orphan), letting me know that I was all she had.

"She seemed content. Untroubled, I stayed away for rather a long time. Then--I heard of it only later--my wife found a roundabout way to be objectionable. I did not know that I had become a cause of pain. I had desperately lonely and worried for the child she had borne. One day she sent me a letter attached to a wild carnation." His voice trembled. "And what did it say?" Genji urged him on.

"Nothing very remarkable. I do remember her poem, though: "The fence of the mountain rustic may fall to the ground. Rest gently, O dew, upon the wild carnation."

"I went to see her again. The talk was open and easy, as always, but she seemed pensive as she looked out at the dewy garden from the neglected house. She seemed to be weeping, joining her laments to the songs of the autumn insects. It could have been a scene from an old romance. I whispered a verse:

"No bloom in this wild array would I wish to slight.

But dearest of all to me is the wild carnation.'

"Her carnation had been the child. I made it clear that my own was the lady herself, the wild carnation no dust falls upon.\*

"She answered: "Dew wets the sleeve that brushes the wild carnation. The tempest rages. Now comes autumn too.'

"She spoke quietly all the same, and she did not seem really angry. She did shed a tear from time to time, but she seemed ashamed of herself, and anxious to avoid difficult moments. I went away feeling much relieved. It was clear that she did not want to show any sign of anger at my neglect. And so once more I stayed away for rather a long time.

"And when I looked in on her again she had disappeared.

"If she is still living, it must be in very unhappy circumstances. She need not have suffered so if she had asserted herself a little more in the days when we were together. She need not have put up with my absences, and I would have seen to her needs over the years. The child was a very pretty little girl. I was fond of her, and I have not been able to find any trace of her.

"She must be listed among your reticent ones, I suppose? She let me have no hint of jealousy. Unaware of what was going on, I had no intention of giving her up. But the result was hopeless yearning, quite as if I had given her up. I am beginning to forget; and how is it with her? She must remember me sometimes, I should think, with regret, because she must remember too that it was not I who abandoned her. She was, I fear, not the sort of woman one finds it possible to keep for very long.

"Your jealous woman must be interesting enough to remember, but she must have been a bit wearying. And the other one, all her skill on the koto cannot have been much compensation for the undependability. And the one I have described to you--her very lack of jealousy might have brought a suspicion that there was another man in her life. Well, such is the way with the world--you cannot give your unqualified approval to any of them. Where are you to go for the woman who has no defects and who combines the virtues of all three? You might choose Our Lady of Felicity\*--and find yourself married to unspeakable holiness."

The others laughed.

To~ no Chu~jo~ turned to the young man from the ministry of rites. "You must have interesting stories too."

"Oh, please. How could the lowest of the low hope to hold your attention?"

"You must not keep us waiting."

"Let me think a minute." He seemed to be sorting out memories. "When I was still a student I knew a remarkably wise woman. She was the sort worth consulting about public affairs, and she had a good mind too for the little tangles that come into your private life. Her erudition would have put any ordinary sage to shame. In a word, I was awed into silence. "I was studying under a learned scholar. I had heard that he had many daughters, and on some occasion or other I had made the acquaintance of this one. The father learned of the affair. Taking out wedding cups, he made reference, among other things, to a Chinese poem about the merits of an impoverished wife. +

Although not exactly enamored of the woman, I had developed a certain fondness for her, and felt somewhat deferential toward the father. She was most attentive to my needs. I learned many estimable things from her, to add to my store of erudition and help me with my work. Her letters were lucidity itself, in the purest Chinese. None of this Japanese nonsense for her. I found it hard to think of giving her up, and under her tutelage I managed to turn out a few things in passable Chinese myself. And yet--though I would not wish to seem wanting in gratitude, it is undeniable that a man of no learning is somewhat daunted at the thought of being forever his wife's inferior. So it is in any case with an ignorant one like me; and what possible use could you gentlemen have for so formidable a wife? A stupid, senseless affair, a man tells himself, and yet he is dragged on against his will, as if there might have been a bond in some other life."

"She seems a most unusual woman." Genji and To no Chujo were eager to hear more.

Quite aware that the great gentlemen were amusing themselves at his expense, he smiled somewhat impishly. "One day when I had not seen her for rather a long time I had some reason or other for calling. She was not in the room where we had been in the habit of meeting. She insisted on talking to me through a very obtrusive screen. I thought she might be sulking, and it all seemed very silly. And then again--if she was going to be so petty, I might have my excuse for leaving her. But no. She was not a person to let her jealousy show. She knew too much of the world. Her explanation of what was happening poured forth at great length, all of it very well reasoned.

"I have been indisposed with a malady known as coryza. Discommoded to an uncommon degree, I have been imbibing of a steeped potion made from bulbaceous herbs. Because of the noisome odor, I will not find it possible to admit of greater propinquity. If you have certain random matters for my attention, perhaps you can deposit the relevant materials where you are."

"Is that so?" I said. I could think of nothing else to say.

"I started to leave. perhaps feeling a little lonely, she called after me, somewhat shrilly. 'When I have disencumbered myself of this aroma, we can meet once more.

"It seemed cruel to rush off, but the time was not right for a quiet visit. And it was as she said: her odor was rather high. Again I started out, pausing long enough to compose a verse:

"The spider must have told you I would come.

Then why am I asked to keep company with garlic?'"

"I did not take time to accuse her of deliberately putting me off. "She was quicker than I. She chased after me with an answer. "Were we two who kept company every night, What would be wrong with garlic in the daytime?"+

"You must admit she was quick with her answers." He had quietly finished his story.



The two gentlemen, Genji and his friend, would have none of it. "A complete fabrication, from start to finish. Where could you find such a woman? Better to have a quiet evening with a witch." They thought it an outrageous story, and asked if he could come up with nothing more acceptable.

"Surely you would not wish for a more unusual sort of story?"

The guards officer took up again. "In women as in men, there is no one worse than the one who tries to display her scanty knowledge in full. It is among the least endearing of accomplishments for a woman to have delved into the Three Histories and the Five Classics; and who, on the other hand, can go through life without absorbing something of public affairs and private? A reasonably alert woman does not need to be a scholar to see and hear a great many things. The very worst are the ones who scribble off Chinese characters at such a rate that they fill a good half of letters where they are most out of place, letters to other women. 'What a bore,' you say. 'If only she had mastered a few of the feminine things.' She cannot of course intend it to be so, but the words read aloud seem muscular and unyielding, and in the end hopelessly mannered. I fear that even our highest of the high are too often guilty of the fault.

"Then there is the one who fancies herself a poetess. She immerses herself in the anthologies, and brings antique references into her very first line, interesting enough in themselves but inappropriate. A man has had enough with that first line, but he is called heartless if he does not answer, and cannot claim the honors if he does not answer in a similar vein. On the Day of the Iris he is frantic to get off to court and has no eye for irises, and there she is with subtle references to iris roots. On the Day of the Chrysanthemum,\* his mind has no room for anything but the Chinese poem he must come up with in the course of the day, and there she is with something about the dew upon the chrysanthemum. A poem that might have been amusing and even moving on a less frantic day has been badly timed and must therefore be rejected. A woman who dashes off a poem at an unpoetic moment cannot be called a woman of taste.

"For someone who is not alive to the particular quality of each moment and each occasion, it is safer not to make a great show of taste and elegance; and from someone who is alive to it all, a man wants restraint.

She should feign a certain ignorance, she should keep back a little of what she is prepared to say."

Through all the talk Genji's thoughts were on a single lady. His heart was filled with her. She answered every requirement, he thought. She had none of the defects, was guilty of none of the excesses, that had emerged from the discussion.

The talk went on and came to no conclusion, and as the rainy night gave way to dawn the stories became more and more improbable.

It appeared that the weather would be fine. Fearing that his father-in-law might resent his secluding himself in the palace, Genji set off for Sanjo~. The mansion itself, his wife--every detail

was admirable and in the best of taste. Nowhere did he find a trace of disorder. Here was a lady whom his friends must count among the truly dependable ones, the indispensable ones. And yet-- she was too finished in her perfection, she was so cool and self-possessed that she made him uncomfortable. He turned to playful conversation with Chu~nagon and Nakatsukasa and other pretty young women among her attendants. Because it was very warm, he loosened his dress, and they thought him even handsomer.

The minister came to pay his respects. Seeing Genji thus in dishabille, he made his greetings from behind a conveniently placed curtain. Though somewhat annoyed at having to receive such a distinguished visitor on such a warm day, Genji made it clear to the women that they were not to smile at his discomfort. He was a very calm, self-possessed young gentleman.

As evening approached, the women reminded him that his route from the palace had transgressed upon the domain of the Lord of the Center.\* He must not spend the night here.

"To be sure. But my own house lies in the same direction. And I am very tired." He lay down as if he meant in spite of everything to stay the night.

"It simply will not do, my lord."

"The governor of Kii here," said one of Genji's men, pointing to another. "He has dammed the Inner River + and brought it into his garden, and the waters are very cool, very pleasant."

"An excellent idea. I really am very tired, and perhaps we can send ahead to see whether we might drive into the garden."

There were no doubt all sorts of secret places to which he could have gone to avoid the taboo. He had come to Sanjo~, and after a considerable absence. The minister might suspect that he had purposely chosen a night on which he must leave early.

The governor of Kii was cordial enough with his invitation, but when he withdrew he mentioned certain misgivings to Genji's men. Ritual purification, he said, had required all the women to be away from his father's house, and unfortunately they were all crowded into his own, a cramped enough place at best. He feared that Genji would be inconvenienced.

"Nothing of the sort," said Genji, who had overheard. "It is good to have people around. There is nothing worse than a night away from home with no ladies about. just let me have a little comer behind their curtains." "If that is what you want," said his men, "then the governor's place should be perfect."

And so they sent runners ahead. Genji set off immediately, though in secret, thinking that no great ceremony was called for. He did not tell the minister where he was going, and took only his nearest retainers. The governor grumbled that they were in rather too much of a hurry. No one listened.

The east rooms of the main hall had been cleaned and made presentable. The waters were as they had been described, a most pleasing arrangement. A fence of wattles, of a deliberately rustic appearance, enclosed the garden, and much care had gone into the plantings. The wind was cool. Insects were humming, one scarcely knew where, fireflies drew innumerable lines of light, and all in all the time and the place could not have been more to his liking. His men were already tippling, out where they could admire a brook flowing under a gallery. The governor seemed to have "hurried off for viands." \* Gazing calmly about him, Genji concluded that the house would be of the young guardsman's favored in-between category. Having heard that his host's stepmother, who would be in residence, was a high-spirited lady, he listened for signs of her presence. There were signs of someone's presence immediately to the west. He heard a swishing of silk and young voices that were not at all displeasing. Young ladies seemed to be giggling self-consciously and trying to contain themselves. The shutters were raised, it seemed, but upon a word from the governor they were lowered. There was a faint light over the sliding doors. Genji went for a look, but could find no opening large enough to see through. Listening for a time, he concluded that the women had gathered in the main room, next to his.

The whispered discussion seemed to be about Genji himself. "He is dreadfully serious, they say, and has made a fine match for himself. And still so young. Don't you imagine he might be a little lonely? But they say he finds time for a quiet little adventure now and then." Genji was startled. There was but one lady on his mind, day after day. So this was what the gossips were saying; and what if, in it all, there was evidence that rumors of his real love had spread abroad? But the talk seemed harmless enough, and after a time he wearied of it. Someone misquoted a poem he had sent to his cousin Asagao, attached to a morning glory.+ Their standards seemed not of the most rigorous. A misquoted poem for every occasion. He feared he might be disappointed when he saw the woman.

The governor had more lights set out at the eaves, and turned up those in the room. He had refreshments brought.

"And are the curtains all hung?" # asked Genji. "You hardly qualify as a host if they are not."

"And what will you feast upon?" rejoined the governor, somewhat stiffly. "Nothing so very elaborate, I fear."

Genji found a cool place out near the veranda and lay down. His men were quiet. Several young boys were present, all very sprucely dressed, sons of the host and of his father, the governor of Iyo.\* There was one particularly attractive lad of perhaps twelve or thirteen. Asking who were the sons of whom, Genji learned that the boy was the younger brother of the host's stepmother, son of a guards officer no longer living. His father had had great hopes for the boy and had died while he was still very young. He had come to this house upon his sister's marriage to the governor of Iyo. He seemed to have some aptitude for the classics, said the host, and was of a quiet, pleasant disposition; but he was young and without backing, and his prospects at court were not good.

"A pity. The sister, then, is your stepmother?"

"Yes."

"A very young stepmother. My father had thought of inviting her to court. He was asking just the other day what might have happened to her. Life," he added with a solemnity rather beyond his years, "is uncertain." "It happened almost by accident. Yes, you are right: it is a very uncertain world, and it always has been, particularly for women. They are like bits of driftwood."

"Your father is no doubt very alert to her needs. perhaps, indeed, one has trouble knowing who is the master?"

"He quite worships her. The rest of us are not entirely happy with the arrangements he has made."

"But you cannot expect him to let you young gallants have every- thing. He has a name in that regard himself, you know. And where might the lady be?"

"They have all been told to spend the night in the porter's lodge, but they don't seem in a hurry to go."

The wine was having its effect, and his men were falling asleep on the veranda.

Genji lay wide awake, not pleased at the prospect of sleeping alone. He sensed that there was someone in the room to the north. It would be the lady of whom they had spoken. Holding his breath, he went to the door and listened.

"Where are you?" The pleasantly husky voice was that of the boy who had caught his eye.

"Over here." It would be the sister. The two voices, very sleepy, resembled each other. "And where is our guest? I had thought he might be somewhere near, but he seems to have gone away." "He's in the east room." The boy's voice was low. "I saw him. He is every bit as handsome as everyone says."

"If it were daylight I might have a look at him myself." The sister yawned, and seemed to draw the bedclothes over her face. Genji was a little annoyed. She might have questioned her brother more energetically.

"I'll sleep out toward the veranda. But we should have more light." The boy turned up the lamp. The lady apparently lay at a diagonal remove from Genji. "And where is Chu-jo~? I don't like being left alone." "She went to have a bath. She said she'd be right back." He spoke from out near the veranda.

All was quiet again. Genji slipped the latch open and tried the doors. They had not been bolted. A curtain had been set up just inside, and in the dim light he could make out Chinese chests and other

furniture scattered in some disorder. He made his way through to her side. She lay by herself, a slight little figure. Though vaguely annoyed at being disturbed, she evidently took him for the woman Chu~jo~ until he pulled back the covers.

"I heard you summoning a captain," he said, "and I thought my prayers over the months had been answered.\* She gave a little gasp. It was muffled by the bedclothes and no one else heard. "You are perfectly correct if you think me unable to control myself. But I wish you to know that I have been thinking of you for a very long time. And the fact that I have finally found my opportunity and am taking advantage of it should show that my feelings are by no means shallow." His manner was so gently persuasive that devils and demons could not have gainsaid him. The lady would have liked to announce to the world that a strange man had invaded her boudoir.

"I think you have mistaken me for someone else," she said, outraged, though the remark was under her breath.

The little figure, pathetically fragile and as if on the point of expiring from the shock, seemed to him very beautiful.

"I am driven by thoughts so powerful that a mistake is completely out of the question. It is cruel of you to pretend otherwise. I promise you that I will do nothing unseemly. I must ask you to listen to a little of what is on my mind."

She was so small that he lifted her easily. As he passed through the doors to his own room, he came upon the Chu~jo~ who had been summoned earlier. He called out in surprise. Surprised in turn, Chu~jo~ peered into the darkness. The perfume that came from his robes like a cloud of smoke told her who he was. She stood in confusion, unable to speak. Had he been a more ordinary intruder she might have ripped her mistress away by main force. But she would not have wished to raise an alarm all through the house.

She followed after, but Genji was quite unmoved by her pleas. "Come for her in the morning," he said, sliding the doors closed.

The lady was bathed in perspiration and quite beside herself at the thought of what Chu~jo~, and the others too, would be thinking. Genji had to feel sorry for her. Yet the sweet words poured forth, the whole gamut of pretty devices for making a woman surrender.

She was not to be placated. "Can it be true? Can I be asked to believe that you are not making fun of me? Women of low estate should have husbands of low estate."

He was sorry for her and somewhat ashamed of himself, but his answer was careful and sober. "You take me for one of the young prodigates you see around? I must protest. I am very young and know nothing of the estates which concern you so. You have heard of me, surely, and you must know that I do not go in for adventures. I must ask what unhappy entanglement imposes this

upon me. You are making a fool of me, and nothing should surprise me, not even the tumultuous emotions that do in fact surprise me."

But now his very splendor made her resist. He might think her obstinate and insensitive, but her unfriendliness must make him dismiss her from further consideration. Naturally soft and pliant, she was suddenly firm. It was as with the young bamboo: she bent but was not to be broken. She was weeping. He had his hands full but would not for the world have missed the experience.

"Why must you so dislike me?" he asked with a sigh, unable to stop the weeping. "Don't you know that the unexpected encounters are the ones we were fated for? Really, my dear, you do seem to know altogether too little of the world."

"If I had met you before I came to this," she replied, and he had to admit the truth of it, "then I might have consoled myself with the thought --it might have been no more than self-deception, of course--that you would someday come to think fondly of me. But this is hopeless, worse than I can tell you. Well, it has happened. Say no to those who ask if you have seen me." \*

One may imagine that he found many kind promises with which to comfort her.

The first cock was crowing and Genji's men were awake. "Did you sleep well? I certainly did."

"Let's get the carriage ready."

Some of the women were heard asking whether people who were avoiding taboos were expected to leave again in the middle of the night. Genji was very unhappy. He feared he could not find an excuse for another meeting. He did not see how he could visit her, and he did not see how they could write. Chu~jo~ came out, also very unhappy. He let the lady go and then took her back again.

"How shall I write to you? Your feelings and my own--they are not shallow, and we may expect deep memories. Has anything ever been so strange?" He was in tears, which made him yet handsomer. The cocks were now crowing insistently. He was feeling somewhat harried as he composed his farewell verse:

"Why must they startle with their dawn alarums  
When hours are yet required to thaw the ice?"

The lady was ashamed of herself that she had caught the eye of a man so far above her. His kind words had little effect. She was thinking of her husband, whom for the most part she considered a clown and a dolt. She trembled to think that a dream might have told him of the night's happenings.

This was the verse with which she replied:

"Day has broken without an end to my tears.

To my cries of sorrow are added the calls of the cocks."

It was lighter by the moment. He saw her to her door, for the house was coming to life. A barrier had fallen between them. In casual court dress, he leaned for a time against the south railing and looked out at the garden. Shutters were being raised along the west side of the house.

Women seemed to be looking out at him, beyond a low screen at the veranda. He no doubt brought shivers of delight. The moon still bright in the dawn sky added to the beauty of the morning. The sky, without heart itself, can at these times be friendly or sad, as the beholder sees it. Genji was in anguish. He knew that there would be no way even to exchange notes. He cast many a glance backward as he left.

At Sanjo~ once more, he was unable to sleep. If the thought that they would not meet again so pained him, what must it do to the lady? She was no beauty, but she had seemed pretty and cultivated. Of the middling rank, he said to himself. The guards officer who had seen them all knew what he was talking about.

Spending most of his time now at Sanjo~, he thought sadly of the unapproachable lady. At last he summoned her stepson, the governor of Kii.

"The boy I saw the other night, your foster uncle. He seemed a promising lad. I think I might have a place for him. I might even introduce him to my father."

"Your gracious words quite overpower me. Perhaps I should take the matter up with his sister."

Genji's heart leaped at the mention of the lady. "Does she have children?"

"No. She and my father have been married for two years now, but I gather that she is not happy. Her father meant to send her to court." "How sad for her. Rumor has it that she is a beauty. Might rumor be correct?"

"Mistaken, I fear. But of course stepsons do not see a great deal of stepmothers."

Several days later he brought the boy to Genji. Examined in detail the boy was not perfect, but he had considerable charm and grace. Genji addressed him in a most friendly manner, which both confused and pleased him. Questioning him about his sister, Genji did not learn a great deal. The answers were ready enough while they were on safe ground, but the boy's self-possession was a little disconcerting. Genji hinted rather broadly at what had taken place. The boy was startled. He guessed the truth but was not old enough to pursue the matter.

Genji gave him a letter for his sister. Tears came to her eyes. How much had her brother been told? she wondered, spreading the letter to hide her flushed cheeks.

It was very long, and concluded with a poem:

"I yearn to dream again the dream of that night.

The nights go by in lonely wakefulness.

"There are no nights of sleep." \*

The hand was splendid, but she could only weep at the yet stranger turn her life had taken.

The next day Genji sent for the boy.

Where was her answer? the boy asked his sister.

"Tell him you found no one to give his letter to."

"Oh, please." The boy smiled knowingly. "How can I tell him that?

I have learned enough to be sure there is no mistake."

She was horrified. It was clear that Genji had told everything.

"I don't know why you must always be so clever. Perhaps it would be better if you didn't go at all."

"But he sent for me." And the boy departed.

The governor of Kii was beginning to take an interest in his pretty young stepmother, and paying insistent court. His attention turned to the brother, who became his frequent companion.

"I waited for you all day yesterday," said Genji. "Clearly I am not as much on your mind as you are on mine."

The boy flushed.

"Where is her answer?" And when the boy told him: "A fine messenger. I had hoped for something better."

There were other letters.

"But didn't you know?" he said to the boy. "I knew her before that old man she married. She thought me feeble and useless, it seems, and looked for a stouter support. Well, she may spurn me, but you needn't. You will be my son. The gentleman you are looking to for help won't be with us long."



The boy seemed to be thinking what a nuisance his sister's husband was. Genji was amused.

He treated the boy like a son, making him a constant companion, giving him clothes from his own wardrobe, taking him to court. He continued to write to the lady. She feared that with so inexperienced a messenger the secret might leak out and add suspicions of promiscuity to her other worries. These were very grand messages, but something more in keeping with her station seemed called for. Her answers were stiff and formal when she answered at all. She could not forget his extraordinary good looks and elegance, so dimly seen that night. But she belonged to another, and nothing was to be gained by trying to interest him. His longing was undiminished. He could not forget how touchingly fragile and confused she had seemed. With so many people around, another invasion of her boudoir was not likely to go unnoticed, and the results would be sad.

One evening after he had been at court for some days he found an excuse: his mansion again lay in a forbidden direction. Pretending to set off for Sanjo~, he went instead to the house of the governor of Kii. The governor was delighted, thinking that those well-designed brooks and lakes had made an impression. Genji had consulted with the boy, always in earnest attendance. The lady had been informed of the visit. She must admit that they seemed powerful, the urges that forced him to such machinations. But if she were to receive him and display herself openly, what could she expect save the anguish of the other night, a repetition of that nightmare? No, the shame would be too much.

The brother having gone off upon a summons from Genji, she called several of her women. "I think it might be in bad taste to stay too near. I am not feeling at all well, and perhaps a massage might help, somewhere far enough away that we won't disturb him."

The woman Chu~jo~ had rooms on a secluded gallery. They would be her refuge.

It was as she had feared. Genji sent his men to bed early and dispatched his messenger. The boy could not find her. He looked everywhere and finally, at the end of his wits, came upon her in the gallery.

He was almost in tears. "But he will think me completely useless." "And what do you propose to be doing? You are a child, and it is quite improper for you to be carrying such messages. Tell him I have not been feeling well and have kept some of my women to massage me. You should not be here. They will think it very odd."

She spoke with great firmness, but her thoughts were far from as firm. How happy she might have been if she had not made this unfortunate marriage, and were still in the house filled with memories of her dead parents. Then she could have awaited his visits, however infrequent. And the coldness she must force herself to display--he must think her quite unaware of her place in the world. She had done what she thought best, and she was in anguish. Well, it all was hard fact, about which she had no choice. She must continue to play the cold and insensitive woman. Genji lay wondering what blandishments the boy might be using. He was not sanguine, for the boy was

very young. Presently he came back to report his mission a failure. What an uncommonly strong woman! Genji feared he must seem a bit feckless beside her. He heaved a deep sigh. This evidence of despondency had the boy on the point of tears. Genji sent the lady a poem:

"I wander lost in the Sonohara moorlands, For I did not know the deceiving ways of the broom tree.\*

"How am I to describe my sorrow?"

She too lay sleepless. This was her answer:

"Here and not here, I lie in my shabby hut.

Would that I might like the broom tree vanish away."

The boy traveled back and forth with messages, a wish to be helpful driving sleep from his thoughts. His sister beseeched him to consider what the others might think.

Genji's men were snoring away. He lay alone with his discontent. This unique stubbornness was no broom tree. It refused to vanish away. The stubbornness was what interested him. But he had had enough. Let her do as she wished. And yet--not even this simple decision was easy. "At least take me to her."

"She is shut up in a very dirty room and there are all sorts of women with her. I do not think it would be wise." The boy would have liked to be more helpful.

"Well, you at least must not abandon me." Genji pulled the boy down beside him.

The boy was delighted, such were Genji's youthful charms. Genji, for his part, or so one is informed, found the boy more attractive than his chilly sister.

“見通しあらはなる廂の御座にゐたまへる人、ものに紛るべくもあらず、気高くきよらに、さとにほふ心地して、春の曙の霞の間より、おもしろき樺桜の咲き乱れたるを見る心地す。”

『源氏物語・野分』より

### 三.空蟬 3.The Shell of the Locust

Genji lay sleepless.

"I am not used to such treatment. Tonight I have for the first time seen how a woman can treat a man. The shock and the shame are such that I do not know how I can go on living."

The boy was in tears, which made him even more charming. The slight form, the not too long hair--was it Genji's imagination that he was much like his sister? The resemblance was very affecting, even if imagined. It would be undignified to make an issue of the matter and seek the woman out, and so Genji passed the night in puzzled resentment. The boy found him less friendly than usual.

Genji left before daylight. Very sad, thought the boy, lonely without him.

The lady too passed a difficult night. There was no further word from Genji. It seemed that he had had enough of her. She would not be happy if he had in fact given her up, but with half her mind she dreaded another visit. It would be as well to have an end of the affair. Yet she went on grieving.

For Genji there was gnawing dissatisfaction. He could not forget her, and he feared he was making a fool of himself.

"I am in a sad state," he said to the boy. "I try to forget her, and I cannot. Do you suppose you might contrive another meeting?" It would be difficult, but the boy was delighted even at this sort of attention. With childish eagerness he watched for an opportunity. Presently the governor of Kii had to go off to his province. The lady had nothing to do through the long twilight hours. Under cover of darkness, the boy took Genji to the governor's mansion in his own carriage. Genji had certain misgivings. His guide was after all a mere child. But this was no time for hesitation. Dressed inconspicuously, he urged the boy on, lest they arrive after the gates were barred. The carriage was brought in through a back gate and Genji dismounted.

So young a boy attracted little attention and indeed little deference from the guards. He left Genji at an east door to the main hall. He pounded on the south shutters and went inside.

"Shut it, shut it!" shrieked the women. "The whole world can see us." "But why do you have them closed on such a warm evening?"

"The lady from the west wing has been here since noon. They have been at Go."

Hoping to see them at the Go board, Genji slipped from his hiding place and made his way through the door and the blinds. The shutter through which the boy had gone was still raised.\* Genji could see through to the west. One panel of a screen just inside had been folded back, and the curtains, which should have shielded off the space beyond, had been thrown over their frames, perhaps because of the heat. The view was unobstructed.

There was a lamp near the women. The one in silhouette with her back against a pillar--would she be the one on whom his heart was set? He looked first at her. She seemed to have on a purple

singlet with a woven pattern, and over it a cloak of which the color and material were not easy to determine. She was a small, rather ordinary lady with delicate features. She evidently wanted to conceal her face even from the girl opposite, and she kept her thin little hands tucked in her sleeves. Her opponent was facing east, and Genji had a full view of her face. Over a singlet of white gossamer she had thrown a purplish cloak, and both garments were some- what carelessly open all the way to the band of the red trousers. She was very handsome, tall and plump and of a fair complexion, and the lines of her head and forehead were strong and pleasing. It was a sunny face, with a beguiling cheerfulness about the eyes and mouth. Though not particu- larly long, the hair was rich and thick, and very beautiful where it fell about the shoulders. He could detect no marked flaws, and saw why her father, the governor of Iyo, so cherished her. It might help, to be sure, if she were just a little quieter. Yet she did not seem to be merely silly. She brimmed with good spirits as she placed a stone upon a dead spot to signal the end of the game.

"Just a minute, if you please," said the other very calmly. "It is not quite over. You will see that we have a ko~ to get out of the way first." +

"I've lost, I've lost. Let's just see what I have in the corners." She counted up on her fingers. "Ten, twenty, thirty, forty." She would have had no trouble, he thought, taking the full count of the baths of Iyo\*-- though her manner might have been just a touch inelegant.

The other woman, a model of demureness, kept her face hidden. Gazing at her, Genji was able to make out the details of the profile. The eyelids seemed a trifle swollen, the lines of the nose were somewhat erratic, and there was a weariness, a want of luster, about the face. It was, one had to admit, a little on the plain side. Yet she clearly paid attention to her appearance, and there were details likely to draw the eye to a subtler sensibility than was evident in her lively companion. The latter, very engaging indeed, laughed ever more happily. There was no denying the bright gaiety, and in her way she was interesting enough. A shallow, superficial thing, no doubt, but to his less than pure heart she seemed a prize not to be flung away. All the ladies he knew were so prim and proper. This was the first time he had seen one so completely at her ease. He felt a little guilty, but not so guilty that he would have turned away had he not heard the boy coming back. He slipped outside.

Apologetic that his master should still be at the beginning, the boy said that the unexpected guest had interfered with his plans. "You mean to send me off frustrated once more? It is really too much." "No, sir. But I must ask you to wait until the other lady has gone. I'll arrange everything then, I promise you."

Things seemed to be arranging themselves. The boy was very young, but he was calmly self- possessed and had a good eye for the significant things.

The game of Go was apparently over. There was a stir inside, and a sound as of withdrawing.

"Where will that boy have gone?" Now there was a banging of shut- ters. "Let's get the place closed up."

"No one seems to be stirring," said Genji after a time. "Go and do your best."

The boy knew well enough that it was not his sister's nature to encourage frivolity. He must admit Genji when there was almost no one with her.

"Is the guest still here?" asked Genji. "I would like a glimpse of her." "Quite impossible. There are curtains inside the shutters."

Genji was amused, but thought it would be bad manners to let the boy know that he had already seen the lady. "How slowly time does go by."

This time the boy knocked on the corner door and was admitted. "I'll just make myself comfortable here," he said, spreading bed-clothes where one or two of the sliding doors had been left open. "Come in, breezes."

Numbers of older women seemed to be sleeping out near the veranda. The girl who had opened the door seemed to have joined them. The boy feigned sleep for a time. Then, spreading a screen to block the light, he motioned Genji inside.

Genji was suddenly shy, fearing he would be defeated once more. He followed the boy all the same. Raising a curtain, he slipped into the main room. It was very quiet, and his robes rustled alarmingly.

With one part of her mind the woman was pleased that he had not given up. But the nightmare of the earlier evening had not left her. Brooding days, sleepless nights--it was summer, and yet it was "budless spring." \*

Her companion at Go, meanwhile, was as cheerful as could be. "I shall stay with you tonight," she announced. It was not likely that she would have trouble sleeping.

The lady herself sensed that something was amiss. Detecting an unusual perfume, she raised her head. It was dark where the curtain had been thrown over the frame, but she could see a form creeping toward her. In a panic, she got up. Pulling a singlet of raw silk over her shoulders, she slipped from the room.

Genji was delighted to see that there was only one lady asleep behind the curtains. There seemed to be two people asleep out toward the veranda. As he pulled aside the bedclothes it seemed to him that the lady was somewhat larger than he would have expected. He became aware of one odd detail after another in the sleeping figure, and guessed what had happened. How very stupid! And how ridiculous he would seem if the sleeper were to awaken and see that she was the victim of a silly mistake. It would be equally silly to pursue the lady he had come for, now that she had made her feelings so clear. A new thought came to him: might this be the girl who had so interested him in the lamplight? If so, what had he to lose? It will be observed that a certain fickleness was at

work.

The girl was now awake, and very surprised. Genji felt a little sorry for her. But though inexperienced in the ways of love, she was bright and modern, and she had not entirely lost her composure. He was at first reluctant to identify himself. She would presently guess, however, and what did it matter if she did? As for the unfriendly one who had neded him and who was so concerned about appearances--he did have to think of her reputation, and so he said to the girl that he had taken advantage of directional taboos to visit her. A more experienced lady would have had no trouble guessing the truth, but this one did not sense that his explanation was a little forced. He was not displeased with her, nor was he strongly drawn to her. His heart was resentfully on the other. No doubt she would be off in some hidden chamber gloating over her victory. She had shown a most extraordinary firmness of purpose. In a curious way, her hostility made her memorable. The girl beside him had a certain young charm of her own, and presently he was deep in vows of love.

"The ancients used to say that a secret love runs deeper than an open one." He was most persuasive. "Think well of me. I must worry about appearances, and it is not as if I could go where my desires take me. And you: there are people who would not at all approve. That is sad. But you must not forget me."

"I'm afraid." Clearly she was afraid. "I won't be able to write to you." "You are right that we would not want people to know. But there is the little man I brought with me tonight. We can exchange notes through him. Meanwhile you must behave as if nothing had happened." He took as a keepsake a summer robe the other lady seemed to have thrown off.

The boy was sleeping nearby. The adventure was on his mind, however, and Genji had no trouble arousing him. As he opened the door an elderly serving woman called out in surprise.

Who's there?

"Just me," replied the boy in some confusion.

"Wherever are you going at this time of the night?" The woman came out, wishing to be helpful.

"Nowhere," said the boy gruffly. "Nowhere at all."

He pushed Genji through the door. Dawn was approaching. The woman caught sight of another figure in the moonlight.

"And who is with you? Oh, Mambu, of course. Only Mambu reaches such splendid heights." Mambu was a lady who was the victim of much humor because of her unusual stature. So he was out walking with Mambu, muttered the old woman. "One of these days you'll be as tall as Mambu yourself." Chattering away, she followed after them. Genji was horrified, but could not very well shove her inside. He pulled back into the darkness of a gallery.

Still she followed. "You've been with our lady, have you? I've been having a bad time with my stomach these last few days and I've kept to my room. But she called me last night and said she wanted more people around. I'm still having a terrible time. Terrible," she muttered again, getting no answer. "Well, goodbye, then."

She moved on, and Genji made his escape. He saw more than ever how dangerous these adventures can be.

The boy went with him to Nijo~. Genji recounted the happenings of the night. The boy had not done very well, he said, shrugging his shoulders in annoyance at the thought of the woman's coldness. The boy could find no answer.

"I am rejected, and there is nothing to be done for me. But why could she not have sent a pleasant answer? I'm no match for that husband of hers. That's where the trouble lies." But when he went to bed he had her cloak beneath his own. He kept the boy beside him, audience for his laments.

"It's not that you aren't a nice enough boy, and it's not that I'm not fond of you. But because of your family I must have doubts about the durability of our relationship."

A remark which plunged the boy into the darkest melancholy. Genji was still unable to sleep. He said that he required an inkstone. On a fold of paper he jotted down a verse as if for practice: "Beneath a tree, a locust's empty shell.

Sadly I muse upon the shell of a lady."

He wondered what the other one, the stepdaughter, would be thinking of him; but though he felt rather sorry for her and though he turned the matter over in his mind, he sent no message. The lady's fragrance lingered in the robe he had taken. He kept it with him, gazing fondly at it.

The boy, when he went to his sister's house, was crushed by the scolding he received. "This is the sort of thing a person cannot be expected to put up with. I may try to explain what has happened, but can you imagine that people will not come to their own conclusions? Does it not occur to you that even your good master might wish to see an end to this childishness?"

Badgered from the left and badgered from the right, the poor boy did not know where to turn. He took out Genji's letter. In spite of herself his sister opened and read it. That reference to the shell of the locust: he had taken her robe, then. How very embarrassing. A sodden rag, like the one discarded by the fisherman of Ise.\*

The other lady, her stepdaughter, returned in some disorder to her own west wing. She had her sad thoughts all to herself, for no one knew what had happened. She watched the boy's comings and goings, thinking that there might be some word; but in the end there was none. She did not have the imagination to guess that she had been a victim of mistaken identity. She was a lighthearted

and inattentive creature, but now she was lost in sad thoughts.

The lady in the main hall kept herself under tight control. She could see that his feelings were not to be described as shallow, and she longed for what would not return, her maiden days. Besides his poem she jotted down a poem by Lady Ise:

The dew upon the fragile locust wing

Is lost among the leaves. Lost are my tears.\* \_\_\_\_\_ “見  
通しあらはなる廂の御座にゐたまへる人、ものに紛るべくもあらず、気高くきよらに、さと  
にはふ心地して、春の曙の霞の間より、おもしろき樺桜の咲き乱れたるを見る心地す。”

『源氏物語・野分』より

#### 四.夕顔 4.Evening Faces

On his way from court to pay one of his calls at Rokujo~, Genji stopped to inquire after his old nurse, Koremitsu's mother, at her house in Gojo~. Gravely ill, she had become a nun. The carriage entrance was closed. He sent for Koremitsu and while he was waiting looked up and down the dirty, cluttered street. Beside the nurse's house was a new fence of plaited cypress. The four or five narrow shutters above had been raised, and new blinds, white and clean, hung in the apertures. He caught outlines of pretty foreheads beyond. He would have judged, as they moved about, that they belonged to rather tall women. What sort of women might they be? His carriage was simple and unadorned and he had no outrunners. Quite certain that he would not be recognized, he leaned out for a closer look. The hanging gate, of something like trelliswork, was propped on a pole, and he could see that the house was tiny and flimsy. He felt a little sorry for the occupants of such a place--and then asked himself who in this world had more than a temporary shelter.\* A hut, a jeweled pavilion, they were the same. A pleasantly green vine was climbing a board wall. The white flowers, he thought, had a rather self-satisfied look about them. "I needs must ask the lady far off yonder,"+ he said, as if to himself.

An attendant came up, bowing deeply. "The white flowers far off yonder are known as 'evening faces,'"\* he said." A very human Sort of name--and what a shabby place they have picked to bloom in."

It was as the man said. The neighborhood was a poor one, chiefly of small houses. Some were leaning precariously, and there were "evening faces" at the sagging eaves.

"A hapless sort of flower. pick one off for me, would you?" The man went inside the raised gate and broke off a flower. A pretty little girl in long, unlined yellow trousers of raw silk came out through a sliding door that seemed too good for the surroundings. Beckoning to the man, she handed him a heavily scented white fan. "put it on this. It isn't much of a fan, but then it isn't much



of a flower either."

Koremitsu, coming out of the gate, passed it on to Genji. "They lost the key, and I have had to keep you waiting. You aren't likely to be recognized in such a neighborhood, but it's not a very nice neighborhood to keep you waiting in."

Genji's carriage was pulled in and he dismounted. Besides Koremitsu, a son and a daughter, the former an eminent cleric, and the daughter's husband, the governor of Mikawa, were in attendance upon the old woman. They thanked him profusely for his visit.

The old woman got up to receive him. "I did not at all mind leaving the world, except for the thought that I would no longer be able to see you as I am seeing you now. My vows seem to have given me a new lease on life, and this visit makes me certain that I shall receive the radiance of Lord Amita~bha with a serene and tranquil heart." And she collapsed in tears. Genji was near tears himself. "It has worried me enormously that you should be taking so long to recover, and I was very sad to learn that you have withdrawn from the world. You must live a long life and see the career I make for myself. I am sure that if you do you will be reborn upon the highest summits of the Pure Land. I am told that it is important to rid oneself of the smallest regret for this world."

Fond of the child she has reared, a nurse tends to look upon him as a paragon even if he is a half-wit. How much prouder was the old woman, who somehow gained stature, who thought of herself as eminent in her own right for having been permitted to serve him. The tears flowed on. Her children were ashamed for her. They exchanged glances. It would not do to have these contortions taken as signs of a lingering affection for the world.

Genji was deeply touched. "The people who were fond of me left me when I was very young. Others have come along, it is true, to take care of me, but you are the only one I am really attached to. In recent years there have been restrictions upon my movements, and I have not been able to look in upon you morning and evening as I would have wished, or indeed to have a good visit with you. Yet I become very depressed when the days go by and I do not see you.'Would that there were on this earth no final partings.'""\* He spoke with great solemnity, and the scent of his sleeve, as he brushed away a tear, quite flooded the room.

Yes, thought the children, who had been silently reproaching their mother for her want of control, the fates had been kind to her. They too were now in tears.

Genji left orders that prayers and services be resumed. As he went out he asked for a torch, and in its light examined the fan on which the "evening face" had rested. It was permeated with a lady's perfume, elegant and alluring. On it was a poem in a disguised cursive hand that suggested breeding and taste. He was interested.

"I think I need not ask whose face it is, So bright, this evening face, in the shining dew."

"Who is living in the house to the west?" he asked Koremitsu. "Have you perhaps had occasion to

inquire?"

At it again, thought Koremitsu. He spoke somewhat tartly. "I must confess that these last few days I have been too busy with my mother to think about her neighbors."

"You are annoyed with me. But this fan has the appearance of some- thing it might be interesting to look into. Make inquiries, if you will, please, of someone who knows the neighborhood."

Koremitsu went in to ask his mother's steward, and emerged with the information that the house belonged to a certain honorary vice- governor.\* "The husband is away in the country, and the wife seems to be a young woman of taste. Her sisters are out in service here and there. They often come visiting. I suspect the fellow is too poorly placed to know the details."

His poetess would be one of the sisters, thought Genji. A rather practiced and forward young person, and, were he to meet her, perhaps vulgar as well--but the easy familiarity of the poem had not been at all unpleasant, not something to be pushed away in disdain. His amative propensities, it will be seen, were having their way once more.

Carefully disguising his hand, he jotted down a reply on a piece of notepaper and sent it in by the attendant who had earlier been of service. "Come a bit nearer, please. Then might you know Whose was the evening face so dim in the twilight."

Thinking it a familiar profile, the lady had not lost the opportunity to surprise him with a letter, and when time passed and there was no answer she was left feeling somewhat embarrassed and disconsolate. Now came a poem by special messenger. Her women became quite giddy as they turned their minds to the problem of replying. Rather bored with it all, the messenger returned empty-handed. Genji made a quiet departure, lighted by very few torches. The shutters next door had been lowered. There was something sad about the light, dimmer than fireflies, that came through the cracks.

At the Rokujo~ house, the trees and the plantings had a quiet dignity. The lady herself was strangely cold and withdrawn. Thoughts of the "evening faces" quite left him. He overslept, and the sun was rising when he took his leave. He presented such a fine figure in the morning light that the women of the place understood well enough why he should be so universally admired. On his way he again passed those shutters, as he had no doubt done many times before. Because of that small incident he now looked at the house carefully, wondering who might be within.

"My mother is not doing at all well, and I have been with her," said Koremitsu some days later. And, coming nearer: "Because you seemed so interested, I called someone who knows about the house next door and had him questioned. His story was not completely clear. He said that in the Fifth Month or so someone came very quietly to live in the house, but that not even the domestics had been told who she might be. I have looked through the fence from time to time myself and had glimpses through blinds of several young women. Something about their dress suggests that they are in the service of someone of higher rank.\* Yesterday, when the evening light was coming

directly through, I saw the lady herself writing a letter. She is very beautiful. She seemed lost in thought, and the women around her were weeping."

Genji had suspected something of the sort. He must find out more. Koremitsu's view was that while Genji was undeniably someone the whole world took seriously, his youth and the fact that women found him attractive meant that to refrain from these little affairs would be less than human. It was not realistic to hold that certain people were beyond temptation.

"Looking for a chance to do a bit of exploring, I found a small pretext for writing to her. She answered immediately, in a good, practiced hand. Some of her women do not seem at all beneath contempt." "Explore very thoroughly, if you will. I will not be satisfied until you do."

The house was what the guardsman would have described as the lowest of the low, but Genji was interested. What hidden charms might he not come upon!

He had thought the coldness of the governor's wife, the lady of "the locust shell," quite unique. Yet if she had proved amenable to his persuasions the affair would no doubt have been dropped as a sad mistake after that one encounter. As matters were, the resentment and the distinct possibility of final defeat never left his mind. The discussion that rainy night would seem to have made him curious about the several ranks. There had been a time when such a lady would not have been worth his notice. Yes, it had been broadening, that discussion! He had not found the willing and available one, the governor of Iyo's daughter, entirely uninteresting, but the thought that the stepmother must have been listening coolly to the interview was excruciating. He must await some sign of her real intentions. The governor of Iyo returned to the city. He came immediately to Genji's mansion. Somewhat sunburned, his travel robes rumpled from the sea voyage, he was a rather heavy and displeasing sort of person. He was of good lineage, however, and, though aging, he still had good manners. As they spoke of his province, Genji wanted to ask the full count of those hot springs,\* but he was somewhat confused to find memories chasing one another through his head. How foolish that he should be so uncomfortable before the honest old man! He remembered the guardsman's warning that such affairs are unwise,+ and he felt sorry for the governor. Though he resented the wife's coldness, he could see that from the husband's point of view it was admirable. He was upset to learn that the governor meant to find a suitable husband for his daughter and take his wife to the provinces. He consulted the lady's young brother upon the possibility of another meeting. It would have been difficult even with the lady's cooperation, however, and she was of the view that to receive a gentleman so far above her would be extremely unwise.

Yet she did not want him to forget her entirely. Her answers to his notes on this and that occasion were pleasant enough, and contained casual little touches that made him pause in admiration. He resented her chilliness, but she interested him. As for the stepdaughter, he was certain that she would receive him hospitably enough however formidable a husband she might acquire. Reports upon her arrangements disturbed him not at all.

Autumn came. He was kept busy and unhappy by affairs of his own making, and he visited Sanjo~

infrequently. There was resentment.

As for the affair at Rokujo~, he had overcome the lady's resistance and had his way, and, alas, he had cooled toward her. People thought it worthy of comment that his passions should seem so much more governable than before he had made her his. She was subject to fits of despondency, more intense on sleepless nights when she awaited him in vain. She feared that if rumors were to spread the gossips would make much of the difference in their ages.

On a morning of heavy mists, insistently roused by the lady, who was determined that he be on his way, Genji emerged yawning and sighing and looking very sleepy. Chu~jo~, one of her women, raised a shutter and pulled a curtain aside as if urging her lady to come forward and see him off. The lady lifted her head from her pillow. He was an incomparably handsome figure as he paused to admire the profusion of flowers below the veranda. Chu~jo~ followed him down a gallery. In an aster robe that matched the season pleasantly and a gossamer train worn with clean elegance, she was a pretty, graceful woman. Glancing back, he asked her to sit with him for a time at the corner railing. The ceremonious precision of the seated figure and the hair flowing over her robes were very fine.

He took her hand.

"Though loath to be taxed with seeking fresher blooms, I feel impelled to pluck this morning glory.

"Why should it be?"

She answered with practiced alacrity, making it seem that she was speaking not for herself but for her lady:

'In haste to plunge into the morning mists,

to have no heart for the blossoms here."

A pretty little page boy, especially decked out for the occasion, it would seem, walked out among the flowers. His trousers wet with dew, he broke off a morning glory for Genji. He made a picture that called out to be painted.

Even persons to whom Genji was nothing were drawn to him. No doubt even rough mountain men wanted to pause for a time in the shade of the flowering tree,\* and those who had basked even briefly in his radiance had thoughts, each in accordance with his rank, of a daughter who might be taken into his service, a not ill-formed sister who might perform some humble service for him. One need not be surprised, then, that people with a measure of sensibility among those who had on some occasion received a little poem from him or been treated to some little kindness found him much on their minds. No doubt it distressed them not to be always with him.

I had forgotten: Koremitsu gave a good account of the fence peeping to which he had

assigned. "I am unable to identify her. She seems determined to hide herself from the world. In their boredom her women and girls go out to the long gallery at the street, the one with the shutters, and watch for carriages. Sometimes the lady who seems to be their mistress comes quietly out to join them. I've not had a good look at her, but she seems very pretty indeed. One day a carriage with outrunners went by. The little girls shouted to a person named Ukon that she must come in a hurry. The captain\* was going by, they said. An older woman came out and motioned to them to be quiet. How did they know? she asked, coming out toward the gallery. The passage from the main house is by a sort of makeshift bridge. She was hurrying and her skirt caught on something, and she stumbled and almost fell off.'The sort of thing the god of Katsuragi might do,'+ she said, and seems to have lost interest in sightseeing. They told her that the man in the carriage was wearing casual court dress and that he had a retinue. They mentioned several names, and all of them were undeniably Lord To~ no Chu~jo~'s guards and pages."

"I wish you had made positive identification." Might she be the lady of whom To~ no Chu~jo~ had spoken so regretfully that rainy night? Koremitsu went on, smiling at this open curiosity. "I have as a matter of fact made the proper overtures and learned all about the place. I come and go as if I did not know that they are not all equals. They think they are hiding the truth and try to insist that there is no one there but them- selves when one of the little girls makes a slip."

"Let me have a peep for myself when I call on your mother."

Even if she was only in temporary lodgings, the woman would seem to be of the lower class for which his friend had indicated such contempt that rainy evening. Yet something might come of it all. Determined not to go against his master's wishes in the smallest detail and himself driven by very considerable excitement, Koremitsu searched diligently for a chance to let Genji into the house. But the details are tiresome, and I shall not go into them.

Genji did not know who the lady was and he did not want her to know who he was. In very shabby disguise, he set out to visit her on foot. He must be taking her very seriously, thought Koremitsu, who offered his horse and himself went on foot.

"Though I do not think that our gentleman will look very good with tramps for servants."

To make quite certain that the expedition remained secret, Genji took with him only the man who had been his intermediary in the matter of the "evening faces" and a page whom no one was likely to recognize. Lest he be found out even so, he did not stop to see his nurse.

The lady had his messengers followed to see how he made his way home and tried by every means to learn where he lived; but her efforts came to nothing. For all his secretiveness, Genji had grown fond of her and felt that he must go on seeing her. They were of such different ranks, he tried to tell himself, and it was altogether too frivolous. Yet his visits were frequent. In affairs of this sort, which can muddle the senses of the most serious and honest of men, he had always kept himself under tight control and avoided any occasion for censure. Now, to a most astonishing degree, he would be asking himself as he returned in the morning from a visit how he could wait through the

day for the next. And then he would rebuke himself. It was madness, it was not an affair he should let disturb him. She was of an extraordinarily gentle and quiet nature. Though there was a certain vagueness about her, and indeed an almost childlike quality, it was clear that she knew something about men. She did not appear to be of very good family. What was there about her, he asked himself over and over again, that so drew him to her?

He took great pains to hide his rank and always wore travel dress, and he did not allow her to see his face. He came late at night when everyone was asleep. She was frightened, as if he were an apparition from an old story. She did not need to see his face to know that he was a fine gentleman. But who might he be? Her suspicions turned to Koremitsu. It was that young gallant, surely, who had brought the strange visitor. But Koremitsu pursued his own little affairs unremittently, careful to feign indifference to and ignorance of this other affair. What could it all mean? The lady was lost in unfamiliar speculations.

Genji had his own worries. If, having lowered his guard with an appearance of complete unreserve, she were to slip away and hide, where would he seek her? This seemed to be but a temporary residence, and he could not be sure when she would choose to change it, and for what other. He hoped that he might reconcile himself to what must be and forget the affair as just another dalliance; but he was not confident.

On days when, to avoid attracting notice, he refrained from visiting her, his fretfulness came near anguish. Suppose he were to move her in secret to Nijo~. If troublesome rumors were to arise, well, he could say that they had been fated from the start. He wondered what bond in a former life might have produced an infatuation such as he had not known before. "Let's have a good talk," he said to her, "where we can be quite at our ease.

"It's all so strange. What you say is reasonable enough, but what you do is so strange. And rather frightening."

Yes, she might well be frightened. Something childlike in her fright brought a smile to his lips. "Which of us is the mischievous fox spirit? I wonder. Just be quiet and give yourself up to its persuasions."

Won over by his gentle warmth, she was indeed inclined to let him have his way. She seemed such a pliant little creature, likely to submit absolutely to the most outrageous demands. He thought again of To~ no Chu~jo~'s "wild carnation," of the equable nature his friend had described that rainy night. Fearing that it would be useless, he did not try very hard to question her. She did not seem likely to indulge in dramatics and suddenly run off and hide herself, and so the fault must have been To~ no Chu~jo~'s. Genji himself would not be guilty of such negligence--though it did occur to him that a bit of infidelity\* might make her more interesting.

The bright full moon of the Eighth Month came flooding in through chinks in the roof. It was not the sort of dwelling he was used to, and he was fascinated. Toward dawn he was awakened by plebeian voices in the shabby houses down the street.

"Freezing, that's what it is, freezing. There's not much business this year, and when you can't get out into the country you feel like giving up. Do you hear me, neighbor?"

He could make out every word. It embarrassed the woman that, so near at hand, there should be this clamor of preparation as people set forth on their sad little enterprises. Had she been one of the stylish ladies of the world, she would have wanted to shrivel up and disappear. She was a placid sort, however, and she seemed to take nothing, painful or embarrassing or unpleasant, too seriously. Her manner elegant and yet girlish, she did not seem to know what the rather awful clamor up and down the street might mean. He much preferred this easygoing bewilderment to a show of consternation, a face scarlet with embarrassment. As if at his very pillow, there came the booming of a foot pestle, more fearsome than the stamping of the thunder god, genuinely earsplitting. He did not know what device the sound came from, but he did know that it was enough to awaken the dead. From this direction and that there came the faint thump of fulling hammers against coarse cloth; and mingled with it--these were sounds to call forth the deepest emotions--were the calls of geese flying overhead. He slid a door open and they looked out. They had been lying near the veranda. There were tasteful clumps of black bamboo just outside and the dew shone as in more familiar places. Autumn insects sang busily, as if only inches from an ear used to wall crickets at considerable distances. It was all very clamorous, and also rather wonderful. Countless details could be overlooked in the singleness of his affection for the girl. She was pretty and fragile in a soft, modest cloak of lavender and a lined white robe. She had no single feature that struck him as especially beautiful, and yet, slender and fragile, she seemed so delicately beautiful that he was almost afraid to hear her voice. He might have wished her to be a little more assertive, but he wanted only to be near her, and yet nearer. "Let's go off somewhere and enjoy the rest of the night. This is too much."

"But how is that possible?" She spoke very quietly. "You keep taking me by surprise."

There was a newly confiding response to his offer of his services as guardian in this world and the next. She was a strange little thing. He found it hard to believe that she had had much experience of men. He no longer cared what people might think. He asked Ukon to summon his man, who got the carriage ready. The women of the house, though uneasy, sensed the depth of his feelings and were inclined to put their trust in him. Dawn approached. No cocks were crowing. There was only the voice of an old man making deep obeisance to a Buddha, in preparation, it would seem, for a pilgrimage to Mitake.\* He seemed to be prostrating himself repeatedly and with much difficulty. All very sad. In a life itself like the morning dew, what could he desire so earnestly?

"Praise to the Messiah to come," intoned the voice.

"Listen," said Genji. "He is thinking of another world."

"This pious one shall lead us on our way As we plight our troth for all the lives to come."

The vow exchanged by the Chinese emperor and Yang Kuei-fei seemed to bode ill, and so he

preferred to invoke Lord Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future; but such promises are rash.

"So heavy the burden I bring with me from the past, I doubt that I should make these vows for the future."

It was a reply that suggested doubts about his "lives to come."

The moon was low over the western hills. She was reluctant to go with him. As he sought to persuade her, the moon suddenly disappeared behind clouds in a lovely dawn sky. Always in a hurry to be off before daylight exposed him, he lifted her easily into his carriage and took her to a nearby villa. Ukon was with them. Waiting for the caretaker to be summoned, Genji looked up at the rotting gate and the ferns that trailed thickly down over it. The groves beyond were still dark, and the mist and the dews were heavy. Genji's sleeve was soaking, for he had raised the blinds of the carriage.

"This is a novel adventure, and I must say that it seems like a lot of trouble.

"And did it confuse them too, the men of old, This road through the dawn, for me so new and strange?

"How does it seem to you?"

She turned shyly away.

"And is the moon, unsure of the hills it approaches,

Foredoomed to lose its way in the empty skies?

"I am afraid."

She did seem frightened, and bewildered. She was so used to all those swarms of people, he thought with a smile.

The carriage was brought in and its traces propped against the veranda while a room was made ready in the west wing. Much excited, Ukon was thinking about earlier adventures. The furious energy with which the caretaker saw to preparations made her suspect who Genji was. It was almost daylight when they alighted from the carriage. The room was clean and pleasant, for all the haste with which it had been readied.

"There are unfortunately no women here to wait upon His Lordship." The man, who addressed him through Ukon, was a lesser steward who had served in the Sanjo~ mansion of Genji's father-in-law. "Shall I send for someone?"

"The last thing I want. I came here because I wanted to be in complete solitude, away from all



possible visitors. You are not to tell a soul."

The man put together a hurried breakfast, but he was, as he had said, without serving women to help him.

Genji told the girl that he meant to show her a love as dependable as "the patient river of the loons." \* He could do little else in these strange lodgings.

The sun was high when he arose. He opened the shutters. All through the badly neglected grounds not a person was to be seen. The groves were rank and overgrown. The flowers and grasses in the foreground were a drab monotone, an autumn moor. The pond was choked with weeds, and all in all it was a forbidding place. An outbuilding seemed to be fitted with rooms for the caretaker, but it was some distance away.

"It is a forbidding place," + said Genji. "But I am sure that whatever devils emerge will pass me by."

He was still in disguise. She thought it unkind of him to be so secretive, and he had to agree that their relationship had gone beyond such furtiveness.

"Because of one chance meeting by the wayside The flower now opens in the evening dew.

"And how does it look to you?"

"The face seemed quite to shine in the evening dew, But I was dazzled by the evening light."

Her eyes turned away. She spoke in a whisper.

To him it may have seemed an interesting poem.

As a matter of fact, she found him handsomer than her poem suggested, indeed frighteningly handsome, given the setting.

"I hid my name from you because I thought it altogether too unkind of you to be keeping your name from me. Do please tell me now. This silence makes me feel that something awful might be coming."

"Call me the fisherman's daughter." \* Still hiding her name, she was like a little child.

"I see. I brought it all on myself? A case of warekara?" +

And so, sometimes affectionately, sometimes reproachfully, they talked the hours away.

Koremitsu had found them out and brought provisions. Feeling a little guilty about the way he had

treated Ukon, he did not come near. He thought it amusing that Genji should thus be wandering the streets, and concluded that the girl must provide sufficient cause. And he could have had her himself, had he not been so generous.

Genji and the girl looked out at an evening sky of the utmost calm. Because she found the darkness in the recesses of the house frightening, he raised the blinds at the veranda and they lay side by side. As they gazed at each other in the gathering dusk, it all seemed very strange to her, unbelievably strange. Memories of past wrongs quite left her. She was more at ease with him now, and he thought her charming. Beside him all through the day, starting up in fright at each little noise, she seemed delightfully childlike. He lowered the shutters early and had lights brought.

"You seem comfortable enough with me, and yet you raise difficulties."

At court everyone would be frantic. Where would the search be directed? He thought what a strange love it was, and he thought of the turmoil the Rokujo~ lady was certain to be in. She had every right to be resentful, and yet her jealous ways were not pleasant. It was that sad lady to whom his thoughts first turned. Here was the girl beside him, so simple and undemanding; and the other was so impossibly forceful in her demands. How he wished he might in some measure have his freedom.

It was past midnight. He had been asleep for a time when an exceedingly beautiful woman appeared by his pillow.

"You do not even think of visiting me, when you are so much on my mind. Instead you go running off with someone who has nothing to recommend her, and raise a great stir over her. It is cruel, intolerable." She seemed about to shake the girl from her sleep. He awoke, feeling as if he were in the power of some malign being. The light had gone out. In great alarm, he pulled his sword to his pillow and awakened Ukon. She too seemed frightened.

"Go out to the gallery and wake the guard. Have him bring a light."

"It's much too dark."

He forced a smile. "You're behaving like a child."

He clapped his hands and a hollow echo answered. No one seemed to hear. The girl was trembling violently. She was bathed in sweat and as if in a trance, quite bereft of her senses.

"She is such a timid little thing," said Ukon, "frightened when there is nothing at all to be frightened of. This must be dreadful for her." Yes, poor thing, thought Genji. She did seem so fragile, and she had spent the whole day gazing up at the sky.

"I'll go get someone. What a frightful echo. You stay here with her."

He pulled Ukon to the girl's side.

The lights in the west gallery had gone out. There was a gentle wind. He had few people with him, and they were asleep. They were three in number: a young man who was one of his intimates and who was the son of the steward here, a court page, and the man who had been his intermediary in the matter of the "evening faces." He called out. Someone answered and came up to him.

"Bring a light. Wake the other, and shout and twang your bowstrings. What do you mean, going to sleep in a deserted house? I believe Lord Koremitsu was here."

"He was. But he said he had no orders and would come again at dawn."

An elite guardsman, the man was very adept at bow twanging. He went off with a shouting as of a fire watch. At court, thought Genji, the courtiers on night duty would have announced themselves, and the guard would be changing. It was not so very late.

He felt his way back inside. The girl was as before, and Ukon lay face down at her side.

"What is this? You're a fool to let yourself be so frightened. Are you worried about the fox spirits that come out and play tricks in deserted houses? But you needn't worry. They won't come near me." He pulled her to her knees.

"I'm not feeling at all well. That's why I was lying down. My poor lady must be terrified."

"She is indeed. And I can't think why."

He reached for the girl. She was not breathing. He lifted her and she was limp in his arms. There was no sign of life. She had seemed as defenseless as a child, and no doubt some evil power had taken possession of her. He could think of nothing to do. A man came with a torch. Ukon was not prepared to move, and Genji himself pulled up curtain frames to hide the girl.

"Bring the light closer."

It was most an unusual order. Not ordinarily permitted at Genji's side, the man hesitated to cross the threshold.

"Come, come, bring it here! There is a time and place for ceremony." In the torchlight he had a fleeting glimpse of a figure by the girl's pillow. It was the woman in his dream. It faded away like an apparition in an old romance. In all the fright and honor, his confused thoughts centered upon the girl. There was no room for thoughts of himself. He knelt over her and called out to her, but she was cold and had stopped breathing. It was too horrible. He had no confidant to whom he could turn for advice. It was the clergy one thought of first on such occasions. He had been so brave and confident, but he was young, and this was too much for him. He clung to the lifeless body.

"Come back, my dear, my dear. Don't do this awful thing to me." But she was cold and no longer seemed human.

The first paralyzing terror had left Ukon. Now she was writhing and wailing. Genji remembered a devil a certain minister had encountered in the Grand Hall.\*

"She can't possibly be dead." He found the strength to speak sharply. "All this noise in the middle of the night--you must try to be a little quieter." But it had been too sudden.

He turned again to the torchbearer. "There is someone here who seems to have had a very strange seizure. Tell your friend to find out where Lord Koremitsu is spending the night and have him come immediately. If the holy man is still at his mother's house, give him word, very quietly, that he is to come too. His mother and the people with her are not to hear. She does not approve of this sort of adventure."

He spoke calmly enough, but his mind was in a turmoil. Added to grief at the loss of the girl was horror, quite beyond describing, at this desolate place. It would be past midnight. The wind was higher and whistled more dolefully in the pines. There came a strange, hollow call of a bird. Might it be an owl? All was silence, terrifying solitude. He should not have chosen such a place--but it was too late now. Trembling violently, Ukon clung to him. He held her in his arms, wondering if she might be about to follow her lady. He was the only rational one present, and he could think of nothing to do. The flickering light wandered here and there. The upper parts of the screens behind them were in darkness, the lower parts fitfully in the light. There was a persistent creaking, as of someone coming up behind them. If only Koremitsu would come. But Koremitsu was a nocturnal wanderer without a fixed abode, and the man had to search for him in numerous places. The wait for dawn was like the passage of a thousand nights. Finally he heard a distant crowing. What legacy from a former life could have brought him to this mortal peril? He was being punished for a guilty love, his fault and no one else's, and his story would be remembered in infamy through all the ages to come. There were no secrets, strive though one might to have them. Soon everyone would know, from his royal father down, and the lowest court pages would be talking; and he would gain immortality as the model of the complete fool.

Finally Lord Koremitsu came. He was the perfect servant who did not go against his master's wishes in anything at any time; and Genji was angry that on this night of all nights he should have been away, and slow in answering the summons. Calling him inside even so, he could not immediately find the strength to say what must be said. Ukon burst into tears, the full honor of it all coming back to her at the sight of Koremitsu. Genji too lost control of himself. The only sane and rational one present, he had held Ukon in his arms, but now he gave himself up to his grief.

"Something very strange has happened," he said after a time. "Strange --'unbelievable' would not be too strong a word. I wanted a priest--one does when these things happen--and asked your reverend brother to come."

"He went back up the mountain yesterday. Yes, it is very strange indeed. Had there been anything wrong with her?"

"Nothing."

He was so handsome in his grief that Koremitsu wanted to weep. An older man who has had everything happen to him and knows what to expect can be depended upon in a crisis; but they were both young, and neither had anything to suggest.

Koremitsu finally spoke. "We must not let the caretaker know. He may be dependable enough himself, but he is sure to have relatives who will talk. We must get away from this place."

"You aren't suggesting that we could find a place where we would be less likely to be seen?"

"No, I suppose not. And the women at her house will scream and wail when they hear about it, and they live in a crowded neighborhood, and all the mob around will hear, and that will be that. But mountain temples are used to this sort of thing. There would not be much danger of attracting attention." He reflected on the problem for a time. "There is a woman I used to know. She has gone into a nunnery up in the eastern hills. She is very old, my father's nurse, as a matter of fact. The district seems to be rather heavily populated, but the nunnery is off by itself."

It was not yet full daylight. Koremitsu had the carriage brought up. Since Genji seemed incapable of the task, he wrapped the body in a covering and lifted it into the carriage. It was very tiny and very pretty, and not at all repellent. The wrapping was loose and the hair streamed forth, as if to darken the world before Genji's eyes.

He wanted to see the last rites through to the end, but Koremitsu would not hear of it. "Take my horse and go back to Nijo~, now while the streets are still quiet."

He helped Ukon into the carriage and himself proceeded on foot, the skirts of his robe hitched up. It was a strange, bedraggled sort of funeral procession, he thought, but in the face of such anguish he was prepared to risk his life. Barely conscious, Genji made his way back to Nijo-.

"Where have you been?" asked the women. "You are not looking at all well."

He did not answer. Alone in his room, he pressed a hand to his heart. Why had he not gone with the others? What would she think if she were to come back to life? She would think that he had abandoned her. Self-reproach filled his heart to breaking. He had a headache and feared he had a fever. Might he too be dying? The sun was high and still he did not emerge. Thinking it all very strange, the women pressed breakfast upon him. He could not eat. A messenger reported that the emperor had been troubled by his failure to appear the day before.

His brothers-in-law came calling.

"Come in, please, just for a moment." He received only To~ no Chu~jo~ and kept a blind between them. "My old nurse fell seriously ill and took her vows in the Fifth Month or so. perhaps because of them, she seemed to recover. But recently she had a relapse. Someone came to ask if I would not call on her at least once more. I thought I really must go and see an old and dear servant who was on her deathbed, and so I went. One of her servants was ailing, and quite suddenly, before he had time to leave, he died. Out of deference to me they waited until night to take the body away. All this I learned later. It would be very improper of me to go to court with all these festivities coming up,\* I thought, and so I stayed away. I have had a headache since early this morning-- perhaps I have caught cold. I must apologize." "I see. I shall so inform your father. He sent out a search party during the concert last night, and really seemed very upset." To~ no Chu~jo~ turned to go, and abruptly turned back. "Come now. What sort of brush did you really have? I don't believe a word of it."

Genji was startled, but managed a show of nonchalance. "You needn't go into the details. Just say that I suffered an unexpected defilement. Very unexpected, really."

Despite his cool manner, he was not up to facing people. He asked a younger brother-in-law to explain in detail his reasons for not going to court. He got off a note to Sanjo~ with a similar explanation.

Koremitsu came in the evening. Having announced that he had suffered a defilement, Genji had callers remain outside, and there were few people in the house. He received Koremitsu immediately.

"Are you sure she is dead?" He pressed a sleeve to his eyes.

Koremitsu too was in tears. "Yes, I fear she is most certainly dead. I could not stay shut up in a temple indefinitely, and so I have made arrangements with a venerable priest whom I happen to know rather well. Tomorrow is a good day for funerals."

"And the other woman?"

"She has seemed on the point of death herself. She does not want to be left behind by her lady. I was afraid this morning that she might throw herself over a cliff. She wanted to tell the people at Gojo~, but I persuaded her to let us have a little more time."

"I am feeling rather awful myself and almost fear the worst."

"Come, now. There is nothing to be done and no point in torturing yourself. You must tell yourself that what must be must be. I shall let absolutely no one know, and I am personally taking care of everything." "Yes, to be sure. Everything is fated. So I tell myself. But it is terrible to think that I have sent a lady to her death. You are not to tell your sister, and you must be very sure that your mother does not hear. I would not survive the scolding I would get from her."

"And the priests too: I have told them a plausible story." Koremitsu exuded confidence.

The women had caught a hint of what was going on and were more puzzled than ever. He had said that he had suffered a defilement, and he was staying away from court; but why these muffled lamentations? Genji gave instructions for the funeral. "You must make sure that nothing goes wrong."

"Of course. No great ceremony seems called for."

Koremitsu turned to leave.

"I know you won't approve," said Genji, a fresh wave of grief sweeping over him, "but I will regret it forever if I don't see her again. I'll go on horseback."

"Very well, if you must." In fact Koremitsu thought the proposal very ill advised. "Go immediately and be back while it is still early." Genji set out in the travel robes he had kept ready for his recent amorous excursions. He was in the bleakest despair. He was on a strange mission and the terrors of the night before made him consider turning back. Grief urged him on. If he did not see her once more, when, in another world, might he hope to see her as she had been? He had with him only Koremitsu and the attendant of that first encounter. The road seemed a long one.

The moon came out, two nights past full. They reached the river. In the dim torchlight, the darkness off towards Mount Toribe was ominous and forbidding; but Genji was too dazed with grief to be frightened. And so they reached the temple.

It was a harsh, unfriendly region at best. The board hut and chapel where the nun pursued her austerities were lonely beyond description. The light at the altar came dimly through cracks. Inside the hut a woman was weeping. In the outer chamber two or three priests were conversing and invoking the holy name in low voices. Vespers seemed to have ended in several temples nearby. Everything was quiet. There were lights and there seemed to be clusters of people in the direction of Kiyomizu. The grand tones in which the worthy monk, the son of the nun, was reading a sutra brought on what Genji thought must be the full flood tide of his tears. He went inside. The light was turned away from the corpse. Ukon lay behind a screen. It must be very terrible for her, thought Genji. The girl's face was unchanged and very pretty.

"Won't you let me hear your voice again?" He took her hand. "What was it that made me give you all my love, for so short a time, and then made you leave me to this misery?" He was weeping uncontrollably. The priests did not know who he was. They sensed something remarkable, however, and felt their eyes mist over.

"Come with me to Nijo~, " he said to Ukon.

"We have been together since I was very young. I never left her side, not for a single moment. Where am I to go now? I will have to tell the others what has happened. As if this weren't enough,

I will have to put up with their accusations." She was sobbing. "I want to go with her." "That is only natural. But it is the way of the world. Parting is always sad. Our lives must end, early or late. Try to put your trust in me." He comforted her with the usual homilies, but presently his real feelings came out. "put your trust in me--when I fear I have not long to live myself." He did not after all seem likely to be much help.

"It will soon be light," said Koremitsu. "We must be on our way."

Looking back and looking back again, his heart near breaking, Genji went out. The way was heavy with dew and the morning mists were thick. He scarcely knew where he was. The girl was exactly as she had been that night. They had exchanged robes and she had on a red singlet of his. What might it have been in other lives that had brought them together? He managed only with great difficulty to stay in his saddle. Koremitsu was at the reins. As they came to the river Genji fell from his horse and was unable to remount.

"So I am to die by the wayside? I doubt that I can go on." Koremitsu was in a panic. He should not have permitted this expedition, however strong Genji's wishes. Dipping his hands in the river, he turned and made supplication to Kiyomizu. Genji somehow pulled himself together. Silently invoking the holy name, he was seen back to Nijo~.

The women were much upset by these untimely wanderings. "Very bad, very bad. He has been so restless lately. And why should he have gone out again when he was not feeling well?"

Now genuinely ill, he took to his bed. Two or three days passed and he was visibly thinner. The emperor heard of the illness and was much alarmed. Continuous prayers were ordered in this shrine and that temple. The varied rites, Shinto and Confucian and Buddhist, were beyond counting. Genji's good looks had been such as to arouse forebodings. All through the court it was feared that he would not live much longer. Despite his illness, he summoned Ukon to Nijo~ and assigned her rooms near his own. Koremitsu composed himself sufficiently to be of service to her, for he could see that she had no one else to turn to. Choosing times when he was feeling better, Genji would summon her for a talk, and she soon was accustomed to life at Nijo~. Dressed in deep mourning, she was a somewhat stern and forbidding young woman, but not without her good points. "It lasted such a very little while. I fear that I will be taken too. It must be dreadful for you, losing your only support. I had thought that as long as I lived I would see to all your needs, and it seems sad and ironical that I should be on the point of following her." He spoke softly and there were tears in his eyes. For Ukon the old grief had been hard enough to bear, and now she feared that a new grief might be added to it.

All through the Nijo~ mansion there was a sense of helplessness. Emisseries from court were thicker than raindrops. Not wanting to worry his father, Genji fought to control himself. His father-in-law was extremely solicitous and came to Nijo~ every day. perhaps because of all the prayers and rites the crisis passed--it had lasted some twenty days--and left no ill effects. Genji's full recovery coincided with the final cleansing of the defilement. With the unhappiness he had caused his father much on his mind, he set off for his apartments at court. For a time he felt out of things,



as if he had come back to a strange new world.

By the end of the Ninth Month he was his old self once more. He had lost weight, but emaciation only made him handsomer. He spent a great deal of time gazing into space, and sometimes he would weep aloud. He must be in the clutches of some malign spirit, thought the women. It was all most peculiar.

He would summon Ukon on quiet evenings. "I don't understand it at all. Why did she so insist on keeping her name from me? Even if she was a fisherman's daughter it was cruel of her to be so uncommunicative. It was as if she did not know how much I loved her."

"There was no reason for keeping it secret. But why should she tell you about her insignificant self? Your attitude seemed so strange from the beginning. She used to say that she hardly knew whether she was waking or dreaming. Your refusal to identify yourself, you know, helped her guess who you were. It hurt her that you should belittle her by keeping your name from her."

"An unfortunate contest of wills. I did not want anything to stand between us; but I must always be worrying about what people will say. I must refrain from things my father and all the rest of them might take me to task for. I am not permitted the smallest indiscretion. Everything is exaggerated so. The little incident of the 'evening faces' affected me strangely and I went to very great trouble to see her. There must have been a bond between us. A love doomed from the start to be fleeting-- why should it have taken such complete possession of me and made me find her so precious? You must tell me everything. What point is there in keeping secrets now? I mean to make offerings every week, and I want to know in whose name I am making them."

"Yes, of course--why have secrets now? It is only that I do not want to slight what she made so much of. Her parents are dead. Her father was a guards captain. She was his special pet, but his career did not go well and his life came to an early and disappointing end. She somehow got to know Lord To~ no Chu~jo~~it was when he was still a lieutenant. He was very attentive for three years or so, and then about last autumn there was a rather awful threat from his father-in-law's house. She was ridiculously timid and it frightened her beyond all reason. She ran off and hid herself at her nurse's in the western part of the city. It was a wretched little hovel of a place. She wanted to go off into the hills, but the direction she had in mind has been taboo since New Year's. So she moved to the odd place where she was so upset to have you find her. She was more reserved and withdrawn than most people, and I fear that her unwillingness to show her emotions may have seemed cold."

So it was true. Affection and pity welled up yet more strongly.

"He once told me of a lost child. Was there such a one?"

"Yes, a very pretty little girl, born two years ago last spring."

"Where is she? Bring her to me without letting anyone know. It would be such a comfort. I should

tell my friend To~ no Chu~jo~, I suppose, but why invite criticism? I doubt that anyone could reprove me for taking in the child. You must think up a way to get around the nurse."

"It would make me very happy if you were to take the child. I would hate to have her left where she is. She is there because we had no competent nurses in the house where you found us."

The evening sky was serenely beautiful. The flowers below the veranda were withered, the songs of the insects were dying too, and autumn tints were coming over the maples. Looking out upon the scene, which might have been a painting, Ukon thought what a lovely asylum she had found herself. She wanted to avert her eyes at the thought of the house of the "evening faces." A pigeon called, somewhat discordantly, from a bamboo thicket. Remembering how the same call had frightened the girl in that deserted villa, Genji could see the little figure as if an apparition were there before him.

"How old was she? She seemed so delicate, because she was not long for this world, I suppose."

"Nineteen, perhaps? My mother, who was her nurse, died and left me behind. Her father took a fancy to me, and so we grew up together, and I never once left her side. I wonder how I can go on without her. I am almost sorry that we were so close.\* She seemed so weak, but I can see now that she was a source of strength."

"The weak ones do have a power over us. The clear, forceful ones I can do without. I am weak and indecisive by nature myself, and a woman who is quiet and withdrawn and follows the wishes of a man even to the point of letting herself be used has much the greater appeal. A man can shape and mold her as he wishes, and becomes fonder of her all the while."

"She was exactly what you would have wished, sir." Ukon was in tears. "That thought makes the loss seem greater."

The sky had clouded over and a chilly wind had come up. Gazing off into the distance, Genji said softly:

"One sees the clouds as smoke that rose from the pyre, And suddenly the evening sky seems nearer."

Ukon was unable to answer. If only her lady were here! For Genji even the memory of those fulling blocks was sweet.

"In the Eighth Month, the Ninth Month, the nights are long," \* he whispered, and lay down.

The young page, brother of the lady of the locust shell, came to Nijo~ from time to time, but Genji no longer sent messages for his sister. She was sorry that he seemed angry with her and sorry to hear of his illness. The prospect of accompanying her husband to his distant province was a dreary one. She sent off a note to see whether Genji had forgotten her. "They tell me you have not been

well.

"Time goes by, you ask not why I ask not.

Think if you will how lonely a life is mine.

"I might make reference to Masuda Pond." +

This was a surprise; and indeed he had not forgotten her. The uncertain hand in which he set down his reply had its own beauty. "Who, I wonder, lives the more aimless life.

"Hollow though it was, the shell of the locust Gave me strength to face a gloomy world.

"But only precariously."

So he still remembered "the shell of the locust." She was sad and at the same time amused. It was good that they could correspond without rancor. She wished no further intimacy, and she did not want him to despise her.

As for the other, her stepdaughter, Genji heard that she had married a guards lieutenant. He thought it a strange marriage and he felt a certain pity for the lieutenant. Curious to know something of her feelings, he sent a note by his young messenger.

"Did you know that thoughts of you had brought me to the point of expiring?

"I bound them loosely, the reeds beneath the eaves, And reprove them now for having come undone."

He attached it to a long reed.

The boy was to deliver it in secret, he said. But he thought that the lieutenant would be forgiving if he were to see it, for he would guess who the sender was. One may detect here a note of self-satisfaction.

Her husband was away. She was confused, but delighted that he should have remembered her. She sent off in reply a poem the only excuse for which was the alacrity with which it was composed:

"The wind brings words, all softly, to the reed, And the under leaves are nipped again by the frost."

It might have been cleverer and in better taste not to have disguised the clumsy handwriting. He thought of the face he had seen by lamplight. He could forget neither of them, the governor's wife, seated so primly before him, or the younger woman, chattering on so contentedly, without the smallest suggestion of reserve. The stirrings of a susceptible heart suggested that he still had important lessons to learn.

Quietly, forty-ninth-day services were held for the dead lady in the Lotus Hall on Mount Hiei. There was careful attention to all the details, the priestly robes and the scrolls and the altar decorations. Koremitsu's older brother was a priest of considerable renown, and his conduct of the services was beyond reproach. Genji summoned a doctor of letters with whom he was friendly and who was his tutor in Chinese poetry and asked him to prepare a final version of the memorial petition. Genji had prepared a draft. In moving language he committed the one he had loved and lost, though he did not mention her name, to the mercy of Amita~bha.

"It is perfect, just as it is. Not a word needs to be changed." Noting the tears that refused to be held back, the doctor wondered who might be the subject of these prayers. That Genji should not reveal the name, and that he should be in such open grief--someone, no doubt, who had brought a very large bounty of grace from earlier lives.

Genji attached a poem to a pair of lady's trousers which were among his secret offerings:

"I weep and weep as today I tie this cord.

It will be untied in an unknown world to come."

He invoked the holy name with great feeling. Her spirit had wandered uncertainly these last weeks. Today it would set off down one of the ways of the future.

His heart raced each time he saw To~ no Chu~jo~. He longed to tell his friend that "the wild carnation" was alive and well; but there was no point in calling forth reproaches.

In the house of the "evening faces," the women were at a loss to know what had happened to their lady. They had no way of inquiring. And Ukon too had disappeared. They whispered among themselves that they had been right about that gentleman, and they hinted at their suspicions to Koremitsu. He feigned complete ignorance, however, and continued to pursue his little affairs. For the poor women it was all like a nightmare. Perhaps the wanton son of some governor, fearing To~ no Chu~jo~, had spirited her off to the country? The owner of the house was her nurse's daughter. She was one of three children and related to Ukon. She could only long for her lady and lament that Ukon had not chosen to enlighten them. Ukon for her part was loath to raise a stir, and Genji did not want gossip at this late date. Ukon could not even inquire after the child. And so the days went by bringing no light on the terrible mystery.

Genji longed for a glimpse of the dead girl, if only in a dream. On the day after the services he did have a fleeting dream of the woman who had appeared that fatal night. He concluded, and the thought filled him with horror, that he had attracted the attention of an evil spirit haunting the neglected villa.

Early in the Tenth Month the governor of iyo left for his post, taking the lady of the locust shell with him. Genji chose his farewell presents with great care. For the lady there were numerous

fans,\* and combs of beautiful workmanship, and pieces of cloth (she could see that he had had them dyed specially) for the wayside gods. He also returned her robe, "the shell of the locust."

"A keepsake till we meet again, I had hoped, And see, my tears have rotted the sleeves away."

There were other things too, but it would be tedious to describe them. His messenger returned empty-handed. It was through her brother that she answered his poem.

"Autumn comes, the wings of the locust are shed.

A summer robe returns, and I weep aloud."

She had remarkable singleness of purpose, whatever else she might have. It was the first day of winter. There were chilly showers, as if to mark the occasion and the skies were dark. He spent the day lost in thought. "The one has gone, to the other I say farewell.

They go their unknown ways. The end of autumn."

He knew how painful a secret love can be.

I had hoped, out of deference to him, to conceal these difficult matters; but I have been accused of romancing, of pretending that because he was the son of an emperor he had no faults. Now, perhaps, I shall be accused of having revealed too much.

“見通しあらはなる廂の御座にゐたまへる  
人、ものに紛るべくもあらず、気高くきよらに、さとにはふ心地して、春の曙の霞の間より、  
おもしろき樺桜の咲き乱れたるを見る心地す。”

『源氏物語・野分』より

## 五.若紫 5.Lavender

Genji was suffering from repeated attacks of malaria. All manner of religious services were commissioned, but they did no good.

In a certain temple in the northern hills, someone reported, there lived a sage who was a most accomplished worker of cures. "During the epidemic last summer all sorts of people went to him. He was able to cure them immediately when all other treatment had failed. You must not let it have its way. You must summon him at once."

Genji sent off a messenger, but the sage replied that he was old and bent and unable to leave his cave.

There was no help for it, thought Genji: he must quietly visit the man. He set out before dawn taking four or five trusted attendants with him. The temple was fairly deep in the northern hill

Though the cherry blossoms had already fallen in the city, it being late in the Third Month, the mountain cherries were at their best. The deepening mist as the party entered the hills delighted him. He did not often go on such expeditions, for he was of such rank that freedom of movement was not permitted him. The temple itself was a sad place. The old man's cave was surrounded by rocks, high in the hills behind. Making his way up to it, Genji did not at first reveal his identity. He was in rough disguise, but the holy man immediately saw that he was someone of importance.

"This is a very great honor. You will be the gentleman who sent for me? My mind has left the world, and I have so neglected the ritual that it has quite gone out of my head. I fear that your journey has been in vain." Yet he got busily to work, and he smiled his pleasure at the visit.

He prepared medicines and had Genji drink them, and as he went through his spells and incantations the sun rose higher.

Genji walked a few steps from the cave and surveyed the scene. The temple was on a height with other temples spread out below it. Down a winding path he saw a wattled fence of better workmanship than similar fences nearby. The halls and galleries within were nicely disposed and there were fine trees in the garden.

"Whose house might that be?"

"A certain bishop, I am told, has been living there in seclusion for the last two years or so."

"Someone who calls for ceremony--and ceremony is hardly possible in these clothes. He must not know that I am here." Several pretty little girls had come out to draw water and cut flowers for the altar.

"And I have been told that a lady is in residence too. The bishop can hardly be keeping a mistress. I wonder who she might be."

Several of his men went down to investigate, and reported upon what they had seen. "Some very pretty young ladies and some older women too, and some little girls."

Despite the sage's ministrations, which still continued, Genji feared a new seizure as the sun rose higher.

"It is too much on your mind," said the sage. "You must try to think of something else."

Genji climbed the hill behind the temple and looked off toward the city. The forests receded into a spring haze.

"Like a painting," he said. "People who live in such a place can hardly want to be anywhere e

"Oh, these are not mountains at all," said one of his men. "The moun- tains and seas off in the far

provinces, now--they would make a real picture. Fuji and those other mountains."

Another of his men set about diverting him with a description of the mountains and shores of the West Country. "In the nearer provinces the Akashi coast in Harima is the most beautiful. There is nothing especially grand about it, but the view out over the sea has a quiet all its own. The house of the former governor--he took his vows not long ago, and he worries a great deal about his only daughter--the house is rather splendid. He is the son or grandson of a minister and should have made his mark in the world, but he is an odd sort of man who does not get along well with people. He resigned his guards commission and asked for the Harima post. But unfortunately the people of the province do not seem to have taken him quite seriously. Not wanting to go back to the city a failure, he became a monk. You may ask why he should have chosen then to live by the sea and not in a mountain temple. The provinces are full of quiet retreats, but the mountains are really too remote, and the isolation would have been difficult for his wife and young daughter. He seems to have concluded that life by the sea might help him to forget his frustrations.

"I was in the province not long ago and I looked in on him. He may not have done well in the city, but he could hardly have done better in Akashi. The grounds and the buildings are really very splendid. He was, after all, the governor, and he did what he could to make sure that his last years would be comfortable. He does not neglect his prayers, and they would seem to have given him a certain mellowness."

"And the daughter?" asked Genji.

"pretty and pleasant enough. Each successive governor has asked for her hand but the old man has turned them all away. He may have ended up an insignificant provincial governor himself, he says, but he has other plans for her. He is always giving her list instructions. If he dies with his grand ambitions unrealized she is to leap into the sea."

Genji smiled.

"A cloistered maiden, reserved for the king of the sea," laughed one of his men. "A very extravagant ambition."

The man who had told the story was the son of the present governor of Harima. He had this year been raised to the Fifth Rank for his services in the imperial secretariat.

"I know why you lurk around the premises," said another. "You're a lady's man, and you want to spoil the old governor's plans."

And another: "You haven't convinced me. She's a plain country girl, no more. She's lived in the country most of her life with an old father who knows nothing of the times and the fashions."

"The mother is the one. She has used her connections in the city to find girls and women from the best families and bring them to Akashi. It makes your head spin to watch her."

"If the wrong sort of governor were to take over,\* the old man would have his worries."

Genji was amused. "Ambition wide and deep as the sea. But alas, we would not see her for the seaweed."

Knowing his fondness for oddities, his men had hoped that the story would interest him.

"It is rather late, sir, and seeing as you have not had another attack, suppose we start for home."

But the sage objected. "He has been possessed by a hostile power. We must continue our services quietly through the night."

Genji's men were persuaded, and for Genji it was a novel and amusing excursion.

"We will start back at daybreak."

The evening was long. He took advantage of a dense haze to have a look at the house behind the wattled fence. Sending back everyone except Koremitsu, he took up a position at the fence. In the west room sat a nun who had a holy image before her. The blinds were slightly raised and she seemed to be offering flowers. She was leaning against a pillar and had a text spread out on an armrest. The effort to read seemed to take all her strength. Perhaps in her forties, she had a fair, delicate skin and a pleasantly full face, though the effects of illness were apparent. The features suggested breeding and cultivation. Cut cleanly at the shoulders, her hair seemed to him far more pleasing than if it had been permitted to trail the usual length. Beside her were two attractive women, and little girls scampered in and out. Much the prettiest was a girl of perhaps ten in a soft white singlet and a russet robe. She would one day be a real beauty. Rich hair spread over her shoulders like a fan. Her face was flushed from weeping.

"What is it?" The nun looked up. "Another fight?" He thought he saw a resemblance. Perhaps they were mother and daughter.

"Inuki let my baby sparrows loose." The child was very angry. "I had them in a basket."

"That stupid child," said a rather handsome woman with rich hair who seemed to be called Sho~nagon and was apparently the girl's nurse.

"She always manages to do the wrong thing, and we are forever scolding her. Where will they have flown off to? They were getting to be such sweet little things too! How awful if the crows find them." She went out.

"What a silly child you are, really too silly," said the nun. "I can't be sure I will last out the day, and here you are worrying about sparrows. I've told you so many times that it's a sin to put birds in a cage. Come here." The child knelt down beside her. She was charming, with rich, unplucked



eyebrows and hair pushed childishly back from the forehead. How he would like to see her in a few years! And a sudden realization brought him close to tears: the resemblance to Fujitsubo, for whom he so yearned, was astonishing.

The nun stroked the girl's hair. "You will not comb it and still it's so pretty. I worry about you, you do seem so very young. Others are much more grown up at your age. Your poor dead mother: she was only ten when her father died, and she understood everything. What will become of you when I am gone?"

She was weeping, and a vague sadness had come over Genji too. The girl gazed attentively at her and then looked down. The hair that fell over her forehead was thick and lustrous.

"Are these tender grasses to grow without the dew Which holds itself back from the heavens that would receive it?"

There were tears in the nun's voice, and the other woman seemed also to be speaking through tears:

"It cannot be that the dew will vanish away Ere summer comes to these early grasses of spring."

The bishop came in. "What is this? Your blinds up? And today of all days you are out at the veranda? I have just been told that General Genji is up at the hermitage being treated for malaria. He came in disguise and I was not told in time to pay a call."

"And what a sight we are. You don't suppose he saw us?" She lowered the blinds.

"The shining one of whom the whole world talks. Wouldn't you like to see him? Enough to make a saint throw off the last traces of the vulgar world, they say, and feel as if new years had been added to his life. I will get off a note."

He hurried away, and Genji too withdrew. What a discovery! It was for such unforeseen rewards that his amorous followers were so constantly on the prowl. Such a rare outing for him, and it had brought such a find! She was a perfectly beautiful child. Who might she be? He was beginning to make plans: the child must stand in the place of the one whom she so resembled.

As he lay down to sleep, an acolyte came asking for Koremitsu. The cell was a narrow one and Genji could hear everything that was said. "Though somewhat startled to learn that your lord had passed us by, we should have come immediately. The fact is that his secrecy rather upset us. We might, you know, have been able to offer shabby accommodations."

Genji sent back that he had been suffering from malaria since about the middle of the month and had been persuaded to seek the services of the sage, of whom he had only recently heard. "Such is his reputation that I hated to risk marring it by failing to recover. That is the reason for my secrecy. We shall come down immediately."

The bishop himself appeared. He was a man of the cloth, to be sure, but an unusual one, of great courtliness and considerable fame. Genji was ashamed of his own rough disguise.

The bishop spoke of his secluded life in the hills. Again and again he urged Genji to honor his house. "It is a log hut, no better than this, but you may find the stream cool and pleasant."

Genji went with him, though somewhat embarrassed at the extravagant terms in which he had been described to women who had not seen him. He wanted to know more about the little girl. The flowers and grasses in the bishop's garden, though of the familiar varieties, had a charm all their own. The night being dark, flares had been set out along the brook, and there re lanterns at the eaves. A delicate fragrance drifted through the air, mixing with the stronger incense from the altar and the very special scent which had been burnt into Genji's robes. The ladies within must have found the blend unsettling.

The bishop talked of this ephemeral world and of the world to come. His own burden of sin was heavy, thought Genji, that he had been lured into an illicit and profitless affair. He would regret it all his life and suffer even more terribly in the life to come. What joy to withdraw to such a place as this! But with the thought came thoughts of the young face he had seen earlier in the evening.

"Do you have someone with you here? I had a dream that suddenly begins to make sense."

"How quick you are with your dreams, sir! I fear my answer will disappoint you. It has been a very long time since the Lord Inspector died. I don't suppose you will even have heard of him. He was my brother-in-law. His widow turned her back on the world and recently she has been ill, and since I do not go down to the city she has come to stay with me here. It was her thought that I might be able to help her."

"I have heard that your sister had a daughter. I ask from no more than idle curiosity, you must believe me."

"There was an only daughter. She too has been dead these ten years and more. He took very great pains with her education and hoped to send her to court; but he died before that ambition could be realized, and the nun, my sister, was left to look after her. I do not know through whose offices it was that prince Hyo~bu began visiting the daughter in secret. His wife is from a very proud family, you know, sir, and there were unpleasant incidents, which finally drove the poor thing into a fatal decline. I saw before my own eyes how worry can destroy a person." So the child he had seen would be the daughter of prince Hyo~bu and the unfortunate lady; and it was Fujitsubo, the prince's sister, whom she so resembled. He wanted more than ever to meet her. She was an elegant child, and she did not seem at all spoiled. What a delight if he could take her into his house and make her his ideal!

"A very sad story." He wished to be completely sure. "Did she leave no one behind?"

"She had a child just before she died, a girl, a great source of worry for my poor sister in her declining years."

There could be no further doubt. "What I am about to say will, I fear, startle you--but might I have charge of the child? I have rather good reasons, for all the suddenness of my proposal. If you are telling yourself that she is too young--well, sir, you are doing me an injustice. Other men may have improper motives, but I do not."

"Your words quite fill me with delight. But she is indeed young, so very young that we could not possibly think even in jest of asking you to take responsibility for her. Only the man who is presently to be her husband can take that responsibility. In a matter of such import I am not competent to give an answer. I must discuss the matter with my sister." He was suddenly remote and chilly.

Genji had spoken with youthful impulsiveness and could not think what to do next.

"It is my practice to conduct services in the chapel of Lord Amita~bha." The bishop got up to leave. "I have not yet said vespers. I shall come again when they are over."

Genji was not feeling well. A shower passed on a chilly mountain wind, and the sound of the waterfall was higher. Intermittently came a rather sleepy voice, solemn and somehow ominous, reading a sacred text. The most insensitive of men would have been aroused by the scene. Genji was unable to sleep. The vespers were very long and it was growing late. There was evidence that the women in the inner rooms were still up. They were being quiet, but he heard a rosary brush against an armrest and, to give him a sense of elegant companionship, a faint rustling of silk. Screens lined the inside wall, very near at hand. He pushed one of the center panels some inches aside and rustled his fan. Though they must have thought it odd, the women could not ignore it. One of them came forward, then retreated a step or two.

"This is very strange indeed. Is there some mistake?"

"The guiding hand of the Blessed One makes no mistakes on the darkest nights." His was an aristocratic young voice.

"And in what direction does it lead?" the woman replied hesitantly. "This is most confusing."

"Very sudden and confusing, I am sure."

"Since first the wanderer glimpsed the fresh young grasses His sleeves have known no respite from the dew."

"Might I ask you to pass my words on to your lady?"

"There is no one in this house to whom such a message can possibly seem appropriate."

"I have my reasons. You must believe me."

The woman withdrew to the rear of the house.

The nun was of course rather startled. "How very forward of him. He must think the child older than she is. And he must have heard our poems about the grasses. What can they have meant to him?" She hesitated for rather a long time. persuaded that too long a delay would be rude, she finally sent back:

"The dew of a night of travel--do not compare it With the dew that soaks the sleeves of the mountain dweller.

It is this last that refuses to dry."

"I am not used to communicating through messengers. I wish to speak to you directly and in all seriousness."

Again the old nun hesitated. "There has been a misunderstanding, surely. I can hardly be expected to converse with such a fine young gentleman."

But the women insisted that it would be rude and unfeeling not to reply.

"I suppose you are right. Young gentlemen are easily upset. I am humbled by such earnestness." And she came forward.

"You will think me headstrong and frivolous for having addressed you without warning, but the Blessed One knows that my intent is not frivolous at all." He found the nun's quiet dignity somewhat daunting. "We must have made a compact in another life, that we should be in such unexpected conversation."

"I have heard the sad story, and wonder if I might offer myself as a substitute for your late daughter. I was very young when I lost the one who was dearest to me, and all through the years since I have had strange feelings of aimlessness and futility. We share the same fate, and I wonder if I might not ask that we be companions in it. The opportunity is not likely to come again. I have spoken, I am sure you see, quite without reserve."

"What you say would delight me did I not fear a mistake. It is true that there is someone here who is under my inadequate protection; but she is very young, and you could not possibly be asked to accept her deficiencies. I must decline your very kind proposal."

"I repeat that I have heard the whole story. Your admirable reticence does not permit you to understand that my feelings are of no ordinary sort."

But to her they seemed, though she did not say so, quite outrageous. The bishop came out.

"Very well, then. I have made a beginning, and it has given me strength." And Genji pushed the screen back in place.

In the Lotus Hall, voices raised in an act of contrition mingled solemnly with the roar of the waterfall and the wind that came down from the mountain.

This was Genji's poem, addressed to the bishop:

"A wind strays down from the hills to end my dream, And tears well forth at these voices upon the waters."

And this the bishops reply:

"These waters wet your sleeves. Our own are dry, And tranquil our hearts, washed clean by mountain waters.

"Such is the effect of familiarity with these scenes."

There were heavy mists in the dawn sky, and bird songs came from Genji knew not where. Flowering trees and grasses which he could not identify spread like a tapestry before him. The deer that now paused to feed by the house and now wandered on were for him a strange and wonderful sight. He quite forgot his illness. Though it was not easy for the sage to leave his retreat, he made his way down for final services. His husky voice, emerging uncertainly from a toothless mouth, had behind it long years of discipline, and the mystic incantations suggested deep and awesome powers.

An escort arrived from the city, delighted to see Genji so improved, and a message was delivered from his father. The bishop had a breakfast of unfamiliar fruits and berries brought from far down in the valley.

"I have vowed to stay in these mountains until the end of the year, and cannot see you home." He pressed wine upon Genji. "And so a holy vow has the perverse effect of inspiring regrets."

"I hate to leave your mountains and streams, but my father seems worried and I must obey his summons. I shall come again before the cherry blossoms have fallen.

"I shall say to my city friends: 'Make haste to see Those mountain blossoms. The winds may see them first.'"

His manner and voice were beautiful beyond description.

The bishop replied:

"In thirty hundreds of years it blooms but once.

My eyes have seen it, and spurn these mountain cherries." \*

"A very great rarity indeed," Genji said, smiling, "a blossom with so long and short a span."

The sage offered a verse of thanks as Genji filled his cup:

"My mountain door of pine has opened briefly To see a radiant flower not seen before."

There were tears in his eyes. His farewell present was a sacred mace + which had special protective powers. The bishop too gave farewell presents: a rosary of carved ebony# which Prince Sho~toku had obtained in Korea, still in the original Chinese box, wrapped in a netting and attached to a branch of cinquefoil pine; several medicine bottles of indigo decorated with sprays of cherry and wisteria and the like; and other gifts as well, all of them appropriate to the mountain setting. Genji's escort had brought gifts for the priests who had helped with the services, the sage himself and the rest, and for all the mountain rustics too. And so Genji started out.

The bishop went to the inner apartments to tell his sister of Genji's proposal.

"It is very premature. If in four or five years he has not changed his mind we can perhaps give it some thought."

The bishop agreed, and passed her words on without comment. Much disappointed, Genji sent in a poem through an acolyte: "Having come upon an evening blossom, The mist is loath to go with the morning sun."

She sent back:

"Can we believe the mist to be so reluctant?

We shall watch the morning sky for signs of truth."

It was in a casual, cursive style, but the hand was a distinguished one.

He was about to get into his carriage when a large party arrived from the house of his father-in-law, protesting the skill with which he had eluded them. Several of his brothers-in-law, including the oldest, To~ no Chu~jo~, were among them.

"You know very well that this is the sort of expedition we like best. You could at least have told us. Well, here we are, and we shall stay and enjoy the cherries you have discovered."

They took seats on the moss below the rocks and wine was brought out. It was a pleasant spot,

beside cascading waters. To~ no Chu~jo~ took out a flute, and one of his brothers, marking time with a fan, sang "To the West of the Toyora Temple." \* They were handsome young men, all of them, but it was the ailing Genji whom everyone was looking at, so handsome a figure as he leaned against a rock that he brought a shudder of apprehension. Always in such a company there is an adept at the flageolet, and a fancier of the sho~ pipes+ as well.

The bishop brought out a seven-stringed Chinese koto and pressed Genji to play it. "Just one tune, to give our mountain birds a pleasant surprise."

Genji protested that he was altogether too unwell, but he played a passable tune all the same. And so they set forth. The nameless priests and acolytes shed tears of regret, and the aged nuns within, who had never before seen such a fine gentleman, asked whether he might not be a visitor from another world.

"How can it be," said the bishop, brushing away a tear, "that such a one has been born into the confusion and corruption in which we live?" The little girl too thought him very grand. "Even handsomer than Father," she said.

"So why don't you be his little girl?"

She nodded, accepting the offer; and her favorite doll, the one with the finest wardrobe, and the handsomest gentleman in her pictures too were thereupon named "Genji."

Back in the city, Genji first reported to his father upon his excursion. The emperor had never before seen him in such coarse dress. He asked about the qualifications of the sage, and Genji replied in great detail.

"I must see that he is promoted. Such a remarkable record and I had not even heard of him."

Genji's father-in-law, the Minister of the Left, chanced to be in attendance. "I thought of going for you, but you did after all go off in secret. Suppose you have a few days' rest at Sanjo~. I will go with you, immediately."

Genji was not enthusiastic, but he left with his father-in-law all the same. The minister had his own carriage brought up and insisted that Genji get in first. This solicitude rather embarrassed him.

At the minister's Sanjo~ mansion everything was in readiness. It had been polished and refitted until it was a jeweled pavilion, perfect to the last detail. As always, Genji's wife secluded herself in her private apartments, and it was only at her father's urging that she came forth; and so Genji had her before him, immobile, like a princess in an illustration for a romance. It would have been a great pleasure, he was sure, to have her comment even tartly upon his account of the mountain journey. She seemed the stiffest, remotest person in the world. How odd that the aloofness seemed only to grow as time went by.

"It would be nice, I sometimes think, if you could be a little more wifely. I have been very ill, and I am hurt, but not really surprised, that you have not inquired after my health."

"Like the pain, perhaps, of awaiting a visitor who does not come?" \* She cast a sidelong glance at him as she spoke, and her cold beauty was very intimidating indeed.

"You so rarely speak to me, and when you do you say such unpleasant things. 'A visitor who does not come'--that is hardly an appropriate way to describe a husband, and indeed it is hardly civil. I try this approach and I try that, hoping to break through, but you seem intent on defending all the approaches. Well, one of these years, perhaps, if I live long enough." He withdrew to the bedchamber. She did not follow. Though there were things he would have liked to say, he lay down with a sigh. He closed his eyes, but there was too much on his mind to permit sleep.

He thought of the little girl and how he would like to see her grown into a woman. Her grandmother was of course right when she said that the girl was still too young for him. He must not seem insistent. And yet--was there not some way to bring her quietly to Nijo~ and have her beside him, a comfort and a companion? prince Hyo~bu was a dashing and stylish man, but no one could have called him remarkably handsome. Why did the girl so take after her aunt? perhaps because aunt and father were children of the same empress. These thoughts seemed to bring the girl closer, and he longed to have her for his own.

The next day he wrote to the nun. He would also seem to have communicated his thoughts in a casual way to the bishop. To the nun he said:

"I fear that, taken somewhat aback by your sternness, I did not express myself very well. I find strength in the hope that something of the resolve demanded of me to write this letter will have conveyed itself to you."

With it was a tightly folded note for the girl:

"The mountain blossoms are here beside me still.

All of myself I left behind with them.

"I am fearful of what the night winds might have done." \*

The writing, of course, and even the informal elegance of the folding, quite dazzled the superannuated woman who received the letter. Somewhat overpowering, thought the grandmother.

She finally sent back: "I did not take your farewell remarks seriously; and now so soon to have a letter from you--I scarcely know how to reply. She cannot even write 'Naniwa'+ properly, and how are we to expect that she give you a proper answer?"



"Brief as the time till the autumn tempests come To scatter the flowers--so brief your thoughts of her.

"I am deeply troubled."

The bishop's answer was in the same vein. Two or three days later Genji sent Koremitsu off to the northern hills.

"There is her nurse, the woman called Sho~nagon. Have a good talk with her."

How very farsighted, thought Koremitsu, smiling at the thought of the girl they had seen that evening.

The bishop said that he was much honored to be in correspondence with Genji. Koremitsu was received by Sho~nagon, and described Genji's apparent state of mind in great detail. He was a persuasive young man and he made a convincing case, but to the nun and the others this suit for the hand of a mere child continued to seem merely capricious. Genji's letter was warm and earnest. There was a note too for the girl:

"Let me see your first exercises at the brush.

"No Shallow Spring, this heart of mine, believe me.\*

And why must the mountain spring then seem so distant?"

This was the nun's reply:

"You drink at the mountain stream, your thoughts turn elsewhere. Do you hope to see the image you thus disturb?"

Koremitsu's report was no more encouraging. Sho~nagon had said that they would be returning to the city when the nun was a little stronger and would answer him then.

Fujitsubo was ill and had gone home to her family. Genji managed a sympathetic thought or two for his lonely father, but his thoughts were chiefly on the possibility of seeing Fujitsubo. He quite halted his visits to other ladies. All through the day, at home and at court, he sat gazing off into space, and in the evening he would press Omyo~bu to be his intermediary. How she did it I do not know; but she contrived a meeting. It is sad to have to say that his earlier attentions, so unwelcome, no longer seemed real, and the mere thought that they had been successful was for Fujitsubo a torment.+ Determined that there would not be another meeting, she was shocked to find him in her presence again. She did not seek to hide her distress, and her efforts to turn him away delighted him even as they put him to shame. There was no one else quite like her. In that fact was his undoing: he would be less a prey to longing if he could find in her even a trace of the ordinary. And the tumult of thoughts and feelings that now assailed him--he would have liked to

consign it to the Mountain of Obscurity.# It might have been better, he sighed, so short was the night, if he had not come at all.

"So few and scattered the nights, so few the dreams. Would that the dream tonight might take me with it." He was in tears, and she did, after all, have to feel sorry for him. "Were I to disappear in the last of dreams Would yet my name live on in infamy?"

She had every right to be unhappy, and he was sad for her. Omyo~bu gathered his clothes and brought them out to him.

Back at Nijo~ he spent a tearful day in bed. He had word from Omyo~bu that her lady had not read his letter. So it always was, and yet he was hurt. He remained in distraught seclusion for several days. The thought that his father might be wondering about his absence filled him with terror. Lamenting the burden of sin that seemed to be hers, Fujitsubo was more and more unwell, and could not bestir herself, despite repeated messages summoning her back to court. She was not at all her usual self --and what was to become of her? She took to her bed as the weather turned warmer. Three months had now passed and her condition was clear; and the burden of sin now seemed to have made it necessary that she submit to curious and reproving stares. Her women thought her behavior very curious indeed. Why had she let so much time pass without informing the emperor? There was of course a crucial matter of which she spoke to no one. Ben, the daughter of her old nurse, and Omyo~bu, both of whom were very close to her and attended her in the bath, had ample opportunity to observe her condition. Omyo~bu was aghast. Her lady had been trapped by the harshest of fates. The emperor would seem to have been informed that a malign spirit had possession of her, and to have believed the story, as did the court in general. He sent a constant stream of messengers, which terrified her and allowed no pause in her sufferings.

Genji had a strange, rather awful dream. He consulted a soothsayer, who said that it portended events so extraordinary as to be almost unthinkable.

"It contains bad omens as well. You must be careful."

"It was not my own dream but a friend's. We will see whether it comes true, and in the meantime you must keep it to yourself."

What could it mean? He heard of Fujitsubo's condition, thought of their night together, and wondered whether the two might be related. He exhausted his stock of pleas for another meeting. Horrified that matters were so out of hand, Omyo~bu could do nothing for him. He had on rare occasions had a brief note, no more than a line or two; but now even these messages ceased coming.

Fujitsubo returned to court in the Seventh Month. The emperor's affection for her had only grown in her absence. Her condition was now apparent to everyone. A slight emaciation made her beauty seem if anything nearer perfection, and the emperor kept her always at his side. The skies as autumn approached called more insistently for music. Keeping Genji too beside him, the emperor

had him try his hand at this and that instrument. Genji struggled to control himself, but now and then a sign of his scarcely bearable feelings did show through, to remind the lady of what she wanted more than anything to forget.

Somewhat improved, the nun had returned to the city. Genji had someone make inquiry about her residence and wrote from time to time. It was natural that her replies should show no lessening of her opposition, but it did not worry Genji as it once had. He had more considerable worries. His gloom was deeper as autumn came to a close. One beautiful moonlit night he collected himself for a visit to a place he had been visiting in secret. A cold, wintry shower passed. The address was in Rokujo~, near the eastern limits of the city, and since he had set out from the palace the way seemed a long one. He passed a badly neglected house, the garden dark with ancient trees.

"The inspector's house," said Koremitsu, who was always with him. "I called there with a message not long ago. The old lady has declined so shockingly that they can't think what to do for her."

"You should have told me. I should have looked in on her. Ask, please, if she will see me."

Koremitsu sent a man in with the message.

The women had not been expecting a caller, least of all such a grand one. For some days the old lady had seemed beyond helping, and they feared that she would be unable to receive him. But they could hardly turn such a gentleman away--and so a cushion was put out for him in the south room.

"My lady says that she fears you will find it cluttered and dirty, but she is determined at least to thank you for coming. You must find the darkness and gloom unlike anything you have known."

And indeed he could not have denied that he was used to something rather different.

"You have been constantly on my mind, but your reserve has it difficult for me to call. I am sorry that I did not know sooner of illness."

"I have been ill for a very long time, but in this last extremity--it was good of him to come." He caught the sad, faltering tones as she gave the message to one of her women. "I am sorry that I cannot receive him properly. As for the matter he has raised, I hope that he will still count the child among those important to him when she is no longer a child. The thought of leaving her uncared for must, I fear, create obstacles along the road I yearn to travel. But tell him, please, how good it was of him. I wish the child were old enough to thank him too."

"Can you believe," he sent back, "that I would put myself in this embarrassing position if I were less than serious? There must be a bond between us, that I should have been so drawn to her since I first heard of her. It all seems so strange. The beginnings of it must have been in a different world. I will feel that I have come in vain if I cannot hear the sound of her young voice."

"She is asleep. She did not of course know that you were coming." But just then someone came scampering into the room. "Grand- mother, they say the gentleman we saw at the temple is here. Why don't you go out and talk to him?"

The women tried to silence her.

"But why? She said the very sight of him made her feel better. I heard Though much amused, Genji pretended not to hear. After proper statements of sympathy he made his departure. Yes, she did seem little more than an infant. He would be her teacher.

The next day he sent a letter inquiring after the old lady, and with it a tightly folded note for the girl:

"Seeking to follow the call of the nestling crane The open boat is lost among the reeds.

"And comes again and again to you?" \*

He wrote it in a childish hand, which delighted the women. The child was to model her own hand upon it, no detail changed, they said. Sho~nagon sent a very sad answer: "It seems doubtful that my lady, after whom you were so kind as to inquire, will last the day. We are on the point of sending her off to the mountains once more. I know that she will thank you from another world."

In the autumn evening, his thoughts on his unattainable love, he longed more than ever, unnatural though the wish may have seemed, for the company of the little girl who sprang from the same roots. The thought of the evening when the old nun had described herself as dew holding back from the heavens made him even more impatient--and at the same time he feared that if he were to bring the girl to Nijo~ he would be disappointed in her.

"I long to have it, to bring it in from the moor, The lavender\* that shares its roots with another."

In the Tenth Month the emperor was to visit the Suzaku palace.+ >From all the great families and the middle and upper courtly ranks the most accomplished musicians and dancers were selected to go with him, and grandees and princes of the blood were busy at the practice that best suited their talents. Caught up in the excitement, Genji was somewhat remiss in inquiring after the nun.

When, finally, he sent off a messenger to the northern hills, a sad reply came from the bishop: "We lost her toward the end of last month. It is the way of the world, I know, and yet I am sad."

If the news shocked even him into a new awareness of evanescence, thought Genji, how must it be for the little girl who had so occupied the nun's thoughts? Young though she was, she must feel utterly lost. He remembered, though dimly how it had been when his mother died, and he sent off an earnest letter of sympathy. Sho~nagon's answer seemed rather warmer.<N 18> He went calling on an evening when he had nothing else to occupy him, some days after he learned that the girl had come out of mourning and returned to the city. The house was badly kept and almost deserted. The

poor child must be terrified, he thought. He was shown to the same room as before. Sobbing, Sho~nagon told him of the old lady's last days. Genji too was in tears.

"My young lady's father would seem to have indicated a willingness to take her in, but she is at such an uncomfortable age, not quite a child and still without the discernment of an adult; and the thought of having her in the custody of the lady who was so cruel to her mother is too awful. Her sisters will persecute her dreadfully, I know. The fear of it never left my lady's mind, and we have had too much evidence that the fear was not groundless. We have been grateful for your expressions of interest, though we have hesitated to take them seriously. I must emphasize that my young lady is not at all what you must think her to be. I fear that we have done badly by her, and that our methods have left her childish even for her years."

"Must you continue to be so reticent and apologetic? I have made my own feelings clear, over and over again. It is precisely the childlike quality that delights me most and makes me think I must have her for my own. You may think me complacent and self-satisfied for saying so, but I feel sure that we were joined in a former life. Let me speak to her, please. "Rushes hide the sea grass at Wakanooura.

Must the waves that seek it out turn back to sea?\*

"That would be too much to ask of them."

"The grass at Wakanoura were rash indeed To follow waves that go it knows not whither.

"It would be far, far too much to ask."

The easy skill with which she turned her poem made it possible for him to forgive its less than encouraging significance. "After so many years," he whispered, "the gate still holds me back." \*

The girl lay weeping for her grandmother. Her playmates came to tell her that a gentleman in court dress was with Sho~nagon. perhaps it would be her father?

She came running in. "Where is the gentleman, Sho~nagon? Is Father here?"

What a sweet voice she had!

"I'm not your father, but I'm someone just as important. Come here." She saw that it was the other gentleman, and child though she was, she flushed at having spoken out of turn. "Let's go." She tugged at Sho~nagon's sleeve. "Let's go. I'm sleepy."

"Do you have to keep hiding yourself from me? Come here. You can sleep on my knee."

"She is really very young, sir." But Sho~nagon urged the child forward, and she knelt obediently just inside the blinds.

He ran his hand over a soft, rumpled robe, and, a delight to the touch, hair full and rich to its farthest ends. He took her hand. She pulled away --for he was, after all, a stranger.

"I said I'm sleepy." She went back to Sho~nagon.

He slipped in after her. "I am the one you must look to now. You must not be shy with me."

"Please, sir. You forget yourself. You forget yourself completely. She is simply not old enough to understand what you have in mind." "It is you who do not understand. I see how young she is, and I have nothing of the sort in mind. I must again ask you to be witness to the depth and purity of my feelings."

It was a stormy night. Sleet was pounding against the roof. "How can she bear to live in such a lonely place? It must be awful for her." Tears came to his eyes. He could not leave her. "I will be your watchman. You need one on a night like this. Come close to me, all of you.

Quite as if he belonged there, he slipped into the girl's bedroom. The women were astounded, Sho~nagon more than the rest. He must be mad! But she was in no position to protest. Genji pulled a singlet over the girl, who was trembling like a leaf. Yes, he had to admit that his behavior must seem odd; but, trying very hard not to frighten her, he talked of things he thought would interest her.

"You must come to my house. I have all sorts of pictures, and there are dolls for you to play with."

She was less frightened than at first, but she still could not sleep. The storm blew all through the night, and Sho~nagon quite refused to budge from their side. They would surely have perished of fright, whispered the women, if they had not had him with them. What a pity their lady was not a little older!

It was still dark when the wind began to subside and he made his departure, and all the appearances were as of an amorous expedition. "What I have seen makes me very sad and convinces me that she must not be out of my sight. She must come and live with me and share my lonely days. This place is quite impossible. You must be in constant tenor." "Her father has said that he will come for her. I believe it is to be after the memorial services."

"Yes, we must think of him. But they have lived apart, and he must be as much of a stranger as I am. I really do believe that in this very short time my feelings for her are stronger than his." He patted the girl on the head and looked back smiling as he left.

There was a heavy mist and the ground was white. Had he been on his way from a visit to a woman, he would have found the scene very affecting; but as it was he was vaguely depressed. Passing the house of a woman he had been seeing in secret, he had someone knock on the gate. There was no answer, and so he had someone else from his retinue, a man of very good voice,

chant this poem twice in tones that could not fail to attract attention:

"Lost though I seem to be in the mists of dawn, I see your gate, and cannot pass it by."

She sent out an ordinary maid who seemed, however, to be a woman of some sensibility:

"So difficult to pass? Then do come in.

No obstacle at all, this gate of grass."

Something more was needed to end the night, but dawn was approaching. Back at Nijo~, he lay smiling at the memory of the girl. The sun was high when he arose and set about composing a letter. A rather special sort of poem seemed called for, but he laid his brush aside and deliberated for a time, and presently sent some pictures.

Looking in on his daughter that same day, prince Hyo~bu found the house vaster and more cavernous than he had remembered it, and the decay astonishingly advanced since the grandmother's death.

"How can you bear it for even a moment? You must come and live with me. I have plenty of room. And Nurse here can have a room of her own. There are other little girls, and I am sure you will get on beautifully together." Genji's perfume had been transferred to the child. "What a beautiful smell. But see how rumpled and ragged you are. I did not like the idea of having you with an ailing lady and wanted you to come and live with me. But you held back so, and I have to admit that the lady who is to be your mother has not been happy at the idea herself. It seems very sad that we should have waited for this to happen."

"Please, my lord. We may be lonely, but it will be better for us to remain as we are at least for a time. It will be better for us to wait until she is a little older and understands things better. She grieves for her grandmother and quite refuses to eat."

She was indeed thinner, but more graceful and elegant.

"Why must she go on grieving? Her grandmother is gone, and that is that. She still has me." It was growing dark. The girl wept to see him go, and he too was in tears. "You mustn't be sad. Please. You mustn't be sad. I will send for you tomorrow at the very latest."

She was inconsolable when he had gone, and beyond thinking about her own future. She was old enough to know what it meant, that the lady who had never left her was now gone. Her playmates no longer interested her. She somehow got through the daylight hours, but in the evening she gave herself up to tears, and Sho~nagon and the others wept at their inability to comfort her. How, they asked one another, could they possibly go on?

Genji sent Koremitsu to make excuses. He wanted very much to call, but he had received an

timed summons from the palace.

"Has he quite forgotten his manners?" said Sho~nagon. "I know very well that this is not as serious an affair for him as for us, but a man is expected to call regularly at the beginning of any affair. Her father, if he hears of it, will think that we have managed very badly indeed. You are young, my lady, but you must not speak of it to anyone." But the girl was not listening as attentively as Sho~nagon would have wished.

Koremitsu was permitted a hint or two of their worries. "Perhaps when the time comes we will be able to tell ourselves that what must be must be, but at the moment the incompatibility overshadows everything. And your lord says and does such extraordinary things. Her father came today and did not improve matters by telling us that nothing must be permitted to happen. What could be worse than your lord's way of doing things?" She was keeping her objections to a minimum, however, for she did not want Koremitsu to think that anything of real importance had occurred.

Puzzled, Koremitsu returned to Nijo~ and reported upon what he had seen and heard. Genji was touched, though not moved to pay a visit. He was worried about rumors and the imputation of recklessness and frivolity that was certain to go with them. He must bring the girl to Nijo~.

He sent several notes, and in the evening dispatched Koremitsu, his most faithful and reliable messenger. Certain obstacles prevented Genji's calling in person, said Koremitsu, but they must not be taken to suggest a want of seriousness.

"Her royal father has said that he will come for her tomorrow. We are feeling rather pressed. It is sad, after all, to leave a familiar place, however shabby and weedy it may be. You must forgive us. We are not entirely ourselves."

She gave him short shrift. He could see that they were busy at needle- work and other preparations.

Genji was at his father-in-law's house in Sanjo~. His wife was as always slow to receive him. In his boredom and annoyance he took out a Japanese koto and pleasantly hummed "The Field in Hitachi." \* Then came Koremitsu's unsettling report. He must act. If he were to take her from her father's house, he would be called a lecher and a child thief. He must swear the women to secrecy and bring her to Nijo~ immediately.

"I will go early in the morning. Have my carriage left as it is, and order a guard, no more than a man or two."

Koremitsu went to see that these instructions were carried out. Genji knew that he was taking risks. People would say that his appetites were altogether too varied. If the girl were a little older he would be credited with having made a conquest, and that would be that. Though Prince Hyo~bu would be very upset indeed, Genji knew that he must not let the child go. It was still dark when he set out. His wife had no more than usual to say to him.



"I have just remembered some business at Nijo~ that absolutely has to be taken care of. I should not be long."

Her women did not even know that he had gone. He went to his own rooms and changed to informal court dress. Koremitsu alone was on horseback.

When they reached their destination one of his men pounded on the gate. Ignorant of what was afoot, the porter allowed Genji's carriage to be pulled inside. Koremitsu went to a corner door and coughed. Sho~nagon came out.

"My lord is here."

"And my lady is asleep. You pick strange hours for your visits."

Sho~nagon suspected that he was on his way home from an amorous adventure.

Genji had joined Koremitsu.

"There is something I must say to her before she goes to her father's." Sho~nagon smiled. "And no doubt she will have many interesting things to say in reply."

He pushed his way inside.

"please, sir. We were not expecting anyone. The old women are a dreadful sight."

"I will go wake her. The morning mist is too beautiful for sleep."

He went into her bedroom, where the women were too surprised to cry out. He took her in his arms and smoothed her hair. Her father had come for her, she thought, only half awake.

"Let's go. I have come from your father's." She was terrified when she saw that it was not after all her father. "You are not being nice. I have told you that you must think of me as your father." And he carried her out. A chorus of protests now came from Sho~nagon and the others.

"I have explained things quite well enough. I have told you how difficult it is for me to visit her and how I want to have her in a more comfortable and accessible spot; and your way of making things easier is to send her off to her father. One of you may come along, if you wish." "Please, sir." Sho~nagon was wringing her hands. "You could not have chosen a worse time. What are we to say when her father comes? If it is her fate to be your lady, then perhaps something can be done when the time comes. This is too sudden, and you put us in an extremely difficult position."

"You can come later if you wish."

His carriage had been brought up. The women were fluttering about helplessly and the child was sobbing. Seeing at last that there was nothing else to be done, Sho~nagon took up several of the robes they had been at work on the night before, changed to presentable clothes of her own, and got into the carriage.

It was still dark when they reached Nijo~, only a short distance away. Genji ordered the carriage brought up to the west wing and took the girl inside.

"It is like a nightmare," said Sho~nagon. "What am I to do?" "Whatever you like. I can have someone see you home if you wish." Weeping helplessly, poor Sho~nagon got out of the carriage. What would her lady's father think when he came for her? And what did they now have to look forward to? The saddest thing was to be left behind by one's protectors. But tears did not augur well for the new life. With an effort she pulled herself together.

Since no one was living in this west wing, there was no curtained bedchamber. Genji had Koremitsu put up screens and curtains, sent some- one else to the east wing for bedding, and lay down. Though trembling violently, the girl managed to keep from sobbing aloud.

"I always sleep with Sho~nagon," she said softly in childish accents. "Imagine a big girl like you still sleeping with her nurse."

Weeping quietly, the girl lay down.

Sho~nagon sat up beside them, looking out over the garden as dawn came on. The buildings and grounds were magnificent, and the sand in the garden was like jewels. Not used to such affluence, she was glad there were no other women in this west wing. It was here that Genji received occasional callers. A few guards beyond the blinds were the only attendants. They were speculating on the identity of the lady he had brought with him. "Someone worth looking at, you can bet."

Water pitchers and breakfast were brought in. The sun was high when Genji arose. "You will need someone to take care of you. Suppose you send this evening for the ones you like best." He asked that children be sent from the east wing to play with her. "Pretty little girls, please." Four little girls came in, very pretty indeed.

The new girl, his Murasaki, still lay huddled under the singlet he had thrown over her.

"You are not to sulk, now, and make me unhappy. Would I have done all this for you if I were not a nice man? Young ladies should do as they are told." And so the lessons began.

She seemed even prettier here beside him than from afar. His manner warm and fatherly, he sought to amuse her with pictures and toys he had sent for from the east wing. Finally she came over to him. Her dark mourning robes were soft and unstarched, and when she smiled, innocently and unprotestingly, he had to smile back. She went out to look at the trees and pond after he had departed for the east wing. The flowers in the foreground, delicately touched by frost, were like a

picture. Streams of courtiers, of the medium ranks and new to her experience, passed back and forth. Yes, it was an interesting place. She looked at the pictures on screens and elsewhere and (so it is with a child) soon forgot her troubles.

Staying away from court for several days, Genji worked hard to make her feel at home. He wrote down all manner of poems for her to copy, and drew all manner of pictures, some of them very good. "I sigh, though I have not seen Musashi," \* he wrote on a bit of lavender paper. She took it up, and thought the hand marvelous. In a tiny hand he wrote beside it:

"Thick are the dewy grasses of Musashi, Near this grass to the grass I cannot have."

"Now you must write something."

"But I can't." She looked up at him, so completely without affectation that he had to smile.

"You can't write as well as you would like to, perhaps, but it would be wrong of you not to write at all. You must think of me as your teacher." It was strange that even her awkward, childish way of holding the brush should so delight him. Afraid she had made a mistake, she sought to conceal what she had written. He took it from her.

"I do not know what it is that makes you sigh.

And whatever grass can it be I am so near to?"

The hand was very immature indeed, and yet it had strength, and character. It was very much like her grandmother's. A touch of the modern and it would not be at all unacceptable. He ordered dollhouses and as the two of them played together he found himself for the first time neglecting his sorrows.

Prince Hyo~bu went for his daughter on schedule. The women were acutely embarrassed, for there was next to nothing they could say to him. Genji wished to keep the girl's presence at Nijo~ secret, and Sho~nagon had enjoined the strictest silence. They could only say that Sho~nagon had spirited the girl away, they did not know where.

He was aghast. "Her grandmother did not want me to have her, and so I suppose Sho~nagon took it upon herself, somewhat sneakily I must say, to hide her away rather than give her to me." In tears, he added: "Let me know if you hear anything."

Which request only intensified their confusion.

The prince inquired of the bishop in the northern hills and came away no better informed. By now he was beginning to feel some sense of loss (such a pretty child); and his wife had overcome her bitterness and, happy at the thought of a little girl to do with as she pleased, was similarly reg

Presently Murasaki had all her women with her. She was a bright, lively child, and the boys and girls who were to be her playmates felt quite at home with her. Sometimes on lonely nights when Genji was away she would weep for her grandmother. She thought little of her father. They had lived apart and she scarcely knew him. She was by now extremely fond of her new father. She would be the first to run out and greet him when he came home, and she would climb on his lap, and they would talk happily together, without the least constraint or embarrassment. He was delighted with her. A clever and watchful woman can create all manner of difficulties. A man must be always on his guard, and jealousy can have the most unwelcome consequences. Murasaki was the perfect companion, a toy for him to play with. He could not have been so free and uninhibited with a daughter of his own. There are restraints upon paternal intimacy. Yes, he had come upon a remarkable little treasure. \_\_\_\_\_