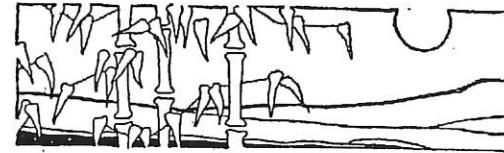


MISS SPRING-MORNING



A story of wonderful beauty and intense dramatic power, this romance of an American man and a Japanese woman (dear, delightful little Miss Spring-Morning!) is certain to win your deepest interest.

By ONOTO WATANNA

CHAPTER I

IT was a humid, sultry day in the Season of Little Plenty. In the house of Captain Taganouchi complete comfort was found on the upper floor of the house, an immense chamber, from which, by order of the master, all the walls had been removed, making of it an open pavilion.

Here the honored American guest of the family had spent the entire day, too indolent to venture down from his pleasant quarters. Here were hammocks, pillows, refreshments and the inevitable tobacco-*bon*. Papers and magazines were scattered in disorder about the apartment, to the constant distress of the waiting maids, who hovered curiously about the room's tenant throughout the entire afternoon.

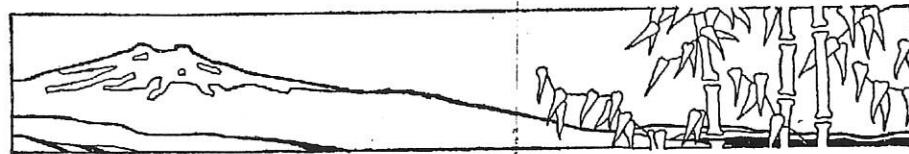
He was lying, stretched full length in a commodious hammock. For some time, however, neither pipe nor paper had occupied him. The former had gone out, and had been set down absently upon the immaculate floor, where its ash distributed itself. The newspaper, a highly colored illustrated American

sheet, lay in disorder everywhere about the room.

Seeking lazily in his mind for something to take its place, his eye had by chance stopped in its wandering and paused to stay intently fixed on the little house across the street.

It was a small, unassuming cottage, built precisely the same as the house on the adjoining lot. Indeed, both little houses seemed, curiously enough, to bear a relation to each other, and similar events seemed to be taking place in each.

In the house directly across the street a young girl and an old woman were, unaided by servants, taking down the screens and converting the floor into an open pavilion like his own. In the adjoining house, a number of children assisted each other in sliding the screens into their grooves. This done, they ran out onto the balcony, to peer into the house next door, calling to the young girl. She paused in her work, as if to go to them, but dropped her head meekly at something the old woman said to her. The latter went out on the balcony and spoke to the children. They fled in-



A Complete Book-Length* Novel

If this novel were published in book form you would pay about eight times the cost of this entire magazine for it. Is it any wonder that these novels of ours are attracting wide attention?

Author of "A Japanese Nightingale," "The Wooing of Wistaria,"
"The Old Jinrikisha," etc.

doors, affrighted by her angry face and acid tongue. Meanwhile, the young girl, on her knees, was listlessly arranging flowers, and the old woman brought *andons* into the room and hung lanterns over the balconies. The two worked in silence, and when the old woman finished her task she left the room, still without speaking to her young companion.

Once alone, the girl came out onto the little balcony; and slipping to her knees, she remained with her face upraised for a long time, like one in an attitude of prayer. Her pose interested Jamison Tyrrell to such an extent that he sat up and leaned over to watch her intently.

It was twilight now, but the very gray of the evening seemed to bring out clearer the rapt, lovely face of the girl. Her hands were clasped about her neck, her large, appealing eyes were suffused with tears. For some time she remained in this strange, unmoving position, un-

conscious of the one who watched her across the way. But she started into sudden, almost painful, life at the return of the old woman, who apparently scolded the girl for her indolence. Mechanically she went about the lighting of the lanterns. Soon the apartment was brilliantly illuminated, and from the darkened chamber of the man across the street seemed to show more clearly its pitiful attempt at adornment. The adjoining house was illuminated in the same way, and just before the darkness came there was a feeble beat of drum somewhere in the little house, and then something flew up gayly from the roofs of both of the houses. Tyrrell, in his interest, went out onto his own balcony. Two flags shook themselves in the breeze and flew bravely from the tops of the flagpoles.

HIS host came into the room and joined him on the balcony.
"Ah," said he, with pride, "I perceive

* The reader should remember that the pages of the BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE contain from three to four times as many words as the average book page. When this novel is published in book form, for example, it will fill about 225 pages.

you are enjoying our sunset. Is it not most glorious? Confess, have you truly ever seen as lovely a sight in an American sky?"

His friend turned abruptly.

"What is going on over there?" he asked, pointing with his glasses to the twin illuminated houses.

"My dear fellow," said the suave Japanese, "do you not yet know the proud symbol the poor people of our country show when one of their family goes to war?"

"No."

"Those flags mean that the families across the street are giving up one of their members to the war service. They are the humble homes of Japanese soldiers."

"I see. That explains it."

"Explains what?"

"I saw a young girl only a few minutes since, over there. She was in trouble—crying—and praying."

"So? Japanese women do not weep at such a time," remarked the Japanese somewhat stiffly.

"She seemed a child—not more than fifteen, I should say. Certainly not a woman."

"You must mean O-Haru-no. She is even younger than that—fourteen years. She ~~should~~ not weep to-night, but be very happy."

"Why?"

"To-night she marries Yamada Omi, the son of her late father's friend. They live in the adjoining house. He is one of my men, and goes with us to-night."

"The night of his wedding! Extraordinary!"

"Not at all. He is a good boy. The marriage has my personal sanction, in fact. His people besought me to attend it, but that's impossible on this busy night. Besides, I wish to spend my last hours with you, my very good friend."

"Tell me something about the young people over there. I'm extraordinarily interested in them."

"Well, there's little to tell. Theirs is a common story. Affianced by their parents in infancy, they have grown up together, almost as brother and sister. They are both very poor, though not illiterate. Indeed, their fathers served as *ashigaru* (sword-men) before the

Restoration, and were in the service of my father, the prince of this province. But, of course, conditions changed for them, as for us; the *kugé* (nobles), and the *ashigaru* were obliged to go into trade or do menial labor. Omi lost his father a couple of years ago, and within a month the father of O-Haru-no followed his old comrade. Since then, Omi has been obliged to support himself as well as his mother. It was his ambition to be a teacher, but, unfortunately, he was not able to pursue his studies, and was obliged to take up his father's employment of rice picker. Out of his poor earnings he has been able to save nothing. Now his country demands his service. Some one must take his place and care for his mother. That is the chief reason why he marries to-night."

"I should think a wife would be but another burden to him," said Tyrrell, mystified.

"Not at all," said the Japanese, softly smoothing his silky little mustache, his little bright eyes unusually hard and unreadable. "O-Haru-no is very young and healthy—moreover, charmingly attractive."

"You mean, she will work to support her mother-in-law?"

"Work—yes, if she can. As I have said, however, she is very pretty. She may be sent to—Tokyo—or perhaps Yokohama."

Captain Taganouchi frowned a trifle, as though he did not like the subject, but his friend pursued it eagerly.

"What for?"

"We'll—beauty finds a market there in the tea-house and the geisha house, and, lastly, in the Yoshiwara!"

"Horrible!"

"It is," admitted the Japanese curtly. He did not enjoy revealing even the slightest of the weaknesses of his country to a foreigner, even though his best friend.

"Can nothing be done to save that child from such a fate?"

"Nothing." There was the least ring of impatience in the usually polite tones of the Japanese. "There's nothing unusual about it, my dear fellow. Her people can spare her, for, though poor, they have some slight competence, which is more than the boy's family are pos-

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sessed of. Had not the war come, she would probably have married and been happy with Omi. I believe she shared his hopes and ambitions. But, as it is, something more is demanded of her now, as it is indeed of all loyal Japanese."

"But what about her family. Do they willingly sacrifice her to such a fate?"

"Her parents, I have already told you, are dead. She has a step-mother, who has five daughters of her own, all younger than O-Haru-no. There is no son in the family. Now they were unable, therefore, to give anything to the Emperor, neither father, son nor even grandsire. You can imagine with what pride they now put up the flag of honor upon their roof. By this marriage they obtain a son—a most honorable soldier, and him they give to the Emperor." And the Captain piously saluted at the name.

JAMISON TYRRELL turned his back upon the little lighted houses.

"Do you mean to tell me they are deliberately selling her to a life of shame, because of some ambiguous honor that may come to them by her marriage to a soldier?"

"You do not put it correctly," said his friend patiently. "In the first place, she has been betrothed to Omi since infancy. Her mother, who is dead, betrothed them with almost her last breath. She would have married Omi in any event. How much more proudly, then, when he goes to service of his Emperor!" And again Taganouchi solemnly saluted. Drawing himself up stiffly and proudly, he resumed: "And as for the Yoshiwara, that is not a certain thing. It is for her mother-in-law later to determine."

"Her mother-in-law! She has the power to sell—?"

"No, no," interrupted Taganouchi hastily. "You jump to conclusions. She has not the power to sell her daughter, but, of course, the latter is bound to respect her slightest wish or desire. The obedience of Japanese daughters-in-law is proverbial, as you know," he added with distinct pride.

"Then it amounts to this: That little

girl's fate is entirely in the hands of that wicked-looking, scolding old woman I've been watching across the way."

He made an expressive motion with his hands, and his young brows drew together gloomily.

"Well," coolly said the Japanese, "after all, O-Haru-no's lot is a common one for girls of her class. And consider, it is not esteemed so dreadful a disgrace in Japan as other countries. It is quite possible even for a girl to return from the Yoshiwara and be received, and even respected by her family and friends. That is some compensation is it not?"

"It's things like that," said Tyrrell bitterly, "that make me pessimistic about Japan, much as I admire the country. All that, you must know, Taggy, is fundamentally and most damnable immoral—or rather unmoral. And Japan cannot hope to hold a place among civilized nations until she does cease to barter and sell her women like cattle."

At this Taganouchi bridled, and a flush darkened his fine face, as he pulled nervously at his little silky mustache.

"You do not understand our viewpoint," he said. "Is it any more immoral for a parent to receive back into his house a daughter who has lived such a life of shame, than to turn her from the door as is done in your country?"

"That's beside the question," said the American quickly, "for the Japanese parent is a party to the girl's shame at the outset, while the American and European parent never is—nor in the end can be reconciled. As sure as I believe in the integrity of Japan, so I know, Taganouchi, that before she is recognized as really civilized by the Western nations, she must rid herself of her national immorality."

"Morality," said the Japanese sharply, "is not a matter of nations, my dear fellow, but of individuals."

"The individual," said the American earnestly, "follows the code set by society; you'll admit that?"

"Oh, I'll admit anything," said the Japanese warmly. "Suppose the condition is wrong. Well, we cannot in a day emancipate creatures who have been held in subservience practically for centuries. Our women to-day enjoy great-

er freedom and respect than any other Oriental women. Even now, the tragedy across the street is enacted only among the lower or very poor classes."

"But you are not poor or of a low class," persisted the American sternly, "and you are this boy's captain. Yet you say you personally gave your sanction to the marriage!"

"Certainly. To the marriage—to nothing else. I merely surmise, or rather guess the outcome of such a union. What is more, we don't have our soldiers—and, even as it is personally I prefer to see the older women provided for. You know in Japan, we always think first of the aged. But look, they are getting all ready for the ceremony. Have you ever seen a Japanese marriage?"

"No, and I don't want to see this one," said his friend, almost angrily.

HE STRODE indoors, and stood moodily in the darkened room. Taganouchi followed him, and placed a familiar, affectionate hand upon his arm.

"Inside of two hours we will go, my friend," he said. "It is impossible for me to tell you how much I appreciate your coming to see me off. You are the only one of my American college friends I truly—" He paused, and his eye met Tyrrell's, softly. "—love," he added gently.

It was the first time Taganouchi had ever permitted himself a show of emotion. At another time, it would at least have instantly aroused his friend's interest, if not his warm reciprocation. But now, the words seemed hardly to have a meaning for him.

"Look here, old man," he pleaded. "Let's do something for that little girl across the street."

Taganouchi drew himself up stiffly. His face had become mask-like and impassive again. His little black eyes had an almost forbidding expression.

"I can do nothing. We leave in—"

"Yes, I know, I know. But you are rich. Pay this boy a sufficient sum to send her and his mother in case they should come to want."

A dull red darkened the cheek-bones of the Japanese captain. His eyes

flashed with some inward zeal that stirred him.

"Whatever money I possess at this moment is at the service of my beloved Emperor. It is not mine. I am his soldier and his servant." Then, as his friend's face revealed his bitter disappointment, Taganouchi added quietly, "Besides, it would not be right for me to show favoritism. I have already sent a wedding gift. That is all expected of me at this time."

A depressing silence fell between them, broken by the silken voice of the Japanese.

"My friend, you permit yourself too much emotion for others. It is not good for you. Forget the little insignificant pair across the street. She, in all probability, is very happy. Her husband of an hour she will gladly resign to the service of her Emperor. There is not a woman in Japan who would not willingly do likewise. She may not need to go to Tokyo. Who knows? She may find employment here. Forget her, I beg of you."

"Well, I will—if I can," said the American reluctantly. "Her face made a curious impression upon me. I could not see it clearly in the half light, and probably at such a distance it appeared etherealized. Yet it seemed to me to be the pure and perfect face of a child tortured. However—"

His host ordered lights, and a meal served, and soon the pair were talking of the war subject, as they dined. The story of the child across the street might have been entirely put from the mind of the American, but for two reasons. The discordant strains of an entertaining *samisen* and its accompanying drum kept constantly twanging throughout the evening, and every time his eye wandered in the direction of the lighted houses, he seemed to see again the kneeling girl upon the balcony, her small, white face raised, as if, in agony, she prayed.

CHAPTER II

MECHANICALLY Spring-morning touched the marriage cup with her lips, then relinquished it to the slim brown hand of Omi. He

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looked at her as he held the cup, and there was in his gaze the eager appeal of the young and ardent bridegroom. But the girl maintained the apathetic attitude she had throughout the entire ceremony. There was no emotion in her face, which was very white. Indeed, she seemed to look and act as one in a dream or an hypnotic state.

Presently the relatives left them alone together, and immediately the boy made an impetuous movement toward her, but she seemed to shrink slightly from him, and the long dark lashes resting upon her cheeks did not even raise, and she seemed unconscious or indifferent to the gentle, wooing voice of her young husband.

"O-Haru-no!" He almost whispered the name, and repeated it, as though the very sound pleased and caressed him. Then, as still she did not stir, nor made any sign of hearing him, he added tremulously:

"I am so very happy now. Are not you, beloved?"

Her lips parted mechanically to form the single word of dull assent. The boy's dark skin reddened. He leaned toward her, and took one of her passive little hands in his. She let it rest limply there, but did not return his pressure. His voice had taken a more manly tone; a hint of his new authority was in it, and made itself fully understood and felt by his bride. Just the glint of her shining black eyes showed for a moment, as sullenly she heard his words:

"Obey my honorable mother. Be a good daughter to her. That is all I command of you, my wife!"

Her head drooped wearily, and she answered meekly enough, but behind her words he heard that thrill of bitter rebellion.

"I will be the honorable mother-in-law's humblest servant," said she.

"Daughter!" substituted the boy quickly. "These are modern days. A daughter-in-law to-day is not considered a servant!"

The faintest smile curled the corners of her lips. She raised her eyes at last, and, wide with defiance, they looked back fairly at her husband.

"Do modern people make such marriages as ours?" she asked.

Omi's face had darkened as sullenly as her own.

"Why not? You and I have always been betrothed."

Her words, her defiant glance, roused uneasy fears within him. He knew, in a dim way, that it was his own teachings of recent years—the little learning they had so passionately achieved together before the going of his father, which was so insidiously affecting the view-point of his wife.

"You speak and look strangely," he said, pathetically. "After all, modern ways are not for our women. Women of our class are better off without too much knowledge or education."

HE SIGHED, looking at her appealingly, even while he spoke falteringly the words which hardened her the more against him. Once Omi had spoken otherwise, she vividly recalled. She shrank into her cold and apathetic self, dumb, submissive to his will and that of his parent, and determined to show no further trace of her condition of heart and mind. He felt utterly pervaded by the vague sense of unhappiness. Why could not O-Haru-no be as other females of her class, meek, obedient, plastic? Why had he foolishly permitted her to share his studies and his books? There she sat before him—his wife—yet with that intangible air of distance and remoteness from him. His dreams of drawing her warmly into the shelter of his arms when once they two should be left alone together had vanished completely. It would be preposterous to embrace one so chilly and forbidding as his bride. Yet it lacked now but a half hour before his departure. His mother would require his presence soon—would jealously begrudge sharing his last moments even with his wife. It seemed to Omi as if he could fairly see the precious moments slipping away—wasted, while he waited, in vain, for his wife's confidence. Mute, almost dumb, she had repelled him from the smallest love advance. He could not frame the words of longing which surged up to his lips, while her cold, shadowy little face was turned so stubbornly from him. Covering his eyes, at last he spoke:

"O-Haru-no, do not cherish harsh thoughts against your husband. It is unwisely. I know that I have married you against your will, but we are taught the command of a parent must come first. We are but children, ordered by our honored ancestors to obey. It troubles me that you should hate me, for I have always loved you."

For the first time; now, she leaned toward him, and there was something very soft and appealing in the dark eyes she bent upon him questioningly.

"Tell me then, Omi-sama: if you loved me, why did you marry me to-night?"

He stammered, seeking for words to justify himself.

"It was necessary. My mother—it was impossible to leave her alone—unprotected."

The hard, baffling look had come back to the girl's face, making it curiously old.

"You bind the one you love, then, to a detestable bondage?"

"No, no," he protested vehemently, seizing her hands and holding them closely. "Do not refer to it in that way. Is it not the place of the young to serve and protect the old?"

SHE drew her hands almost savagely from his.

"Ah!" she cried, "you do not even deny it. I am married for the one purpose—to act as slave to your honorable parent."

Her words smote him. His face turned angrily red, as he rose to his feet.

"It is your duty," said he coldly. "I have mine, a graver, harder one. I serve the Emperor. His slave I am. For him I gladly give my worthless life. And you?" He looked at her commanding now. "You are my wife. It is your duty, also, to make sacrifice for him—our Emperor."

His hands rested heavily upon her slender shoulders, and she shrank vainly from him now.

"My wife you are," he repeated hoarsely. "My mother's slave, if you so name it. But a moment since, all my being melted toward you, but I am not so dull but what I feel your hatred and

defiance of me now. Oh, is it well to send your husband to his death with such a heavy heart?"

Silence for a moment, and then, stooping to look at the down-drooped face, Omi saw the tears silently falling. An exclamation of impetuous pity escaped him, and at last he drew his wife into his arms. After a time:

"Do not weep, O-Haru-no. You break my heart. A soldier must be impervious to pain."

"You go so far away," she sighed. "Alas, we will never, never meet again. I am not your wife at all."

"You are my wife for all time," he asseverated fervently. "Even though my duty takes me from you in this present life, we are united in all the lives yet to come, are we not?"

"I do not know. I do not know."

"You do not believe, then?"

"I do not know."

"Then your heart—it is not your husband's?"

He held her off at arm's length from him, waiting hungrily for her reply. It came slowly, faintly:

"I do not know, O-Omi. I have not looked into my heart."

His voice was hoarse, tremulous with its half fear, half assurance.

"Why then should you suffer at my departure?"

Her gaze averted, she answered sullenly:

"For myself I weep. You go to glorious work, the soldier, the hero of our Emperor, but me you leave in wicked chains."

"I go—unloved," he said in a low voice, which vibrated with despair, but though she trembled at his words, she did not deny them.

They stood for a moment looking at each other solemnly, and upon both their young faces was reflected the tragedy of their hearts. Then some one called to Omi, and without a further word or look at his wife he turned and left the room.

ALONE, she stood, staring at the sliding doors which had closed upon her husband. Then suddenly she rushed frantically upon them and drew them apart. Out in the hall a dull *takahira*

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gave but a gloomy light. She listened at the head of the little flight of stairs; but the house seemed as silent as the night, and she knew that his mother whispered to him alone in the *ozashisiki*. She called, in the darkness, down the stairs, her quivering whisper sounding curiously plaintive and piteous.

"Omi! Omi-sama! For the love of all the gods, do not leave me—yet!"

But no warm, boyish voice came in answer to her entreaty. With her hand upon her fluttering heart, she now staggered back into the room, and out upon the balcony.

The night was starry overhead, but scarce a breath of wind was stirring. The little wind-bells tinkled only faintly at her coming. Over the balcony, where lately she had twisted the vines and ivy, she now leaned, trying to see into the adjoining house, whither she knew he must go to bid farewell to her step-mother. But the lights of the house were out, and suddenly she realized that the hour was late, and that Omi must have found but a moment to say his *sayonara*. He was gone!

Across the street, the house of the honorable captain was brilliantly illuminated. They had feasted there also. Many of the soldiers would march away to-night with their captain—Omi among them. She strained her eyes to watch the doorway of the captain's house, and when a little party issued forth, a cry was strangled on her lips.

A beat of drum was heard up the street—some portion of the regiment on the march to the railway station. Spring-morning wrung her hands desperately together and sank down upon her shaking knees. Now the marching soldiers were passing, had already passed, her house! Soon they were out of sight entirely. Duller, lower, softer sounded the musical beat of the drum.

A FOREIGNER in white flannels came out onto the balcony of the house of Captain Taganouchi. He stood in the darkness looking out at the little house across the street. Suddenly he leaned forward and peered long and eagerly, as though trying to pierce the darkness and short distance that separated the two houses. Was it fancy

only, or did he actually see that same child-woman face, resting like a white lotus upon the vine boxes of the balcony? Every nerve alert and sensitive, he looked and looked, and then he listened. Something—some one over there was crying—lowly moaning. He was sure he was not mistaken. Again he listened, and then a little wind swept refreshingly abroad and knocked the hanging glass of the wind-bells back and forth, so that their melodious tinkle alone was heard.

The American went indoors. A sharp clapping of his hands brought a scurrying maid into the apartment. She slipped to her knees to receive his orders. Taking a roll of bills from a leather case, he deftly rolled them in paper and snapped a rubber band upon them. This he handed to the maid, who stared at him open-mouthed.

"Take this," he said in Japanese, "across the street. It is a wedding gift for the wife of Omi."

The maid bobbed her head half a dozen times, and departed upon her errand. Jamison Tyrrell heard the sliding glide of her feet along the matted hall and down the stairs, and the *clip-clop* of her clogs as she crossed the cobblestoned street. But he did not see her, as, hesitating a moment between the two small houses she approached and knocked upon the door of the Yamada's house. The old woman thrust out a red and angry face, inflamed with late tears and the imbibing of much *sake*:

"Who is it?" harshly she demanded.

"A gift bearer for the bride," sweetly returned the waiting maid.

The old woman grunted, and shuffling heavily along the hall, she opened the door. Thrusting out a withered old hand, she snatched greedily the package extended by the maid, who departed as speedily as she had come.

CHAPTER III

OLD Madam Yamada sat grumbling over her pipe. Her temper was bad, and she found food to increase its acidity in the fact that Spring-morning was not at hand to wait upon her.

Her daughter-in-law had, from the first, been a source of irritation to her, despite the fact that she seemed meek and plastic as wax in the hands of the older woman. After the going of Omi, she had shown a devoted disposition to cater to the slightest desire or caprice of her mother-in-law. By law, she was, of course, under the dominion of the older woman; but something more than mere man-made laws had taken possession of Spring-morning. In the face of unspeakable hardship, privation and eternal denouncing, she remained always the same—meek, sweet, cheerful, docile. Madam Yamada had not troubled herself to discover the reason for the change in the disposition of the somewhat fractious girl she had previously known. She simply took advantage of it. When she expressed her intention of going to live in Yokohama, Spring-morning cheerfully packed her few belongings, made farewell calls upon her various relatives; and submissively, uncomplainingly made the long journey to the big metropolis, so far away from the home she had always known and the few poor relatives, whom despite their poverty and helplessness she loved.

In Yokohama, they found lodgment in a shabby quarter of the town, and here the older woman calmly announced that henceforth she looked to Spring-morning for their entire support. It was war-time. Madam Yamada was well aware that the girl would find it difficult to obtain employment of any sort in the city. Employers were discharging, not engaging, workers; and always Spring-morning, who tramped the strange, endless streets of the big city by day, came back at night with empty hands. A country girl, ignorant of even the likely places where she might obtain work, she found herself shouldered aside everywhere. Shabby, speaking even a different dialect from that of the locality, she was unable to compete with the smart, swiftly moving, sophisticated girls of the city.

It had, therefore, lately become the habit of the older woman, upon the return of the girl from her hopeless quest for work, to make remarks of this nature:

"Hoi! You have been gone seven hours, it seems. Your clogs are wearing out, and even clogs are costly in these days. You come back with nothing! Well, these are strange times. A strong and healthy, aye, and a beautiful girl—and young—yet unable to make a livelihood! Hoi, my girl, there are tricks to learn—tricks!"

Always Spring-morning brooded and shuddered over these "tricks" she should learn. Her rounded cheeks lost their plumpness and their wonderful rosy hue. Shadows crept under her wistful eyes; and her small, pretty mouth, which seemed made for dimples to play about, drooped pathetically. A weariness and languor seized upon her, and presently she found it a matter of hard labor to pull her weary feet along through the hard streets of the seaport.

THEN came a day when she dropped in a dead faint at the feet of a foreign priest. Kindly hands picked the unconscious girl's frail little form up, and she was carried into a cool place, where she was ministered to and cared for. For a time after this, her lot was at least temporarily improved.

Through the kindly offices of Father Daly, Spring-morning found employment in several of the pretentious bungalows on the cliffs of Yokohama, where the foreign residents live, and through him she made the friendship of a sweet and charming American girl.

Spring-morning's little hands were as soft and fine as her native cherry-blossoms. They seemed, indeed, like pretty helpless flowers, made solely to be cherished and caressed. Nevertheless her new friends soon discovered that they were capable and even wonderful hands. The tiny fingers could make the finest of embroidery and microscopic stitches. The work was not particularly remunerative, but the girl's young heart overflowed with grateful joy at the opportunity of at least being permitted to earn her living, and it was with almost pathetic joy that she brought her first wages to the grumbling, muttering, nagging old mother-in-law, whose piercing old eyes had watched her so long with such a sinister expression.

She had not confided in her mother-

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in-law the fact that she had actually found employment, though the latter suspected from the girl's long absences and her happy demeanor that a change of some kind had come in her fortunes. An evil hope lay deep in the breast of the old woman. She ardently trusted that Spring-morning was profiting by the daily hints given her, and was following that easy method of livelihood open to all girls of beauty and youth.

Madam Yamada had had no other fate in mind for her daughter-in-law when she had brought her to the big city with her. She had intended deliberately to drive Spring-morning to the Yoshiwara. The girl was her property—under her sole control and authority; why should she not profit by her beauty? Many fathers, mothers and brothers all over Japan sold their girls into a similar market. Spring-morning was no better than the thousand other girls who obediently and even piously sacrificed themselves at the behest of those in authority over them. Indeed, in her daughter-in-law's case, there was even a higher reason why she should make the sacrifice. Her honorable husband served the Emperor! Those at home must, at any cost, work to make a place for him should the gods decree he should return, mayhap wounded or disabled.

Despite, however, her determination to use her daughter-in-law's body as a marketable commodity, Madam Yamada was cunningly determined that Spring-morning herself should suggest this expedient, for she knew that should her son return from the war, there would be a fearful day of reckoning for her, when Omi would demand what it was she had done with his wife; for although the young soldier was aware that Spring-morning must take his place to his mother and become her means of support, his boyish mind had not actually conceived the horrible possibility that his wife would be driven to the common lot of the very poor, similarly faced with such a problem. At the period of his going to the front, Omi was in too exalted a state of mind for so cruel a shadow to darken his aspirations. It saddened him, broke his heart indeed; that his wife had shrunk from him, even at the parting, but it had not

dashed his high courage, nor his supreme resolve to die gloriously for his Emperor and country, secure in the knowledge that he had dutifully supplied a support for his old mother.

NOW, as Madam Yamada sat alone, muttering over her pipe and sake, Spring-morning softly opened the dingy screen, and stood upon the threshold smiling radiantly down upon her. A golden stream of sunlight came through the opened door, and a breath of sweet air as exhilarating as the smiling face of the young girl herself; but Madam Yamada dashed her pipe down savagely upon the *hibachi* and snarlingly demanded of the girl that she close the *shoji*, and give an account of her day's adventures. Spring-morning continued to smile, heedlessly forgetting even to close the screen. She advanced upon her mother-in-law with her two hands held out, the rosy fingers doubled over till her fists seemed like round, roguish snow-balls.

"Look!" she cried softly. "What do you suppose, Mother, I have got here in my hands?"

Madam Yamada hobbled to her feet, and stood looking from under lowering brows at the two extended fists of her daughter. Slowly the little fingers uncurled, disclosing in each palm a shining piece of money. The old woman's sharp fingers seized upon the coins with the greedy swiftness of some bird of prey picking up food in its talons.

"Hm! It is insignificant. Is this the extent of your wages, then? How much are you holding back?"

The girl's face fell.

"Is it not a large sum?" she quiveringly asked. "Just think—two whole yen, and I am to have steady employment, so the honorable Miss American has promised me. I work for the foreigners, Mother-in-law, who make their homes on the heights and—"

Madam Yamada, who has been testing the money on her teeth, looked up sharply at that, her beady little eyes glittering, as she knotted the coins in the lining of her sleeve. She made a curt motion to her daughter-in-law to be seated, then painfully came to the mat opposite the girl. She pushed with her

foot the tobacco-*bon* toward Spring-morning, and the latter silently went to work filling and refilling the bowl of her mother's one-whiff pipe. For some time the old woman smoked in silence. This is what she was thinking:

Here was a pretty state of things? Her daughter-in-law had found fine friends indeed—barbarians! white-faced, bleached-haired, faded-eyed fools who patronized the sacred soil of *Dai Nippon*. A savage inward anger consumed her withered bosom. She more than hated, she abhorred these accursed foreign devils! It was their very stock and blood which fought the soldiers of Japan—menaced the life of her only son! For these her son's wife must be a servant! The thought tormented—burned her!

AFTER a time, she said with forced calmness:

"I dare say it has not occurred to you that these foreign devils are taking advantage of your youth and ignorance. The amount they pay you is not enough."

"But," cried the girl, surprised and hurt, "it is more than twice what many girls receive for similar employment. And the work is pleasant. It is easy to serve those who are kind."

"You talk the nonsense of a child—you who are married to a soldier of *Tenshi-sama*," said her mother sternly. "We do not serve foreign devils for the same money we would our own folk. It's not merely payment for our labor, but payment for the degradation of serving those—beneath us! Pah—cheap—vulgar barbarians! Would you labor as the slave of the esteemed monkey-man?"

"I was glad," faltered the girl, "to find employment of any kind. We cannot starve."

"Oh, it is not likely we will starve," said her mother-in-law. "I have still a little of the marriage-gift money left for our sustenance; but very shortly it too will be gone. Now there are several things for you to do—many ways to make an honest livelihood. That's right, look at me, daughter-in-law. Well, I have something on my mind."

"Yes? Do tell me what it is. You do

not know how anxious I am to serve you," said Spring-morning gently.

"You say that dutifully enough, and I dare say you really feel to some extent a desire to serve your husband's mother. However, I will test you, Haru-no. Now you know very well the fate of the average girl of beauty who happens also to be a pauper, do you not? Well—er—it's no use to look at me like that. You understand me very well."

THE girl's expression was pathetic.

She had half risen upon her heels. Her little, full childish mouth opened as if to speak, then helplessly closed. Through the eyes, piteous and imploring, she was endeavoring to force a smile. The lightness of her tone was not convincing. There rang insistently through her head, at that moment, the words of her mother-in-law during that dreadful period of semi-starvation from which the foreign priest had mercifully saved her. What horrible solution of their troubles had she then meant to suggest to the vague, heedless ears of the young girl?

"Ah, yes," she answered tremulously. "Of course, I know your meaning, respected mother-in-law, but happily for us both, I am saved from such a fate. See how good the gods have been—see how they befriend even me, so insignificant and unworthy!"

"The gods!" shrieked the old woman, banging her hands harshly together. "What have they to do with such as us? We are the outcasts—the poor—the beggars of Japan. The rod of the gods is heavily upon our backs. We pay for the sins of our previous lives, and it is only through superhuman efforts and sacrifices we can pull ourselves from our miserable pit. It is not *enough* for you, my girl, to earn a daily livelihood for you and me. You must think of my son—Omi. For him too, you must work!"

"Omi!" repeated the girl in piteous surprise.

"Yes—your husband," said the old woman sternly. "Listen to me, Haru-no. Omi may return within a year. It is not sure he will lose his life. You must know that the country will be terribly impoverished when the war is over,

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or, it may chance, though not likely, that we may be defeated! What's my son to do? Suppose he returns—sick, helpless! Must he starve? No! No! I tell you it's the sacred duty of the ones left at home to make a place where our heroes may come. It may mean hardship, sacrifice—suffering—well! What of that? Fill your soul, Spring-morning, with the fire now animating that of my son. Does *he*—the soldier of your Emperor—fear any hazard? Is there any hardship he is not prepared to face? Does he not ride abroad with the dark horse of Death itself?"

Her fingers moved back and forth, as if animated with a new wild life, as she turned over the leaves of an old and well-worn book.

"See—see, O-Haru-no! Read here the words of the philosophers. Your eyes are bright—read aloud—We are taught—"

She thrust the book upon the trembling girl, but with a pitiful wailing cry, Spring-morning pushed it from her.

"Ah no—o-o—no! It is unnecessary. I know the duty-words by heart. They have rung in my ears—yes, since the day I saw my husband's troop marching—away—away—"

She broke down, sobbing like a distracted child.

"Hush! Hush! Control your grief. Take example from your superiors. It is uncivilized to betray one's inner stormy emotions. Your husband is a soldier!"

SPRING-MORNING raised her face bravely. The tears had dried upon it, and it was very white and stony.

"Here at home," pursued the old woman, "you too must be a soldier."

"I will! I will," said the girl softly. "I will try, honorable mother-in-law, to be a—soldier!"

She stood up, smiling now, a smile so terribly sweet and pathetic that her mother-in-law turned away. After a moment she asked gently, as though seeking advice in a course to pursue of whose way she was humbly ignorant:

"Instruct me, honorable mother. What am I to do?"

Madam Yamada's harshness returned. She sneered savagely at the

girl. She had no patience for such weakness and emotion.

"You know very well what to do. It is not difficult to show beauty when one possesses it."

Spring-morning was silent, as though in some deep thought. Suddenly she put out her hands imploringly toward the implacable old woman.

"Oh, it is not possible for me to do it," she said. "Where am I to find the strength for such a life."

"Not possible!" shouted her mother-in-law. "It is done every day. It is the common lot of such as you."

"Ah yes, yes—I have known that," moaned the girl faintly. "I think I have known it from the first—from the day I married Omi. And yet—I know not why, always I have hoped—believed that a better life was for me. Oh—" She cast out her hands again imploringly toward her mother-in-law. "I pray you pardon me for—for my weakness."

"From the decree of heaven there is no escape," quoted Madam Yamada roughly. "Why not then go bravely to the task set you? It is not customary for girls of your class to waste so much emotion at such a time. It is better to do even a loathsome task bravely and finely. You are no better than the thousand other women who have gone to the Yoshiwara before you."

"No better," repeated the girl dully. "Yet—Omi, your son, madam—he taught me—yes, we talked together of the beautiful—the good, sweet life we would tread together. Never did it enter into the mind of my husband that I should be sent to such a dreadful place."

Something in the expression of her mother-in-law's face stopped her words. A vital, terrible question seemed to be bursting to find utterance now.

"Omi? Assure me, dear, good, horrible mother, that *Omi* did not know that I—that I—"

The old woman's eyes had closed, so that nothing was visible save the sinister glint of black. Through this narrow slit, however, Spring-morning felt they rested upon her keenly, cruelly.

"Omi—knew!" she said slowly, deeply.

THERE was silence for some time between them after that, the girl clutching weakly at the screen behind her and looking at her mother-in-law with an expression upon her face of shock and anguish. Presently the old woman broke in upon the silence, speaking roughly:

"It's not for a life-time, my girl. You can go for a stated period—no longer. There is a law governing the matter, you are aware. We will inquire of the proper authorities. I chose this city in preference to Tokyo or Kyoto or Nagasaki or Osaka, because the Yoshiwara here is said to be prosperous even now at war-time.

"Moreover, it is patronized by your friends—the honorable foreigners, and always they are rich! You will enter as a maiden, understand. It is unwise you should be known as the wife of Omi. Place no shame upon my son's name. With your beauty it is quite possible you will make powerful friends. It is a most remunerative employment, my girl. There is a fortune even within your hands if you will but have the courage to seize it."

Spring-morning said nothing. She continued to stare before her in that numbed, dull way of some gentle creature unjustly beaten. Presently the old woman moved across to the casement, and shoving the sliding screen aside, called to the girl:

"Come hither, if you please. Look down there into the street below—and yonder—you will see the wider streets. See the hordes of men as they pass along. Where do you think most of them are going? Is it not a shame that we—you and I—and my son—should not have part of the wealth that is everywhere in a city like this? Think, O-Haru-no, the value of such a possession as yours—beauty! Why, rightfully used, it may win you the prizes of all the earth!"

She pushed the casement wider apart, showing to the dazzled eyes of the unhappy girl the gay panorama of the streets spread out below them, the endless, shifting passing scenes, the gay, hurrying, careless throngs. Then, with a final dark glance at the girl's white, agonized face, she returned to her pipe

by the *hibachi*, and left Spring-morning crouching there.

FOR a long time the girl stared out before her with wide, unseeing eyes. The noise, the traffic, the constant moving of passing people and vehicles, she saw not at all, save as in some dim dream. Through her mind passed a panorama of other scenes—scenes of her childhood. She was a little girl, playing in the fields with Omi, and Omi was teaching her how to catch the glistening fireflies. They were paddling in a country stream, screaming with delight. Now they were going to school together, ragged, barefooted, happy.

And now their young heads were close together, as they pored over those fascinating books that Omi had managed to purchase from the sale of their joint labors as fire-fly catchers. To illuminate a single entertainment of some exalted lord, the thousand fireflies they had labored all summer to take had been liberated from their cages, and liberally paid for. Omi had bought the coveted books. Ah, what delicious dreams were those they had then indulged in, as they pored over the pages.

Then there came the day when Omi must run fleetly to overtake his father, and assist him in the rice fields. Henceforth he was to earn three yen a month! It was a fabulous sum in the eyes of the little twelve-year-old girl. Soon, she was very sure, he would become a man, earning maybe ten yen a month, capable of paying rent for a tiny little house all his own. And their honorable fathers had pledged them to each other. Oh, what blissful years stretched in a golden eternity before them. She saw herself just at the age of maturity, with her dreams more golden than ever, and always in her dreams, like some heroic god, Omi walked beside her.

How she had pitied women less fortunate than she, who must live in the big cities, so closely together that there was scarcely air for all to breathe. Then across her happiness there had come a shadow. Some one had told her of the Yoshiwara. Little O-Natsu-san, of the street of Early Dews, had gone away one day upon a journey. Her parents were very poor and her father was

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blind. There were little brothers and sisters.

Little O-Natsu-san (Miss Summer-day) had gone away smiling, but her mother had wept, quite terribly, Spring-morning remembered. And O-Natsu-san had never returned. One day Spring-morning had asked her step-mother where it was that O-Natsu-san had gone, smiling so bravely; and the step-mother had told Spring-morning of the Yoshiwara. It was a tale to blanch the cheek and stop the beating heart of one older than she. Such might have been her fate, had said the step-mother, but, happily, from this the gods had saved her. She was to be the bride of Omi.

Thinking only of those dim, sweet scenes of her past, and blind to even the colorful moving throngs which her mother-in-law had bade her study, she became gradually conscious of an insistent strain of sweet music, whistled in the street below. It was the strange, melodious air, savoring of some far land, that caught the girl's attention, and she awoke from her sad dreaming, to listen with bated breath to the silken thread of the sweet tone. Then she leaned over the sill, and sought for the singer in the street below.

He was there in the shadow of a little building across the way, a young white man, with sketch-book in his hand, softly whistling to himself, as he drew the face of Spring-morning. For a moment they looked at each other fairly, and a curious look—was it admiration or sympathy?—came into the face of the artist. He stepped across the street, and came directly beneath her casement. She looked down at him with her eyes slightly widened, as if with half fear, half wonder. Then, as his radiant smile seemed to reach up and fairly warm her, the sob that had been strangling there for utterance broke from her lips, and with a little shivering motion, she closed the screen between them.

CHAPTER IV

YOKOHAMA was a-flutter with banners, flags and lanterns. It wore its holiday dress gayly and triumphantly. Mrs. Tyrrell's sewing

lay idly upon her lap. She had put on her glasses, and was watching the crowds of passers-by as they swept along the street. In their thin, bright and flimsy dresses they seemed to her like flower-petals blowing before a wind. Nothing but color and light! Even their faces seemed to harmonize with the tawdry articles they waved so gayly, and with their as tawdry apparel.

They seemed unreal—figures of some strange, fantastic world to which she felt helplessly she could never adapt herself.

Her reverie was interrupted by the impetuous entrance of her son. He came in from the outdoors bare-headed, his light auburn hair curling moistly about his fine head, and giving him that curiously boyish look which never seemed to have entirely left Jamison Tyrrell, though he was past thirty.

"Whew, it's hot!" he exclaimed, tossing his hat, which he had crushed under his arm, across the room to a table. "But, let me tell you, this has been one fine day for me. Wish you'd seen some of the types I got in the quarter."

Mrs. Tyrrell blinked her glasses from her nose, and they hung by their black ribbon suspended from her ear. Her features were sharp and fine, and she was very near-sighted.

"Oh Jamie, I do wish you'd keep away from that part of the city. Father Daly's been telling us that all sorts of crimes are committed in the slums of Yokohama, and particularly at this time, when the war—"

Her son stopped her further speech by gayly placing his big white hands under her chin, and laying his warm, boyish cheek against her own. The contact melted and thrilled her as always, and she put back her hands to hold him there.

"Now aren't you the old fretter," he reproved. "You'd borrow trouble from the sunshine itself."

Mrs. Tyrrell sighed.

"There you go," he growled in reproof, "heaving such murdering sighs. Now what in the world is there to trouble you about?"

"Oh Jamie dear, I wish we were at home," she said plaintively. "There's no telling what might happen to us here."

I've heard such horrible tales about the massacres of Christians in heathen lands and—"

"We're just as safe here as in our little beds at home."

"Oh, we can't be sure of that at all. These Japanese—they really hate us, dear, and they might do anything if things were to go against them with the Russians. I believe they consider us all alike, as indeed we are, at bottom, we Western people."

"You needn't worry about the Japs. They're on their good behavior—trying to 'make good,' in the eyes of the civilized world. They wouldn't have anything happen to us here now for anything in the world. They're terribly sensitive about it. Besides, you do them a great wrong, Mother. They are really a remarkably fine people. Now look out there, will you?" He turned her face around to the window. "Do you see anything to worry about from a smiling crowd like that?"

"They seem friendly and harmless enough, I suppose," she admitted grudgingly, "but Jamie dear, there's something about the—I don't know what—that is unreal, queer—unlike us in every way."

"Nonsense."

"I suppose it is just prejudice," she sighed, "but somehow, they don't seem the same as we are at all. They are so light—I was going to say trifling—like a lot of foolish children." She hesitated and added plaintively: "Oh, I dare say I wrong them."

"You do, Mother," declared her son earnestly, releasing her.

"Well—maybe," admitted his mother, and with the dissatisfied, distressed look still on her face, she fell to work again.

"Now you've always been mighty fond of Taggy," suggested her son.

"Oh no, I have not," said his mother gravely. "It took me some time to—er—appreciate him."

"That's right," jeeringly laughed Jamison. "'Appreciate!' Taggy is like olives, eh, an acquired taste, but awfully good once you really get to know him."

"Then he was educated in America," said Mrs. Tyrrell. "He became just like one of us. I never thought of Mr.

Taganouchi as Japanese at all. With that little mustache he wore, and his very distinguished bearing, why—he might have belonged to any land rather than Japan. In fact, Jamie, I fancy Mr. Taganouchi, living so long in America, really became as one of us, and at heart was scarcely Japanese at all."

"Taggy not Japanese! Why, he is typical. His Western civilization was the merest veneer on Taggy. He was really Japanese to the last drop of his blood! I wish you'd seen him on his last night in Japan." After a moment's thought he added: "No, I'm glad you did not. I want you to retain your good opinion of old Taggy."

HIS mother looked up anxiously, and her son answered her look with a smile of assurance.

"Oh, Taggy's all right, Mother. You needn't lose faith in him. He's doing a fine thing now, you know—an inspiring, noble thing."

"Then what did you mean just now?" inquired his mother.

"We'll, we had a little discussion about a certain matter. Our view points are widely different."

"Why, I thought you and he were in ideal accord—that was why you got on so well together?"

"So did I, till I came out here, and in fact we are in most things; but, as I told you, at bottom Taggy is pure Japanese, and I—" he beamed radiantly at his mother—"in spite of being under the magical spell of this unspeakably charming fairy-land, I'm American—with a 'foine' old Irish ancestry behind me."

He stooped over her and gave her a warm hug and noisy kiss.

"Oh, I love to hear you say that," said she. "I have been so afraid, dear, that you were getting too fond—too infatuated with this country. You are such an enthusiast, and so temperamental. I knew exactly the effect a country like this would have upon you."

He laughed, stretching his arms above him.

"Japan is a cordial, an elixir divine for jaded, tired eyes and nerves. I admit the spell and lure of the country,

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but unlike you, I'm not seeing Japan through glasses, but with admiring eyes wide open."

"I'm not so sure of that," said his mother quietly. "I rather fancy your own glasses are quite rose-colored."

"Maybe they are," said Jamison Tyrrell softly, and sauntering to the window, he looked down dreamily into the street below. All unconsciously he began softly to whistle the haunting little air which had caught the attention of Spring-morning, and as he did so, suddenly there came up before him the exquisite, startled young face of the girl again. The air slightly wavered on his lips. He leaned against the casement in a day-dream, luring and fantastic.

CHAPTER V

A MAID announced a caller, Miss Edith Latimer. She was in the room before her name was pronounced, a tall, hearty, fresh-colored young woman, with a fine, attractive face, and a personality that fairly radiated health and abounding spirits.

"Hello!" was Jamison Tyrrell's cordial greeting, as he shook the large, shapely hand the girl extended.

"It's your mother I want to see," she exclaimed, almost breathlessly. "Good gracious, it's like walking through a maze—a circus—to go down a Yokohama street to-day. I declare I've been literally treading on little people—little babies, little dogs and little cats, and little everything all day. Have you a fan? Thanks. Now wait till I cool off a bit."

She opened the fan with a wide swing, and began fanning herself vigorously, talking, despite her request for them to "wait a bit," as rapidly as she fanned.

"Oh, Mrs. Tyrrell, I have the loveliest little girl I want to interest you in. You needn't smile, Jamison, for she is not this time a geisha girl nor the deserted spouse of one of our fair countrymen. Now I know that you are going to help me, aren't you, Mrs. Tyrrell?"

The latter put on her glasses and beamed through them at Edith, who was a great favorite with her.

"Certainly, if I can, dear, but you

know I don't share your or Jamie's enthusiasm in regard to the Japanese."

"Oh, well, she's going to make you change your opinion. Wait till you see her. Her name is Spring-morning. Isn't that lovely—*Haru-nō*, they say in Japanese, and I wish you could see the perfectly beautiful embroidery work that child can do—better than yours even, and that's saying a lot, isn't it?"

A little flush swept over the thin cheeks of the older woman. She fingered her favorite work, then held it up.

"What do you think of this?"

"Very pretty, but nothing to what Spring-morning can do."

"And who is she, my dear?"

"I'll tell you! She's a poor little thing who was trying to make a living for herself and a disagreeable old relative—grandmother or something. Father Daly discovered her trying to sell sea-shells to his congregation last Sunday after mass. Of all things! Sea-shells! Entering into competition with some nice little Japanese women he'd induced to peddle those little Catholic talismans they sent us from America. That was Spring-morning's idea, however, of earning a living in Yokohama. Well, naturally, dear good old Father Daly stopped a moment gently to reprove her, when all of a sudden she dropped right down at his feet, her precious sea-shells scattering about her. He thought she was kow-towing, but when she did not move, he stooped to see what the trouble was, and there she was in a perfectly dead faint.

"Well, the tale was soon told. She hadn't eaten a bite for three whole days—not a single bit. Just think of that—starving—a young, lovely girl, here in this big, rich city. She said they had come recently from the country and she had brought the shells with her, hoping to sell enough to make a livelihood for herself and 'elderly relative.' We-ell, Father Daly, naturally, brought her to me, and I'm going the rounds of my friends to see if I can't find her a home of some sort. I've seen the 'elderly relative,' you see, and she is perfectly unspeakable—horrible, and I'm going to move heaven and earth to get Spring-morning away from her."

She shuddered vividly, her fine brows drawing together in a frown.

"Why, I hate even to think of some of the horrible things that wicked old woman hinted Spring-morning ought to do for a livelihood."

SHE turned a pair of winning eyes upon Mrs. Tyrrell, who responded with only a slight relaxing of her somewhat forbidding expression.

"Now, dear, can't you make a place for her here in this big house?"

"I may be able to," said Mrs. Tyrrell, running her needle thoughtfully in and out of her emery strawberry. "I am not at all satisfied with Ume. Look at that screen. It has been mended twice already this month; yet only this morning I caught that girl deliberately poking another hole into it, simply for the purpose of spying upon us, though goodness knows what good it does her to hear what we have to say, for she cannot understand a word of English. So I've decided to discharge Ume without references, and if your little friend—"

"But no," interrupted Edith quickly. "Spring-morning is not strong enough for that kind of work; besides, she is too refined and sweet for menial work. You need some one here to—well—" She looked about the formally and precisely arranged room, with its heavy pieces of Western furniture, which Mrs. Tyrrell had herself brought from America, and to the amazement of her son planted firmly in his cherished *osashiki*, until then scrupulously bare and unfurnished, in the Japanese style. Edith surveyed the room, not critically, but appraisingly, as if she saw the possibilities of its being made at least tolerably sightly through the offices of her protégée; then turning to Mrs. Tyrrell, she nodded her bright head emphatically. "That's it. You need some one here to lend a touch of beauty to your house."

This statement brought a snort of amazed laughter from Jamison, and his mother protested in that indulgent tone she always used toward her favorite.

"**T**HEN, too," went on the girl, in her forceful way, determined to carry her purpose through, "there's all sorts

of ways you can make her useful, invaluable to you. Besides the sewing, I forgot to tell you that she is a most wonderful little masseuse. You ask Mrs. Splint. She had a splitting headache. Said she felt as if the top of her head was just about to blow off—you know, one of those headaches we foreigners get in Japan till we're used to the atmosphere. Well, there sat that little thing in the room, patiently embroidering, and looking for all the world like a little Japanese angel or saint—you can't imagine how pretty Spring-morning is—positively the prettiest girl in Japan, I tell you. Well, she said to Mrs. Splint: 'Led me tooch ad you head'—her accent is too cute!—And she got up, put her little soft fingers on Gertrude's head, and as true as I am sitting here now, the pain seemed literally to be lifted out of Gertie's head, and before she knew it she had dropped sound asleep."

"Hypnotism," said Jamison briefly.

"I don't know about that," said his mother thoughtfully. "You know the Japanese have a great reputation for massaging. I've often wanted to hire one of them, but most of the masseuses here in Yokohama are such horrible looking old crones, and I felt a positive repulsion at permitting them to touch me. Now if Edith's friend can really do such things, she would be invaluable to me. You cannot imagine how terribly I suffer with neuralgia, and pains all down this side and—"

"Oh," broke in Edith, "give her a trial then, dear. She'll prove a regular little 'medicine-woman' for you."

"I will then," said Mrs. Tyrrell, "—though," she added uneasily, "I wish she could also do Ume's work. I declare I cannot get used to the unquenchable curiosity of these Japanese maids. It's almost impossible for us even to bathe without espionage. I had to have carpenters build a wall about our bathroom, especially to keep out the maids while we are bathing. You never heard of such immodest officiousness."

The young people exchanged amused glances, and Jamison, grinning broadly, put in:

"The time after Mamma's first bath, she counted—how many holes in the *fusuma*, Mamma?"

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"Thirteen," said Mrs. Tyrrell solemnly, a flush coming to her cheeks.

Jamison threw back his head and burst out laughing, while Edith turned her shoulder slightly from Mrs. Tyrrell to conceal her own mirth. Mrs. Tyrrell did not see at all that the matter was in the nature of a joke, and she regarded her son very disapprovingly as he shook with laughter.

"She cleared out every servant on the place," he croaked, "and all because the poor little critters were interested in our honorable white skin. Our baths were accompanied always by an orchestra (unseen but felt behind the screens) of tittering and admiring exclamatory whispers of astonishment."

"It is nothing to laugh about," said his mother severely, "and I am quite sure I don't know how you managed about such things before I came out here."

A deep silence here ensued, during which Jamison, his back turned to the two women, his shoulders shaking, looked down into the little garden below, fronting the open and quite crowded street. There he saw, modestly bathing in the little pond, totally oblivious of and indifferent to the scores of passers-by, equally indifferent to her, the aforesaid guilty Ume, clad merely in the human form divine—and this despite the fact that the *Okusama* (as they called her in the house) herself had fashioned certain voluminous garments suitable for respectable maids to wear when taking their daily baths.

"Well, I'll be off then," said Edith, "and you're an angel of light. Good-by, Jamison."

SHE held out a vigorous hand, first to the mother and then to the son. For a moment the young man retained her hand.

"Do you know, Edith," he said with fine conviction, "that you strike me as being at present just about the finest thing in Japan?"

"Oh, stop it, silly! You know you don't mean half you say. Everyone knows you've kissed the blarney stone of those kingly ancestors of yours."

Nevertheless, she flushed with pleasure at his words, nor did her bright eyes

evade the warm glance of admiration the young man turned upon her.

"It's true, all-right-o! But what's your hurry? Don't you want to see the result of my hard day's toil?"

"Of course I do." She was glad of the excuse to stay longer. Her friendship with Jamison Tyrrell dated many years back, and Edith could scarcely remember a time when she had not been willing to look at Jamison's wonderful work, or linger to listen to his chaffing flattery.

He put the sketches into her hands, and she turned them over with exclamations of approval and enthusiasm.

"They're really bully—fine. Oh, what a *genre* subject! Lovely! But"—she was holding up a sketch toward him now, and her face had a curious expression—"but where on earth did you get this?"

It was a sketch of a motley block of dilapidated dwellings in some street in the poorest part of Yokohama—a little faded, rickety streak of miserable houses, seeming to lean against each other as for support, yet with their blue slanting roofs, curiously picturesque and quaint. But there was something else that lent a particular distinction to the picture. In the midst of the squalid little block, in a casement on the second floor of the poorest of the houses, there showed a young girl's exquisite but tragic face. She was leaning on her clasped hands, her eyes wide and frightened, fixed in some sad day-dream.

For some reason the artist's face had turned grave, and picking up the sketch, he looked at it for a moment without speaking.

"Well?" prompted Edith, watching his face narrowly. "You haven't answered me. Who is—the girl?"

"Oh—I don't know," he answered slowly. "I wish I did. She interests me. I sketched her down in the quarter to-day. She's rather good—I think."

"She posed for you?" asked Miss Latimer quietly. She was drawing on her gloves slowly now, very carefully smoothing the soft kid over her fingers, but watching Jamison's face all the while, her own brows slightly drawn.

"Oh, no. I caught her—just like that." His eyes half closed, as he ex-

amined the picture critically, as it seemed, and as if in thought. Then he said:

"It's queer, but I have a feeling as if—this girl's face were familiar—as if I'd met this little girl somewhere before. I feel that—I know her."

Edith was snapping closed the buttons on her gloves. She smiled brightly up at her friend.

"Some other re-incarnation," she said lightly. "Who can tell?"

He looked at her sharply.

"No, no. I didn't mean that. I have the curious feeling that I've seen her somewhere here in Japan—fairly recently. Yet I cannot place her at all. Her face—haunts me, almost," he added with a somewhat lame laugh.

"I'll tell you who she is," said Edith. "She's Spring-morning, the girl I've been telling you about. Possibly you've seen her with me."

"Spring-morning? Is that her name?" He looked eagerly from the picture to Edith, enchanted with some discovery he fancied he had made.

"By Jove! how the name becomes her, doesn't it? She is like a spring morning, isn't she?" And he held the picture off at arm's length for Edith's scrutiny.

Edith nodded her head.

"Yes, she is. And now I'm off—in earnest, this time. Good-by."

"But wait a bit, Edith. Perhaps you can tell me something about her—where she came from—who she is? You see I'm anxious to place her—to find out where I've seen her before."

"I've told you exactly everything I know about her," said Edith coldly, "and now, as she's coming here to work for your mother, possibly you will get all the much desired information directly from her. Good-by, all."

JAMISON TYRRELL stood in thought for some time after Edith had gone, his thumb and forefinger absently fingering his lower lip, after an abstracted habit he had when preoccupied.

His mother, who had missed not a word of his colloquy with Edith, had come quietly to his side. Her glasses were on firmly, and she was looking

down at the picture that lay now on the top of the little heap of sketches.

"Did you notice anything peculiar about Edith's manner just now?" he asked his mother suddenly.

Mrs. Tyrrell turned somewhat unwillingly from the sketch. She looked up quietly into her boy's face, and there was in her face a strange dawning expression of vague alarm. Her voice, however, was unusually gentle.

"You say sometimes, dear, that I'm accustomed to see things through my glasses. Don't you think you too are a little—blind?"

"Why, what do you mean, Mother?"

"I mean—Edith!"

"What about her?"

"She loves you, my son."

"What utter nonsense."

He almost shoved his mother aside at the thought, and from his frowning face it was plain that he was not pleased.

"What preposterous notions you do get at times! Now, for heaven's sake don't suggest any such thing to Edith, too. Why, it's a crazy idea! She's no more in love with me than I am with her."

His mother looked at him without speaking, and he began turning over his sketches, muttering to himself crossly:

"Rubbish—preposterous nonsense! Why, she isn't my kind of girl at all. We're jolly good friends—nothing more."

"What is your 'kind of girl?'" asked his mother quietly.

"Oh—I don't know. Something dainty and quaint and unusual—and—and—"

He had stopped speaking, and his mother, going nearer to his side, saw that he was looking at the picture of a miserable block of poor little houses, from the window of one of which a young girl's face seemed to glow, like a star.

"Is that—is that—Spring-morning?" she asked, and involuntarily was conscious that the quaver in her voice betrayed the strange agitation which had seized upon her and seemed to stifle her. Her son looked up, and something in the expression of his eyes deepened her sudden fright. She caught him by the shoulders in an almost frantic embrace.

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"Jamie—Jamie—my own dear boy—it would break my heart if you were to care for—a Japanese!"

"Mother!" He stood up, upsetting all the sketches upon the floor.

"Now, of all the unutterably— Now look here: what's the matter with you? Aren't you ashamed to talk to your son like that?"

Half roughly, half with affectionate humor, he chided her.

"Well, but Jamie, the sudden notion just came to me—and I think it came to Edith, too, and—and—well, I just couldn't bear the mere thought. Why, do you know, dear, I declare in spite of my promise to Edith, I cannot now take that girl into our house."

"Mother!" he cried sternly. "You cannot refuse to. Do you mean to tell me that because of some crazy notion like that you'd refuse to help a poor little helpless girl who's never done you or anyone else any harm, and whose very poverty shows her purity and goodness and—"

His mother's mouth formed in a thin, firm line.

"She may be a perfect angel," said she, "but she is not coming to live in my house, Jamie."

"Oh, very well, if that's the way you do things!"

There was a new expression on his face now, almost ugly, as he picked up his hat and looked at his mother.

"Edith says this little girl is on the verge of starvation, and that her—relative is trying to drive her to worse than that. I knew she was in trouble when I looked at her to-day. Anyone could have seen it. Now, if after promising to help her, you won't—I will!"

"Jamie!" She followed him to the door. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to see her. I'm going to engage her to work for me—as a model."

"No—Jamie!"

"Yes, Mother,"—very firmly. "I must have girls for such work, and she will be an excellent subject, apart from the fact that she needs work."

"But, Jamie, you can't work with a girl like that—as your model. I couldn't bear it. It isn't right—"

But he shook her hand off from his

arm with an exclamation of impatience, and he went out into the street, though the shadows of approaching twilight had already begun to fall, and the streets had taken on the appearance of desolation.

CHAPTER VI

T YRRELL'S knock was answered by Madam Yamada herself. She came to the door, with her pipe in her hand, and stood for a moment, looking up loweringly at the young man upon her threshold. Though it was dark already, and the street unlighted, she perceived at once that her caller was a foreigner, and somehow this fact awoke in her venomous old breast a sense of fury and yet of bitter triumph, as she realized that she had placed her daughter beyond the reach of these most detested ones.

She met his request for Spring-morning, with the response that she could not understand such language, and was about to close the door, practically in his face, when he stepped resolutely across the threshold and into the room.

"What you want, Mr. Foreigner?" she demanded fiercely, her little black eyes taking in one penetrating glance the cool, clean-looking young man whose very attractiveness she resented.

"Why, I merely want to see the young girl who lives here," he said, pleasantly, disregarding entirely the very patent animosity shown by the old woman. "I want to offer her some work to do," he added, smiling, reassuringly.

At that, Madam Yamada made a curious sound that was half a croak of scorn, and half an angry laugh of derision. She shook the ash from her pipe, and now, with her little finger in its bowl, she thrust it out in an almost menacing motion toward the American.

"Our men," she said, "fight for the Emperor—fight men like you, Mr. Sir—of the white skin. Soon, perhaps, the war will be over. Our sons will come back, for not all are killed. Well! There is much poverty in a land after war. Shall our men return to starve in Japan? No! Not while we have daughters who are healthy—and beautiful!"

SOMEWHAT of the meaning of her words reached the comprehension of Jamison Tyrrell, and almost unconsciously he moved back toward the door. A sense of overwhelming disgust for the Japanese swept him. He regretted that he had gone as far as he had to help any one of them, and this regret, for the moment, swept aside his first fine impulse.

The wretched old crone had hobbled back to the fire-box, had lighted her pipe, and now, crouched down upon her knees, she was smoking drowsily. She was a repulsive, detestable object—this relative of Spring-morning; yet, even as he studied her, the tragic face of the young girl herself came up suddenly before him, and the thought of leaving her in the hands of this wretched old woman revolted him.

Tyrrell knew his Japan fairly well, and he knew that the average Japanese girl of the lower class would submit passively and often indifferently to the fate ordained for her by her guardians; and how was he to know that Spring-morning after all was different from any one of these? Only some subtle instinct—the memory of the girl's face with its poignant look of suffering, Miss Latimer's story of her efforts to make a livelihood, her half-starving condition when found by the good priest—these thoughts prevailed, and stopped him, even as he reached the door.

"It is possible," he said gently, "that I may be able to help you. Let me speak to the young girl for a moment."

Madam Yamada laughed weirdly.

"My daughter," she said harshly—and it was somewhat of a shock to Tyrrell to learn that this sweet and refined young girl was the daughter of this repulsive old woman—"is not at home any more. You will find her, foreign mister, in the Yoshiwara. She set out for the honorable place an hour ago."

Having imparted this information, Madam Yamada deliberately turned her shoulder toward Tyrrell, and half closing her eyes drowsily, she gave herself up to pulling upon her pipe.

TYRRELL was conscious of a choking sensation of fury and impotence now, as he looked at the old woman,

now seemingly indifferent to his presence, and placidly, contentedly smoking her pipe. Presently her head began to nod. She was either about to fall asleep, or was feigning sleep for the benefit of the foreigner. Sick, disgusted and nauseated, he turned away, and, as the cold, clear air struck him, he heaved a great sigh of relief.

As he threaded his way through the narrow little streets of the quarter, Tyrrell was unable, much as he desired to do so, to dismiss from his mind the thought of this unhappy girl.

Suddenly it occurred to him that Spring-morning might not yet have actually entered the Yoshiwara, and the idea persisted, till it became almost a torment, that there was a possibility that he still might save this girl from a dreadful fate. He stopped abruptly in the street, and then turning, hastily began to retrace his steps. He scarcely knew himself what it was he intended to do, or whither he was going. His feet seemed almost to carry him along unconsciously, as though directed by some irresistible, magnetic point; and presently his swift walk became a run, and he found himself rushing breathlessly along through the now almost deserted streets.

At the very gates of the Yoshiwara, he found Spring-morning. She had set forth bravely enough, her small white face held high, as though her resolve brought her not shame, but pride and courage; but when the lights and music of the "infernal hell city," as her countrymen had aptly named the place, burst at last upon her, the girl had drawn back, seized with a new terror, and, covering her face with her sleeve, she tottered along, like some frail, helpless leaf driven resistlessly before a relentless storm.

An impassive faced "policeman" threw her a passing word of advice, as she passed, pointing out to her the way. He knew, without being told, the mission upon which the girl had come thither. Her distress and agony of soul impressed not at all this little man of the sword. Many hapless ones had arrived before her in just such a fashion, their poor faces shrouded in their sleeves. In the eyes of the Japanese officer, this kind

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deserved no sympathy. They were weaklings and cowards. All the world admired the valiant ones, who entered for this supreme sacrifice with smiling faces and proud, upheld heads.

NOW Spring-morning found the gates themselves were fronting her. She stood staring at them in a dumbstricken silence. At that moment, weak and helpless as she felt, there recurred to the girl all the horrible tales and proverbs she had heard concerning this place, and not even its charming exterior—for the streets of the Yoshiwara and its houses are the most beautiful to be found in the cities of Japan, had the power to dazzle this wretched girl.

She began to cry—breathless, piteous sobs that tore her; and, shrinking back against the walls, trembling from head to foot, she hesitated there by the gates, trying vainly to summon the courage which must aid her to carry her within.

Suddenly, above her own sobs, above the din of the scraping, mocking music which seemed to beat ceaselessly within the Yoshiwara, a new sound smote upon the girl's ears. Some one, heavily booted, was running down the road she had taken. A moment later, she saw a great figure stop by the little officer who had directed her, and then speed on toward the gates. Under the illuminated gateway he paused, and then he saw Spring-morning, leaning back there against the wall. It was the "whistling man" of the morning, the white foreigner, who had smiled up at her in the dingy street, and had sent a strange thrill of warmth and comfort to the girl's aching heart. Now he was towering above her. Spring-morning felt herself slipping lower and lower. Now she was on her knees, her head at the feet of the stranger.

"I—afraid!" she cried frantically. "I—I unworthily—afraid!"

CHAPTER VII

AFTER waiting what seemed an interminable length of time for her son, Mrs. Tyrrell sent a message to Edith Latimer, asking her to come to her at once.

The girl found her friend, sitting agitatedly by the window, peering out into the dimly lighted street. She began to cry as soon as Edith came in.

"Oh Edith, is it you? I am so glad you came. I'm sure I don't know what to do."

"Why, what is the matter, dear?" inquired the girl, with genuine concern.

"Edith—" Mrs. Tyrrell plunged at once into the subject that troubled her. "I don't want that girl in my house. I won't have her here."

Edith smoothed the older woman's hand lovingly.

"Well, if that is all that's troubling you! I'll get Spring-morning another home. So don't you give the matter a second thought."

Mrs. Tyrrell looked at her gratefully.

"How reasonably *you* take it, dear. Now when I said the identical thing to Jamison, he was very angry with me—" Miss Latimer's brows went up slightly, but she did not interrupt Mrs. Tyrrell. "Yes indeed he was, and he said in that event—if I would not have her, he would go to her and engage her as a model. And he has gone out—to her!"—Mrs. Tyrrell's voice arose to a wail half hysterical, half angry—"without even waiting for his supper, and—well, I feel as if something dreadful were going to happen. I'm so afraid Jamy will do something foolish. You know how quixotic he is. He is a perfect child, my poor Jamy!"

"Nonsense!" chided Miss Latimer, laughing a trifle forcedly, and in spite of her words somewhat of her natural cheeriness seemed to have departed. "Jamison is perfectly able to take care of himself. He is simply sorry, as I am, for this poor girl, and I think it's a fine idea for him to engage her for a model. That will solve the problem for all of us, don't you see? And as for a home, why, I'm sure I can arrange it somehow—I'll talk to Father Daly. I'd take her myself, but you know we are going so soon to Nikko, and then all those other places, and I can't tell when I'll be back in Yokohama." After a moment she added thoughtfully: "Spring-morning will make a perfectly lovely—model."

AT that Mrs. Tyrrell leaped up almost fiercely.

"No, no—Edith. I would rather have her here with me—under my eye—than that she should work for my son as a model!"

"But dear, Jamison has always had models. Why not this lovely girl as well as any other person?"

"Oh, I don't know just why, Edith. I have a feeling—call it mother-intuition. Somehow, when Jamy was looking at that sketch of her—I don't know, I sensed something—something in his look—and it frightened me, Edith—and warned me!"

"Frightened you?"

"Startled me! I was appalled suddenly with the thought of the possibility that Jamy—my son—might become interested in a Japanese girl. It would simply kill me, Edith!" she added violently.

Edith seized her roughly by the shoulders and shook her.

"There! You deserve to be shaken. How can you think such things of our son? The very idea! Jamison has too much common sense."

"Ah, you don't know him, if you say that," cried his mother. "Edith, my son Jamison has *no* common sense—absolutely none! Don't you remember what his uncle Dan used to say of Jamy—that he had all kinds of uncommon sense, but not a grain of common sense; and it's perfectly true. That's the way it always is with people of Jamy's temperament. They are enthusiasts—impressed and deceived too easily. Anyone could deceive Jamison—a child could—easily. Oh, I suppose you call it the artistic temperament, for he is so clever, so wonderful, and yet in certain things as utterly foolish and helpless as a baby. Jamy has never really grown up!"

"You are getting excited over nothing," said Edith quietly. "Now let's wait till he gets in. I can't for the life of me see any harm at all in his engaging this girl to work for him. Poor little soul, goodness knows she needs help terribly. But if you really feel that way about it, you have right in your hands the remedy. Why not have her come to you for a time; then I'll soon find something else for her to do—maybe I could take

her with our party. She speaks English quite well, and might serve as interpreter. For the time at least, let's just make Jamison think we are not deserting her."

MRS. TYRRELL sat down resignedly, and folding her hands, tried to compose herself. To Edith's last suggestion she made no response. For a while she sat in silence, both of them watching from the window for Jamison. Presently Mrs. Tyrrell restlessly moved, as if to arise, but Edith promptly led her back to her seat.

"Now you sit right still, and I'll have Ume bring you tea."

She clapped loudly for the maid, and ordered the tea, but when it was brought Mrs. Tyrrell barely tasted it, and presently, setting the cup down beside her, she began again upon the tormenting subject.

"You know Jamison has always been crazy about Oriental things and people. Even as a child he used to collect queer little fans and ivory figures and old tea-boxes and things. I did everything I could at first to break up his intimacy with Mr. Taganouchi after he went to college, even though I grew to like this Japanese later. Jamy thought the sun was above him—couldn't see an imperfection in him. Then, when Mr. Taganouchi went home, and they corresponded for a while, nothing would do but Jamison had to follow him out here. I thought he would never come home—just think, he has been here more than a year now, and when I found my letters begging him to come home had no effect whatever upon him, I came clear out here, intending, if I could, literally to force the boy to return. I don't like Japan. I never did, and I tell this to Jamy every day. We are always arguing about it, for he is infatuated with the country, and I cannot get him even to say when we might return to our home."

"Well, you are just foolish then to nag him about it," said Edith wisely. "Just let his infatuation for the country spend itself. Everyone is crazy about it at first. I was, and am, and Jamison's got it worse than I have—Japan-fever! He's not had enough yet."

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When he has, you'll see him go back quickly enough then, without any coaxing."

"Ye-es, I thought that too; but now things are complicated by this girl."

"I don't see that at all."

"Oh, but I do. I have such a *feeling* about it, and in some things my intuitions are never wrong."

She hesitated, as though turning over some idea that had come to her timidly in her mind before voicing it. Then:

"Edith, do you suppose, if I did engage this girl, it would be possible for me to keep her—well, completely *away* from Jamy, until we could make some other plan for her—send her away with you as you suggested?"

Edith laughed.

"Well, you might forbid her to speak to or look at Jamison, but that would be very foolish. Keep her occupied all the time—give her plenty of work to do, and then she won't have the chance to bewitch him—as you seem to fear."

"Well—I shall have to give in then," said Mrs. Tyrrell resignedly. "Anything rather than have her working alone with Jamy—as a model. And you see—"

"Wait—I hear Jamison now!"

She put her head out of the window, and called cheerily to the young man, but a moment later she drew in, and hurrying across the room, she went out into the hall, closing the doors of the living room behind her—and holding them closed.

CHAPTER VIII

EDITH closed the doors, and now with her back to them, she stood almost rigidly facing Jamison Tyrrell and the Japanese girl she had befriended. The latter was clinging with both her hands, like a child, to the man's arm, and in the dimly lighted hall, her little pale face seemed both pitiful and appealing.

With an exclamation of relief Jamison started toward Edith.

"Jove! I'm glad to see you, Edith," he began. "Look at this poor little—"

Edith interrupted him gruffly.

"You don't have to explain anything to me, Jamison. I know already, and I want you to go inside to your mother, while I prepare Spring-morning."

The young man hesitated, looking somewhat anxiously at the Japanese girl, whose two little hands closed in a firmer grip about his arm. When he made a motion to release his arm, Spring-morning clung the closer, and Jamison, touched more than he cared Edith to know, and amused, made a wry face.

"You know," went on Edith coolly, "it would hardly do for your mother to see you—like this."

She stepped firmly up to them, and taking the girl by the arm, gently drew her away.

"I want to speak to you, Spring-morning," she said kindly, as the girl started to follow Jamison. "Go!" she nodded to Jamison. "We will follow in just a minute."

As the doors closed upon the white man, the little Japanese girl continued to stare at them with a certain dull pathos, her pretty lip quivering like that of a child. At that moment she felt she should not be separated even temporarily from that one who had come to her like a veritable savior there at the gates of the Yoshiwara. The long journey through the streets, always supported by his strong arm, listening eagerly to words she could only partly understand, but which she knew were kind, was something Spring-morning knew she could never forget. But now she had lost him—as it seemed to her, and not even the sweet white woman who had been her friend previously could take his place to Spring-morning. She began to sob, in a desolate, hopeless way.

"LISTEN to me, dear," said Edith, putting an arm about the girl and turning her about so that she now faced her and not the doors.

"I lig' speag ag'in ad *Eijin-san*," said the girl pathetically. "I forgot tell thank you unto him. I lig' speag those thangs."

"I will thank him for you," said Edith coolly, "or better still, you may thank his mother yourself. Now, Spring-

morning, I want you to listen to me. Would you like to live in this house for a while?"

"Theeese house!" repeated the Japanese girl, with an odd mixture of joy and wonder in her voice. After all, then, it was still possible that she might remain near this wonderful *Ejin-san*.

"Yes—this house."

"House of *Ejin-san*?" quickly demanded Spring-morning, the tears drying like magic upon her face.

"The house of his mother," said Edith coldly. "If you wish, if you do what I tell you, you may remain here and work for the mother of the *Ejin-san*, and you must try to please her and do whatever she wishes."

Spring-morning clasped her hands excitedly and ecstatically together.

"I lig' do those!" she cried. "I lig' worg for honorable mother of *Ejin-san*! I be liddle slave unto her!"

"Yes, that is how I want you to feel," said Edith. "You are going to wait on—to serve her—not the *Ejin-san*! You will be sent away if you try to serve him. It is the *Okusama*—his mother—you are to please—not him!"

"Not the *Ejin-san*?" repeated Spring-morning, shaking her head drearily, "—no—no please those *Ejin-san*?"

"You will please him," said Edith, "by pleasing his mother. And remember, it is better not to speak to the *Ejin-san*, or even to look at him, save when absolutely necessary. If you wish to remain here you must remember these things, and if you wish to please the *Okusama*, you must forget that there is anyone else in the house at all save she. Now can you do that?"

Very forlorn and woeful was the expression now on the little Japanese girl's face. She seemed for a moment to turn the matter over in her mind; then with a little nod of assent she said:

"I do those t'ings you say. Me? I jos' wan' be near those *Ejin-san*! Thas—all!"

Edith frowned, and her shoulders went up in a slight shrug of impatience, but as though making the best of the matter she now lead the girl to the doors.

"Come then. I am going to take you to your mistress."

She stepped in first herself. At the same time, at a sign from his mother, Jamison Tyrrell passed out of the room through another door, leaving the three women alone together. It was apparent that he had told his mother of the presence of the Japanese girl in their house. Mrs. Tyrrell had arisen from her seat, and as Spring-morning came shyly out from behind Miss Latimer, her back unconsciously stiffened. She put on her glasses, but ere she could even look the little Japanese girl over, the latter ran impetuously toward her and slipped humbly to her knees. Now, bowing repeatedly at the feet of the American woman, Spring-morning sought to show at once her desire to serve the august one in all things.

"Is this the girl, Edith?"

Mrs. Tyrrell's voice was harsh. She addressed herself directly to Miss Latimer, and the latter, her face very grave, nodded.

"Yes, Mrs. Tyrrell."

"She understands what she is here for?"

"I told her she is to work for you—to do anything you wish."

"Ah!" Then in a lower voice: "I can find plenty of work for her to do." Then to Spring-morning, whose head was still meekly on the floor: "You may get up now, my good girl, and if you will follow me to my room, I will show you just what I wish you to do for me to-night."

Edith went to Spring-morning, and tapped her upon the shoulder, half impatiently, half kindly.

"The *Okusama* says you may stand up. I thought you understood English."

The girl scrambled to her feet hastily, and turned an eager, smiling face upon her mistress. The latter was yielding to the fond embrace of Miss Latimer, who with both arms about the neck of the older woman, was whispering to her reassuringly. Then with a hearty kiss, she released her.

"Good-night," she said, in her bright, brave voice, and then to Spring-morning: "You will not forget what I told you, will you, dear?" she queried gravely.

"No—I nod forgetting," said the

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Japanese girl, shaking her head solemnly. "I mekin my eye blind ad those *Eijin-san*." And she showed a row of tiny teeth, dazzlingly white, in a smile that unconsciously won both of the women looking at her.

CHAPTER IX

THREE was a faint streak of light in the sky, and the *Okusama's* gardens were very sweet. Spring-morning cautiously slipped aside a screen, and stood in a reverie, dreamily watching the sun rise. She was a girl given to day-dreaming and star-gazing, to the amusement of the *Okusama's* servants. She had now been a month in the Tyrrell household. Her work, though ceaseless, was of an erratic nature, for the *Okusama* knew hardly more than Spring-morning herself exactly what work the girl should do. To keep her constantly busy, and out of sight of her son, this had been the aim of the *Okusama*, and for this first month at least, she kept Spring-morning engaged upon some task or other from morning till night.

Even at night, it was no uncommon thing for the *Okusama* to demand service from the girl. Her old enemy, neuralgia, in conjunction with her disordered nerves, combined to make her nights uneasy. At such times, the Japanese girl proved herself invaluable indeed. For hours, while her weary little head drooped and nodded, her small, deft fingers passed over the hot brow of her mistress, or she patiently applied the inevitable poultice of cayenne pepper and egg, believed by the Japanese to be an infallible remedy for neuralgia. Tired as she was at night, the girl was sublimely happy, and glad and grateful for her work. It was an inexpressible relief, which she would not, however, have admitted even to herself, to be away from the cruel, watchful eye of her mother-in-law. Indeed, the one thing that caused her uneasiness at this time was the thought that she had proved undutiful and, as she told herself, unpatriotic, in thus deserting her parent. And as a salve to her guilty conscience, she regularly sent to her

mother-in-law her wages, leaving but a tiny pittance for her own necessary expenses.

Her life was a lonely one, for she had been forbidden by her mistress to associate with the servants, and in fact she would have found little in common with them. On the other hand, she kept vividly before her mind the injunctions of Miss Latimer, that her position depended entirely upon her forgetting or ignoring the existence of the *Okusama's* son—he who had saved her from the Ychiwara. His appearance in the room where Spring-morning worked, meant the startled and hurried exit of the girl, when that was practicable, and when he had found occasion, several times to address a word or two to her, she had answered so fearfully and reluctantly, and with such apparent desire to avoid him, that it puzzled and nettled him. He even found himself debating the matter of whether she was merely shy or just ungrateful. Jamison felt he had really done a great kindness to this girl, and her obvious efforts to avoid him irritated him.

WHEN the day was very young, Spring-morning, a country-born child, arose with the sun itself, and for an hour at least her time was all her own. She would sit by the *shoji*, like one entranced, watching the slow, exquisite tinting of the eastern sky, the dim, pale light, as it crept upon tree and grass, growing ever brighter and more glorious; but though she watched the daily phenomenon of the sunrise with what seemed an enraptured gaze, her thoughts were in fact often very far away. Sometimes they must have been sad, for she would clasp her hands spasmodically together, and stretch them toward the sun itself, as if in its dawning radiance she could see the pale, benign face of the gracious Kuonnon herself.

"*Namu, amida, Butsu!*" (Save us, eternal Buddha!) she prayed ceaselessly.

The prayers and tears of youth are, however, transient; and Spring-morning was very young. Time was slipping sleepily but happily by, in this house of the *Okusama*, and gradually somewhat

of her fears and self-reproachings departed, and the strain under which she had been for so long, loosened its tension.

There was now no need, she told herself, to pray so passionately to the gods, for already they had heard and granted many of her prayers. Or—to be more exact—as she told her troubled, wistful self, a strange God, the God of the Kirishitans—was befriending her. He had given her a comfortable home for shelter, a clean, sweet bed on which to rest, and honest wages carefully to be sent to the mother of that absent one!

What if the irate and heartless mother of the absent Omi should seek her vainly in the Yoshiwara, and failing to find her there, trace her here, to the house of the *Eijin-san*. Had he not promised her that in his house always she would be safe? So had said the good Miss Latimer, and even the *Okusama*, recently very gracious and kind to the girl, had grudgingly assured her that she might remain in this refuge as long as she desired, but had added the *Okusama* somewhat sternly: "As long as you behave yourself." Spring-morning intended very piously to "behave herself."

THREE came a day when she greeted the rising sun with smiles, forgot all her prayers, and felt only that life and earth were very sweet indeed.

In the camphor trees the birds were noisily saluting the Lord of day. There was bustle and stir in the bushes.

Spring-morning rolled back from her round, dimpled arms, the long sleeves of her kimono, tucked up its scanty skirt with the string of her obi, and daringly ventured out for the first time down into the *Okusama's* garden.

The damp touch of the dew upon her little bare feet delighted her—it reminded her of her childhood days in the country. She had a childish wish to run across the greensward and to sing. Twice she caught herself unconsciously humming, and clapped her hand upon her round, rosy mouth. For a time she kept moving about the garden, running from bush to bush, stopping by the well to peer for a moment at her own smile-

ing reflection, and pausing by the flowering trees, there to steal a tiny blossom, no larger than her little finger. A quaint, witching little figure she made, wandering like a dryad among the trees and bushes, ever and anon unconsciously singing to herself as she moved.

FROM the servants' quarters was heard the first slothful stirring of the morning. Yawning cavernously, the still half-asleep Ume came out to the pond with her yoke of pails, there to dip up water for the early bath, for the *Okusama* had sternly forbidden the common custom of bathing in the family pond in the garden. At the approach of Ume, half fearfully, half mischievously, Spring-morning hid behind a bush. She did not wish to be seen. Her little innocent sojourn in the garden might not be approved should it come to the *Okusama's* ears, and the girl's fresh young face was slightly overcast as she realized this with the coming of Ume.

As soon as the latter had disappeared in the direction of the kitchen regions, Spring-morning hastily tripped back across the lawns, pausing, however, as if unable to resist the impulse, to fill her looped up skirt and sleeves with flower petals, so that they stood out about her in fragrant, overflowing bags. Her room, a temporary one, was on the first floor, and it was but a step down into the garden.

Spring-morning put her hand upon the ledge, and was about to swing up (for she had dropped into the garden from her window), when some one above her shook the heavy-laden flowering vine which clung about the verandas of the house. The loosened blossoms fell in a purple shower upon her.

Startled, she looked up, her little dark head and figure now fairly covered with the glistening petals. To the *Okusama's* son, watching her unseen, from a casement on the second floor, the girl's upturned face, with its wide eyes of excitement and fear, its little delicate pointed chin and scarlet lips, seemed as exquisite as a flower.

For a moment she hesitated uncertainly by the casement looking fearfully

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at the heavy vine which had moved so ferociously but a moment before. Some one, she knew, was watching her. Ah, could it be the *Okusama*, the *Okusama* who would chide her so angrily for thus idly, foolishly playing with the sunlight and the flowers. The troubled look upon her face deepened; her lips began to quiver, and she felt herself yielding to the inclination to cry, when a voice—one that she knew very well, whose half gentle, half humorous tones had never failed to thrill her, and to which often, unseen by her mistress or the *Ejin-san* himself, she had hid behind screens and sliding walls to listen to, called softly to her now.

"Spring-morning! I say—Spring-morning!"

SHE remained, trembling, by the vine, too fearful even to look up; but again the voice softly, insistently called to her:

"Spring-morning—I say—look up here." And when she had obeyed him, he met her shy, still fearful glance with a smile that seemed to the girl as bright as the rising sun itself. "Now I want you to stay right where you are a few minutes. I am going to make a picture of you. Wait a moment till I get my things. Don't move." And he disappeared into the house in a hurried quest for palette and brushes.

She hesitated only a moment, and then climbed through her window and back into the safe shelter of her room. She looked down into the garden, staring with unseeing eyes at the glistening green of grass and tree, and the awakening opening flowers that seemed to smile up at her in the dawning light. But her own eyes were brighter than the light, and her lips were apart, as she listened with beating heart to the *Ejin-san*, as, now reproachfully, he called to her: "Spring-morning—I say—where are you, Spring-morning?"

Fearful that her mistress might be aroused, she put forth her head from the casement like a timid little mouse, which ventures but a questioning peep, and—

"I—I nod can speag unto you," she said with gentle sadness. "Thas a beautiful sun! Good-anide!"

CHAPTER X

IT WAS only a few days later, that, by maneuvers that he would have hesitated to admit to himself, Jamison Tyrrell managed again to be alone with the little Japanese girl in whom he was so frankly interested.

An errant housemaid had been summarily dismissed for some unpardonable offence in the eye of the *Okusama*, and Spring-morning, upon whose slender shoulders the assorted work of the many departing ones always temporarily descended, was too busy to be spared for the daily marketing, a particular task long ago assigned to her, and which she carried out with such conscientiousness and prudence that she won even the grudging approval of the critical *Okusama*. Mrs. Tyrrell was debating whom to send upon this important errand, when her son lightly stated his intention of faring forth for a short sketching tramp into the country, and offering, if she wished, to accompany his mother as far as the street where the daily marketing was done. Mrs. Tyrrell accepted this invitation with alacrity. It was a pleasure always to her to be with her boy, and it solved the little problem neatly for her. And so, in one of his most devoted and charming of moods, he accompanied his mother to the desired market, and then he left her, turning in the direction his mother knew vaguely was "the country." In reality, it lead, by devious paths, directly back to their Japanese-American home.

He found Spring-morning, as he expected, in the *ozashiki*, which his mother had transformed into a general work-room and living room for herself and him.

The girl was industriously engaged in polishing a very large and very beautiful *hibachi*, one of the possessions of her mistress' son, and for which she had an especial fondness, and kept always shining and immaculate. She started to arise almost panic-stricken, however, upon the advent of the young man himself, and only subsided back to her knees at his most urgent, and apparently stern request.

"No—no—you must finish your work," said the *Okusama's* son seri-

ously. "My mother wishes you to." Whereupon she fell to polishing it with more zeal than ever, but her little down-drooped face was as rosy as the cheek of a frost-bitten apple.

THE *Okusama's* son watched her, furtively, from behind a prominently held newspaper; but presently he put the unscanned sheet down upon his desk, and moving his chair nearer to where the girl worked he frankly watched her, much to her discomfort, though she gave him only a timorous glance, and then carefully refrained from looking in his direction again. After a moment:

"Afraid of me?" he queried, with that humorous kindly edge to his voice which Spring-morning had never heard in a Japanese voice and thought must be distinctive of the American race. It was most fascinating, comforting and bewildering—all in one, the little Japanese girl had decided.

She considered the word *afraid* for a moment; then very gravely she nodded:

"Yes—I 'fraid!" she admitted.

"Why?"

She paused in her work, her hands resting upon the bronze bowl. The *Okusama's* son regarded her so fixedly that twice she raised her head to answer him, and twice dropped it in blushing confusion. She shook her head finally in bewilderment.

"I nod—know—why. Thas better nod speag unto Americazan gents," she said.

"Who told you that? My mother?"

"No! No!" She emphatically and very virtuously denied that it was his mother who had imparted this injunction to her.

"Miss Latimer?"

"I—I dunno—" said Spring-morning, trying to make her face very blank. "I—forgetting."

"I see. And who taught you how to speak English?"

It distressed Spring-morning very much that the *Ejin-san* should persist in speaking to her; also it made her most palpitantly agitated to have him sit there so closely to her, and watch her with those keen gray eyes that never for a moment seemed to leave her face. She

must bring this embarrassing interview to a close. It was very difficult to kow-tow with a great golden *hibachi* before ones knees, and Spring-morning was troubled that the *Ejin-san's* expression was now so very grave and, as it seemed to her, stern. Had she then offended him, she wondered.

What, indeed, the man was thinking was that the girl's beauty was the most perfect he had seen in this land of his temporary adoption; and he wished that his mother had not extracted a promise from him on no account to use Spring-morning as a model. Jamison Tyrrell wished ardently to paint Spring-morning, just as she was now, in her poor faded little gown of drab crape, as she knelt there before the fire-box.

She had been very pale and quite thin when first she had entered his mother's employ a month before, and so painfully shy and elusive, it scarcely seemed she was in the house at all. And yet, insensibly, it seemed to the artist, she added to the attractiveness of his house, just as indeed a sunbeam might have done, a graceful flower or a lovely work of art. She was the finishing touch in this Japanese house—the touch that it lacked, for the buxom, tittering wenches who served as scullery maids and servants were of so totally different a type that they might have belonged to a different nation. Spring-morning was of the pure *Yamato* type, with fine, thin features, and an olive skin warmed by a moving blush that was as lovely as a rose. He found himself likening her to a hundred beautiful and poetic things. She was like her name—Spring-morning, fresh and dainty and dewy. She was like a calm and softly flowing stream, disturbed only by the gentlest of ripples.

TYRRELL had never seen Spring-morning much excited, save once, and that was a day when the Mikado's troops, some regiment on the march for the front, had passed by their house. She had trembled, wept with excitement then, and, as if deaf to the remonstrances of her mistress, had run out almost frantically from the house and into the street, to see yet closer the soldiers of her Emperor. But that was in

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the first week of her coming to his mother. There had been no more marching regiments, and things had gone along very smoothly in the household of the *Okusama*. A look of peace had replaced the formerly wistful expression of the young girl's eyes. Her cheeks had rounded out, and were as red as the heart of a cherry blossom. The shadows had gone from beneath her dark eyes. Her lips were vividly red, and her shining little teeth gleamed fascinatingly through them when, rarely, her pretty smile came. Even her white throat and the little swelling breasts, which showed partly through the slightly opened neck of her kimono, did not escape the keen eyes of the *Okusama's* son. After watching her in a curious silence for some time, he repeated his question:

"Where did you learn to speak English?"

"Alas, I kinnod do," she said. "I no can speag those Angleish. Jos—liddle bit do."

"You speak it very well. I hear you with my mother and I understand everything you say now to me. You must have known English speaking people somewhere before, though Miss Latimer told me you came from the interior."

"In those interior," she said, "all Japanese mek a try speag those Angleish. Ad my home—long way gone in country also I got once mos' kind teacher. He tich me those Angleish!"

"Oh—some Englishman?" Jamison could not have told himself why his abrupt question should have sounded harsh.

"No—he nod Angleish. He Japanese jus' same me—I am. But he got lots books, and he learn spik Angleish from those books. He velly grade brains got on top hees head."

HER glance had wandered and she looked out absently before her, a somewhat vaguely sad expression coming over her face.

"Who was your—friend?" inquired the American.

"Who—my frien'?" she repeated, and then as if the question started a sad train of thought she turned very pale, and the

old troubled, haunted expression came back into her dark eyes. She answered him with a reluctance that was almost painful.

"He—Japanese soldier!"

Her voice had the sound of tears in it, and she repeated the words, as if almost to herself: "Japanese soldier,"—and added, tensely, "—to Mikado!" Mechanically her head bowed at the Emperor's name. When she recovered herself she had turned her back toward her questioner and now was at work again, vigorously polishing the neglected *hibachi*.

Jamison Tyrrell bent over the girl, where she knelt above her work. She looked up at him fearfully, an expression of almost terror in her eyes.

He started to say something, then broke off, exclaiming:

"Why, I believe you are afraid of me!"

SHE shook her head, tottered to her feet, and began a series of disconcerting obeisances. He waited till she had finished and then almost roughly asked:

"Are you?"

"No—no, *Ejin-san*, bud me? I go worg' jus' same those soldier, and *Okusama*—she—mebbe she nod lig' me so lazy ad my worg'. No time me got speag wiz *Ejin-san*. Plees excusea me thees day!"

She was backing toward the main doors, bowing timorously at every step as she went.

"Wait a minute!" He got up and stood for a moment looking steadily at her little, slightly up-raised face. Whatever he meant to say to Spring-morning he had forgotten. Inconsequently he asked:

"Has anyone—has any man ever told you how pretty you are?"

"No-o," she faltered. "No mans told me those—jos' ole womans. She tole me thase. She say thas mos' nize ting for Japanese girl—be beautiful. Japanese mans cannot be lig' those. He got be brave, velly strong and noble, account our exalted Emperor need him for hees service. But Japanese girl she can only be—pretty, lig' you say. Account she got stay home and worg—and wait till

those soldiers come bag—mebbe—again ad Japan."

THE man was silent. So the girl's heart, her thoughts, all her alarms and fears then were for some absent Japanese soldier! This was the solution of her dreaming, her sadness, and the thought, strangely enough, did not please him. He sighed suddenly and turning on his heel, went back to his desk. He did not realize that the girl had followed him, so light was her tread, until he felt the timid touch of her hand upon his arm, nor could he have told why the mere touch of Spring-morning's soft little hand should have thrilled him so strangely.

"*Ejin-san*," she whispered, "I lig' ask you one question. You velly wise mans. Mebbe perhaps you also know everyt'ings?"

He shook his head, smiling a bit ruefully, but her words did not displease him.

"Listen," she continued earnestly: "All Japanese soldier fight—fight for Mikado. Ah, all of them *wish* to t'ink a die for him. Bud, whad you think? —mebbe those Russian soldiers, they also kill some of those Japanese soldiers, yes?"

"Some of them, of course, will be killed. That is to be expected."

Spring-morning's hand dropped from his arm. Her lips were parted, and her eyes, moist and clouded now, looked out very forlornly before her.

"I t'ink thas better—die!" she said slowly. "Thas honorable to—die. I pray ad all the gods mek Japanese soldiers die—for Emperor!"

"Have you a lover at the front?" I inquired Jamison Tyrrell, regarding her gravely.

She awoke from her day-dream with a start.

"No—no!" she cried vehemently. "He nod my lover—He *nod!* He—he jos' some one mek proud my honorable family account he soldiér of Japan!"

She retreated hurriedly towards the doors, as if his suggestion of her having a lover both frightened and shamed her, and the thought that this idea was displeasing to her lightened the heart of the American.

CHAPTER XI

THE exclusive study of a very pretty girl is at all times a dangerous and fascinating employment for a young and impressionable man. Especially is it so when he chances to be in a foreign land, removed from the distractions and influences of his own people, and, as is nearly always the case, unconsciously lonely.

Jamison Tyrrell, indolently lingering in a land which charmed and delighted him, found no subject at this time of more absorbing interest than the lovely little girl whom it had been his good fortune, as he believed, to befriend, and her very avoidance and even fear of him served rather to excite and fascinate him the more.

The *Okusama*'s health had been poor, and almost unconsciously she began to lean upon the really capable Spring-morning. Somewhat of her former suspicions and even dislike for the girl had departed, and she had written to her friend, Miss Latimer, to say that she had decided to keep Spring-morning with her as long as she remained in Japan, though it had been previously decided that the girl should be sent to Miss Latimer upon her return to Yokohama from a pleasure trip in another province.

It became an easy matter for Tyrrell to see Spring-morning daily, for she was in almost constant attendance upon his mother. With the exception of that one brief interview with her, however, he had been unable to speak to the girl alone, much as he desired to do so.

He even schemed to make opportunities for being alone with the girl, and since that first morning when he had watched her in the garden at the dawn, he had arisen at the most unseemly hours, in the hope of again seeing her there. Once he had been so sure he had seen the bright scarlet of the girl's obi in the gardens, that he had actually stolen down from his room. But a vain search about the place showed no traces of her, and he returned to his room with a sense of disappointment and even resentment.

He was not his usual cheery self. His actions amazed and confounded him.

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He could not have told himself what it was he wanted of Spring-morning, for the idea that he could possibly be in love with her aroused his angry derision. He told himself he was merely sorry for the Japanese girl. She was a forlorn and pitiful waif, whom he—and he took an amazing pride and satisfaction in this thought—had rescued from a most dreadful fate. It was only natural that he should feel an interest in her. Besides, the girl was so distractingly pretty no man could have remained indifferent to her charms.

He would have liked to know more about that Japanese soldier whom she had so vehemently and excitedly and tearfully denied was her lover, and with whom she had studied the English language. For her sake, Jamison told himself, he trusted the young man would return safely from the war. Yet the picture he conjured up of Spring-morning living in domestic bliss with the aforesaid soldier gave him no particular joy.

His mother remarked his restlessness with complacent approval. She was glad her son showed signs of being bored with his existence in Japan. This surely meant an earlier return to their home than she had hoped for.

THEN came a night when returning late to his home from a little sketching trip in the country, he stopped, as he never failed to do before retiring, in his mother's room to kiss her good-night. A light was burning dimly, and his mother was breathing heavily and regularly. As he approached the bed, Jamison saw in the shadow, the movement of something above his mother's head. On her knees, her little pretty head drooped wearily over, was Spring-morning. Her whole attitude bespoke the most intense weariness and exhaustion, and there was something pathetically childish in her little crouched-over position. Though her eyes were closed, her hand still continued its mechanical motion upon the forehead of the *Okusama*.

"Spring-morning!" he whispered, fearful of awakening his mother. "What are you doing here? at this hour?"

She looked up languidly, the flush of

sleep upon her cheeks, and her tired eyes drooping drowsily. His mother stirred, muttering querulously.

"You must not stop—my head—" And she drowsed off again.

The girl smiled across at the man—a wise, patient little smile, which seemed to say:

"You see! I am needed here! I must stay!"

HE WENT into his own room, and sat in a chair with his frowning face held in his hands. Half an hour passed away. He returned to his mother's door and looked into the room. Spring-morning was still there, her hand on her mistress' head; but she had slipped forward. Her face seemed buried on the *Okusama's* pillow.

Jamison put out the light. Then, in the darkness of the room, he felt his way to where the girl knelt by his mother's bed. She made no resistance, when he compellingly lifted her to her feet and drew her along. In the hall without, still supporting her, he said very roughly:

"It's not right. No one individual has a right to expect that sort of service from another. You shall not do it again. I will not let you."

Spring-morning's eyes were as languid and soft as a tired child's. They smiled up at him in gentle reproof. His grasp tightened upon her arm. There was something in the still night that affected him strangely, or was it merely the contact of the girl's warm little body at his side? He was conscious of an almost imperative impulse to put his arm hungrily about her, and to draw her closely against him, and, fearing to yield to this impulse, he released her suddenly. He could hear his own heavy breathing in the silence that followed.

"Go to bed now," he said, trying to speak gayly. "It's past your ox-hour, and you won't have a chance to salute the honorable sun to-morrow."

She moved along the hall, a forlorn, tired, drooping little figure. Halfway down its length she turned, hesitated, looking back at him wistfully. There was something eerily witching in her face as she came back slowly to him and, without speaking, thrust her two little

hands into his now eager ones. For a moment neither spoke; then very softly she said:

"Eijin-san, I lig tell unto you mos' beautiful proverb ad Japan."

"Yes, tell me it," he whispered eagerly, and even as he spoke he drew her nearer and nearer to him, till her uplifted face was close to his own.

"Bes' thing in traveling,' say those proverb," said she, "is a companion; but mos' bes' thing in all those worl' is—kindness!"

He murmured something almost against her lips, and when she drew back slightly, held her:

"I will tell you something better still than that, Spring-morning," he said. "Look at me, and I will tell you what it is. There's no word in the Japanese language to express it, but in my land we call it—Love!"

CHAPTER XII

THEY kept their secret well for a few days only. Then the *Okusama* discovered it.

Passionately in love with the girl now, Jamison could scarcely be induced to leave the house, nor did his best efforts hide the condition of his heart. Whichever was Spring-morning, Jamison was near at hand, and his hovering, restless, eager presence about the house aroused at first the anxiety and then the suspicion of his mother.

He had insisted that his health was never better, but it was unlike her "boy" to hang about the house in this fashion. She fancied he had lost his appetite, was sure he was thinner, and declared him pale and ill-looking. She implored him to return with her to America, as this was the infallible remedy she always proffered for any of their ills, and when he irritably proclaimed this suggestion as out of the question, and the next moment radiantly averred that he had never been happier in his life, Mrs. Tyrrell found food for further reflection. She wrote to her friend, Miss Latimer, who was now in Kioto, suggesting that Edith's party prolong its pleasure trip, and that her son be invited to join them at some

healthy point. Edith responded that she expected to be in Yokohama in a few days, and her party were already dispersing.

Jamison was in fact consumed with but one purpose and desire at this time. He wished to be alone with Spring-morning, and his arms ached again to hold her in them. Her constant service upon his mother aroused his jealous resentment, and he found himself feeling anything but tenderly disposed toward that one, who, though recently his dear and cherished parent, now appeared in the light of a severe and exacting task mistress to the one upon whom Jamison had bestowed his heart.

A change, too, was apparent in the girl. More than ever, fearfully, she sought to avoid the *Okusama*'s son. She still thrilled and burned with the remembrance of that brief moment in his arms, and she feared even to raise her eyes lest they meet the always ardent and appealing glance of the young white man.

He would take up a position in the room, directly in front of the girl, and where she might not even raise her eyes without encountering his fixed and most fond gaze directed at her over the back of the unconscious *Okusama*. Under these compelling and sometimes reproachful glances Spring-morning turned pale or flushed and trembled so that it seemed impossible for her to continue her work.

Ostentatiously making a pretense of bringing some article to his mother, he never failed to touch the kneeling girl as he passed her, and the furtive passing of his hand upon her cheek, the warm contact of his shoulder against her as he stooped to recover some purposely dropped book, were like enveloping caresses, fascinating and most terrible to the little Japanese girl.

It was vain for her nightly to prostrate herself before the little household shrine she had set up especially in her own room; vain for her to repeat over and over to herself that she was the honorable wife of Yamada Omi, a soldier of Japan! Vain to promise all the eight million gods of the heavens and the seas that she would put forever from her sinful mind all thought of this

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terribly fascinating *Ejin-san!* He pervaded her thoughts utterly.

IT WAS, therefore, impossible for the *Okusama* to continue indifferent to the silent telepathy that existed between these two. She sensed it gradually, though it was suddenly one afternoon when she realized that her previous vague suspicions were well founded. On this particular day she had been reading aloud in the *ozshiki*. Before her, on her knees, Spring-morning was at work, embroidering, and somewhere (by the window looking to the garden side, as she supposed) her son was listening to the story. She chanced to look up suddenly, and something in that attitude of the girl before her caught her attention. Her fingers were idle upon the embroidery frame, and her gaze was fixed above the head of her mistress. She did not move, even when the *Okusama* had ceased abruptly to read. Indeed, she seemed unconscious of this face. Something in the rapt, absorbed expression of the girl's face, the deep glow of red that bathed her face from neck to brow, caused her mistress to regard her fixedly. Then, very stealthily, Mrs. Tyrrell turned in her seat. Her son was standing a few paces behind her. He was looking at Spring-morning, and his expression almost duplicated that upon the face of the girl.

For a long time his mother felt unable to move. She was as one paralyzed, physically and mentally. Only one fearful fact seemed borne down upon her comprehension. Her boy—Jamison—was, after all, infatuated with this Japanese girl.

But she must make sure! She tried to control her panic-stricken nerves. She sat rigidly forward, her eyes fixed upon her folded hands in her lap. Had the two not been so absorbed in each other they might have noticed the curious change in the *Okusama*, but even when she stood up suddenly and moved toward her room, neither of them suspected what was in her mind. By the door, steadyng her voice, she said to the girl:

"I am going to my room—to lie down. I feel like sleeping; but—but I want you to finish the work you are en-

gaged on. You need not—come with me."

The door had barely closed upon her when Jamison joyfully sprang toward the girl, picked her up literally from the floor and drew her, blushing, laughing and playfully protesting, into his arms.

Neither heard the reopening of the doors, and for a moment the *Okusama* swayed on the threshold, glaring at them almost in fury. Then a cry, that had in it something of primeval savagery, burst from her lips, and she sprang upon Spring-morning and plucked her bodily from the arms of her son.

CHAPTER XIII

"I WILL do what I can for you," Edith promised Jamison Tyrrell, but her honest gray eyes had something in them that discomfited the young man.

She had come at once in reply to the telegram sent her by Mrs. Tyrrell, and Jamison had met her at the station and had told her his story on the way to the house. She had listened to him, without comment, nor could he tell by her serious face just what her thoughts were in regard to the matter.

Mrs. Tyrrell lay upon her bed, a cloth soaked in witch-hazel upon her forehead. An exclamation of genuine pity and sympathy escaped Edith, and even Jamison, who had followed behind her, went hastily to his mother, and tried to kiss her. But she would not suffer his touch even, and sprang up fiercely in bed, throwing off the cloth from her face and revealing features distorted with emotion.

"Edith! Edith, do you know what he is threatening to do now?"

"Not threatening," broke in Jamison protestingly.

Mrs. Tyrrell's voice rose to a hysterical crescendo.

"Yes—yes—threatening! He says he will marry this girl—this Japanese—"

Jamison said nothing, but a dark, stubborn frown settled upon his face.

"Now, dear Mrs. Tyrrell," pleaded Edith, "it isn't fair to speak like that. Try and look at things reasonably."

After all, why shouldn't he marry Spring-morning if he loves her? She is a good, sweet girl, I am sure. And Jamison would be taking the right and honorable course in marrying her."

"What!" Mrs. Tyrrell stared at the girl in angry amazement. "You don't understand. He means to marry her regularly—in our church. White men don't marry Japanese like that, even when they make fools of themselves about them. You know that very well."

"I know," said Edith, flushing, but with a certain sweet dignity, "that honorable white men do marry them in our way, and I am glad—glad that Jamison is the man I have always believed him to be."

"So—you are going to side with him?"

She stared at the girl stupidly, a dull look of dislike for her slowly coming into her face.

"It's not a case of 'siding,' dear," said Edith gently.

"Of course not," broke in Jamison angrily. "Edith is simply looking at the matter from a common-sense point of view."

"Do you mean to say, Edith, that you approve of these mixed marriages between white men and Japanese women?"

Edith answered somewhat weakly, after a moment's hesitation.

"Well, why should not such a marriage be happy?"

"Happy!" cried the irate *Okusama*. "It's not a matter of happiness, but of decency. I tell you it's abominable—against nature. God never meant us to make such marriages. I'd as soon have my son marry a—a—negress!"

"Oh, Mrs. Tyrrell!"

"I would indeed!" she declared fiercely. "I have always believed in the yellow peril, and I think we white people should stand together and do everything in our power to keep these horrible heathens—away from us."

JAMISON had come from behind Edith. His wrathful young face was thrust out, and he was thumping his clinched fist upon the palm of his hand.

"If you weren't beside yourself with your insane prejudice and jealousy I'd tell you a thing or two that might enlighten you. You've done nothing since we came here, Mother, save disparage these people, and you ought to know better than to make such foolish and ignorant statements. Fancy comparing a race like the Japanese with one whose history is that of slavery and degeneration. The Japanese, when it comes to that, are a darned sight more civilized than we are."

"But white people," said his mother bitterly, "don't want to be mixed with them. We don't want our race to end in the miserable products such as we see here in Japan—Japan's degraded and despised half-castes. You know yourself how even the Japanese regard them."

"You exaggerate things. I don't know any place in the world—certainly not in the West—where illegitimate children are regarded with any particular favor or respect. Besides, it's unfair to judge a race by its illegitimates. We know, however, lots of charming people of such blood. You think a lot, don't you, Mother, of Senator Franklin? And you were quite flattered when we were in Spain and the Perraltos descended to invite us to their princely home. Well, Senator Franklin is a half-blood Indian and is proud of it. The Perraltos—and many other fine Spanish families—like to boast of a strain of Indian blood. Is the Indian blood better than the Japanese? Have they produced imperishable works of art or uttered sublime proverbs, or endowed the world with some of its most prized inventions? You can't answer me, can you, Mother? Your objection to my marrying Spring-morning you say is because of her race. Well, if you can listen to reason, I can prove to you that her race is fully as good as our own."

Mrs. Tyrrell made a hopeless gesture with her hands. In the stubborn young face looking back at her, she dimly saw her own reflection of many years ago, when she had faced her father and defied him for the sake of the impractical and penniless young actor who had won her heart.

"I see," she said unsteadily, "that at

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is impossible to move you, Jamy. You see,"—she turned to Edith—"there is only one thing left for me to do. I must leave this house—right away."

"You can't do that," protested Jamison. "It wouldn't be fair to—to—Spring-morning; it would be cruel—to leave her alone in the house here—with me, until—"

"Is she here—still?" inquired Edith, surprised.

"Why, of course," returned Jamison, almost irritably. "Where else could she be? My mother wanted to turn her out—on the street—like any—Oh, what's the use even speaking about it?"

"But I should have thought," said Edith gravely, "that she would have gone herself."

"For heaven's sake, Edith, consider. Where could she go? A young girl like that."

"Well—she had some relative, didn't she—?"

"Do you think I'd let her go back there?"

"Now, Edith," broke in Mrs. Tyrrell with enforced calmness, "I am going to ask a favor of you. I want to stay with you, in your house, dear, for a few days, till my boat sails. I am going home."

"Tell her, Edith, that she can't do that—"

"I don't know what to say, Jamison; but, perhaps, it would be best after all for your mother to come with me. I am alone, as you know, and I shall be glad to have her. Maybe, we could go away together somewhere, for a little while, till the excitement is over. See how agitated she is—all upset. And you arrange for Spring-morning to go somewhere else, until your mother is able to bear it better."

Mrs. Tyrrell made a scornful sound of dissent, implying that such a time could never come.

"As you wish, then," said the young man, a trifle surlily, and added after a moment: "Of course you know what this will mean, then—Mother's leaving my house like this. I don't propose to subject Spring-morning to the slightest criticism." (His mother's lip turned in scorn.) "And so we won't wait, as I planned to do. I'll take her to-night with me to Father Daly."

EDITH said nothing to this. She was assisting Mrs. Tyrrell with her coat and hat, and had deftly packed a few necessary articles in a grip. Jamison, thus ignored, strode agitatedly up and down the room, muttering to himself incoherent exclamations of anger and protest. He made another effort to appeal to his mother:

"Now look here, Mother, you can't go like this. You—"

"Are you ready, Edith?" inquired Mrs. Tyrrell with apparent deadly calmness.

The girl looked from mother to son appealingly.

"Mrs. Tyrrell—" she began, hesitatingly, "I hate to see you two part like this. Please speak to Jamison. —And Jamy,"—turning to the angry-faced young man—"say something kind and gentle to your mother. She loves you—"

"I'll say—" began Jamison, but his mother turned her shoulder to him, and pushed the door abruptly open, so that whatever it was he had intended to say stopped halfway on his lips.

Edith thrust her hand out to him. She tried bravely to smile, as she looked up at him.

"Good-by, Jamison—and be good to Spring-morning."

He lowered his voice for her ear alone.

"And you be good to *her*—comfort her, and make her see things rationally, if you can, old girl."

Edith nodded. Then she followed Mrs. Tyrrell, who already was in the street.

CHAPTER XIV

MUCH to her lover's surprise and painful disappointment, Spring-morning did not take kindly to his suggestion that they marry at once. She was in fact secretly dismayed by his proposal. She had not really thought of marriage as a solution of the difficulties in which she had involved the Tyrrell household. She could not see anything wrong in continuing to live in the same house with her lover. The going of the *Okusama* had caused her some regret, and even remorse, but she was ready philosophically to adapt herself to the

new, and certainly joyous, circumstances.

The *Eijin-san's* passion for her (the word *love* in Japanese means merely passion), Spring-morning most ardently returned, and to be with him, touched and caressed by him constantly, was the sum total of her desire at the present time. But the idea of actually marrying the man had not occurred to her. She considered herself truly married to Omi. Her relations with the American by no means represented to the Japanese girl unfaithfulness to her husband, any more than residence in the Yoshiwara would have done—and indeed the girl childishly and even joyously made little offerings to the good Daikoku, God of Fortune, who had given her to this wonderful *Eijin-san* instead of the dreadful Hell-city.

When Jamison, after the going of his mother, insisted upon their immediate marriage, the girl demurred. She was not brave or honest enough to confess to her lover the fact of her Japanese marriage, and hence was unable to explain her reluctance now to marry him. Previously she had faithfully carried out her mother-in-law's injunction to refrain from telling anyone of her marriage, since, as a maiden, her services would prove of more value. Now she found herself in a difficult position. Her lover was demanding, impetuously and insistently, why, if she loved him, she would not marry him; and, seeking for a dozen excuses, all of which, elaborate and solemn as they might have seemed in Japanese eyes, met only the derision of the young white man, she finally, firmly and naively stated she was too young! This aroused his mirth, and between laughter and embraces he finally coaxed from her the grudging consent to go with him the following day to their friend, the good old Catholic priest.

Spring-morning was vastly relieved that he had not suggested a nakoda—go-between, to marry them in Japanese fashion! The idea of going merely to this "Kirishitan" priest was not so terrifying to the Japanese girl. Accordingly, the following morning, a smiling and even eager Spring-morning, arrayed in her prettiest of kimonos, a bright new plum-colored sash about her

waiſt, a flower in her hair and a gay little scarlet parasol above her, appeared in the *ozashiki* ready to accompany Mr. Tyrrell whithersoever he desired.

She had wrestled the matter out most triumphantly with herself the previous night. Omi, she assured herself, would never return. Japanese soldiers always died for the Emperor—certainly brave ones like the honorable Omi would be sure to seek and find that desired death. Even if Omi should return to Japan, this Kirishitan (Christian) ceremony was not, after all, a Japanese marriage. Strangely enough, the girl did not think of this marriage as something permanent, despite the labored and patient explanations of Father Daly, who first received the submissive and smiling girl into the church and baptized her before the marriage ceremony.

WHATEVER were her thoughts, as she stood before the quaint little mission altar, with only the strangely silent Miss Latimer as a witness, and dully repeated the words of the marriage service, cannot be said; but when it was over she asked somewhat tremulously whether Jamison did not wish to make also a Japanese marriage with her.

He said that was entirely unnecessary. All he wanted, so he joyfully assured her, was to make her his wife, according to the custom and the laws of his own country, and by the religion he and his family professed, and which was now also Spring-morning's.

"I wanted to have our marriage right, Spring-morning," he said.

She appeared to debate his explanation for quite a little while, and her next question shocked, while it amused both her happy husband and Miss Latimer. She asked:

"This kind of marriage for jos' liddle bit while?"

"It's for always," declared her husband earnestly.

Spring-morning looked up at him at that with a very wise expression of such sheer scepticism that he was obliged to laugh. Then she sighed and said:

"Some time Japanese girl mek marriage for liddle while. By an' by she gettin' dee-vorce; bud me—I don' ting I never do those unto you!" And she

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smiled up at him in such an arch and charming way that he promptly kissed her, unmindful of the presence of Miss Latimer and the priest. Miss Latimer, too, kissed the little bride; then quickly gripping the hand of the deluded bridegroom, she said she must hurry back to his mother, and she promised to do everything in her power to induce Mrs. Tyrrell to remain in Japan and to become reconciled to her son's marriage.

Now Spring-morning had heard, as most Japanese girls do, that most foreigners in Japan marry the native girls for only the brief season of their sojourn in Japan. She had considered the possibility that her happiness with the white man might be of only short duration and she knew that when the time of parting should arrive, it would be a heart-wrenching period for her. Nevertheless, she was truly Japanese in her philosophy. A little happiness for even a little while, she believed, was better than no happiness at all; and she promised herself that she would ingratiate the gods to such an extent that they would generously extend the length of her joy. She did not at all realize that Jamison Tyrrell had done the unusual thing in making her his wife according to the laws of his own country and church, and not by Japanese ceremony, which no foreigner in Japan considers binding upon him.

HOWEVER it be, things were rushing along in too swift succession to give the girl much time for reflection or alarm. With her husband's strong, ardent arm about her, his beaming face above her own, she felt herself drawn irresistibly into this powerful and fascinating emotion which he called "Love." Kisses, the close embrace and murmuring words of passion and endearment, the caresses that fell like soft rain continually upon her, if she so much as turned her face toward him, or lifted her hands—these were all new things to a Japanese girl—things she could not even have imagined or dreamed were possible. All the more they absorbed, obsessed and intoxicated her, and she learned, joyously and quickly, to return each kiss and caress bestowed upon her.

They lingered a week in the Tyrrell house, in Yokohama, in the hope of winning the forgiveness of his mother; and when this was not forthcoming, they set out upon that long, enchanted "honeymoon," where, under the guidance of and with almost the sensitive vision of his Japanese wife, the white man was to see Divine Japan in all its subtle, penetrating charm and magical allurement. Like poetic seekers after only the fairest and choicest jewels of nature, they journeyed to the famous points of beauty, or penetrated daringly into the interior of the provinces on voyages of discovery of their own.

At Amatautsu the full moon showed its wide, radiant face. They lingered in the exquisite teahouses of Iro and saw the famous dragon's light phosphorescence upon the seashore. She likened the white sails of the floating junks at even to the spirit craft of unhappy lovers who had mated at last upon the vast river of souls. And fairylike and weird indeed they seemed, as under the light of the moon they seemed to blow like fluttering shadows over the gleaming waters.

CHAPTER XV

THE little town of Zuiganji was as quiet and peaceful as the big cities were turbulent and agitated, for day and night, in the cities, the people were threading the streets now in procession, waving flags and banners, raising triumphant voices in delirious shouts of victory upon victory. And even here, somewhat of the excitement had perhaps reached, for, though there were no parades or marching soldiers, bronzed veterans returning from the scenes of triumph, every little house had upon its roof the sun flag of Japan.

Even in the early days of their acquaintance, Jamison had noted the effect of these various symbols of the war upon Spring-morning. She would tremble and pale at the mere beating of a drum, and no matter what her task, the sound of a passing procession or regiment would send the girl flying across the room to lean from the casement in palpitating excitement, deaf to

the chiding and angry voice of the *Okusama*.

So he had wisely refrained in their travels from any long sojourns in the cities, and now in this little quiet town it seemed to him that they had found that pearl beyond price—perfect peace and happiness. It seemed to the fond eyes of her husband that Spring-morning was like some lately lovely but wilted flower, which opened out refreshed, and showed a new and surprising beauty and grace. His constant, watchful care of the girl, the restful atmosphere of the country, their love, all contributed to her serenity of mind, and soon it seemed as if not a trace of the old wistfulness and tremulous apprehension, and even fear, which were so noticeable once about her, was left. A girl of sighs and dreams, he had transformed her, he told himself proudly, into a radiant creature of smiles and joyous bubbling laughter.

ONE day, in the heart of the woods, they came upon a regiment of soldiers engaged in skirmish practice. So astonished was the American at the discovery of Japan's out-of-the-way spots for drilling its men, that he did not at once notice the curious change which had come over his wife. Her face had turned as white as snow; her lips were pinched in a thin, suffering line together. The eyes she raised to his had a fever of excitement burning within them.

"Oh-h!" she cried, her hands crushed upon her breast, "the soldiers of Tenshisama náever sleep! Always they—work for Japan! Always they—they remember!"

"Remember what Spring-morning?" asked her husband, gently, marveling at her excitement.

She struck her breast with a passionate savagery.

"I—miserable me—I—forgitting! I am mos' unworthy worm in all Japan! Think, while those soldiers of my Emperor bleed and die for those country—me—I am seek those joy! May Shaka torment me! May Futen harass my days."

Her passionate words of self-reproach startled him.

"How can you talk in that foolish fashion?"

She raised her face, and as she met her husband's reproachful gaze, her expression changed, the frozen look of despair slowly melting away from it. Suddenly she began to sob, hiding her face against his breast.

"Beloved—I—I p-pray—you mek me forgiveness. Alas, I am think of my Emperor! All Japanese think of him. All Japanese must suffer for him, now, when he need them. But me? I have done nothing. Alas, I have dare be happy—wiz you. It is nod ride when those war is fight! Even those wife of grade princes now wear the cotton dress and work jus' same poor womens, account they too lig to mek sacrifice jus' same their husbands do!"

He stroked the little shining, black head soothingly, murmuring against it comforting and endearing words.

"Well, and you can do something, too, darling," he told her. "When we get back to Yokohama we'll make a contribution—a big one—"

She raised her head, and holding him back with both her hands on his breast, she searched his face with a look of startled eagerness.

"You want help Japan also, *Eijin-san*?"

"Why, yes. Why shouldn't I, with my little wife Japanese. I have plenty of money—"

"Oh—money! *Thas* whad you—do!"

"What else could I do?" he inquired jocularly.

"*Thas* true," she said mournfully. "You—you jos' a foreign mister—liddle while ad Japan. Tangs!"

"Well, I like that!" he laughed. "Is that all the thanks I'm to have then?"

SHE stared for a moment sadly at the rueful young face of her husband, and then her eyes became enlarged, and as she spoke her voice throbbed with some inner fervor that moved her.

"Sup—pose you Japanese hostian! Oh! Glorious then you do! Yaes. You so big—so grade and so brave. You mek one big soldier for Mikado. Kill mebbe one hundred Russian soldier. How then your wife *adore* you, jus'

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sames's you Hachiman those terrible God of War!"

Jamison's rueful amazement turned to mirth.

"Why, you preposterous little witch, you wouldn't want your husband to be a soldier, would you?"

She gave him a look full of curious pathos.

"Ah," she said very wistfully, "how grade honor thad would be!"

"What an emotional little creature it is!" he chided. "Now I want you to forget all about this war-business. That's why I brought you here, away from the noisy city, and I warn you, if you don't, I'm going to hurry you back to Yokohama, and then pack you bag and baggage off to another country, where the wives don't want their husbands killed off in that way. So you'd better stop right there cherishing any gruesome thoughts in regard to your husband's sacrificing himself for your old Emperor. Here, give me a great big kiss, and smile again—this very instant—just look how you've clouded up the whole sky above us!"

HE did kiss him, but her thoughts were far away, and her smile was shadowy. Presently she disengaged herself from his arms and resumed the subject.

"Listen, *Eijin-san!*" (She still called him this.) "Me? I am mos' insignificant little Japanese girl mebbe. Poor me, I kinnod do moach for those Japan. Thas nod for girl do. But I lig tek lots those moaneys you say you go' give for Japan war. I lig give those unto Japanese soldier, account I got live ad your *house*. I kinnod go ad house of Japanese soldier. I kinnod live ad those house."

She was confusing herself, even as she bewildered him.

"Live where? What are you talking about? How could you live in the house of a Japanese soldier?"

"Thas whad I say," she declared, provoked. "I say—I nod lig live ad house of Japanese soldier, account I prefer stay ad house of *Eijin-san*. So-o-o—"

She saw by his face that he was still puzzled, and, fearful of her own words, she added hurriedly:

"Bud sup-pose I got marry also wiz Japanese soldier? I got also live ad hees house. Yaes?"

"But you didn't," said her husband crossly, for him. "You married me, and I don't want you wasting a thought on such foolish suppositions. Now, if you don't instantly become my darling little happy sweetheart again, you know what I told you I'd do. It'll be Yokohama for sure, and then—America!"

"America!" she repeated, her eyes very wide as she stared out before her. "Ah, I lig very much go unto those America."

"Good!" he cried with enthusiasm. "Then that's the place we'll trot to next."

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT are you doing?"

He had come upon his wife doubled over before a little foot-high table. Propped up on it was a single scroll, in the center of which was a picture of the Emperor. Beside the scroll, propped up also, was a photograph of a Japanese soldier.

Jamison picked up the picture and examined it, his brows tightly drawn in a very ugly frown.

Spring-morning did not move. She was holding her breath, her face averted, one little hand held slightly up, almost as if she feared he might strike her.

A curious change had come over the girl since that day in Zuiganji woods, when they had come across the regiment of drilling soldiers. Since their return to Yokohama, but a few weeks since, the young people had been anything but happy. The man was unable to understand the change in his wife. From being gay, loving, happy one day, she was morose, tearful and silent the next, seemingly brooding over some secret trouble, concerning which she refused to take her husband into her confidence. This aroused both his resentment and his sorrow.

He longed at this time to go to his mother, who had never left Japan, and who—his friend Miss Latimer assured him—waited for him to come to her; but he did not wish her to see this new Spring-morning he had brought back to

Yokohama with him. He wished to show her the Spring-morning of their early honeymoon days, and he waited each day hoping she would become as before.

Now, as he looked at the girl, the soldier's picture in his hand, the old suspicion that she had a lover flitted across his mind. At the thought, a blind, jealous fury against her took full possession of him, and his hand dropped heavily upon her shoulder. Shrinking under its weight, she raised a terrified face. He thrust the picture before her.

"You've been uncommonly interested in the war. Every day you've been running out to learn the latest news. The house is full of papers. You read nothing else. I thought it patriotism. I hope it is nothing else."

She turned from white to red, her eyes furtively going from the picture to her husband's face. She tried to speak, but her fluttering tongue failed her.

"Well?" he prompted. "Are you going to tell me who this is?"

By an effort of will she had recovered her composure. Her face was blank, as inscrutable as that of a Japanese doll. Her half closed eyes even shinned as they met her husband's, and there was no more fear in them.

"Thas picture my honorable brother," she said. "He soldier of Tenshi-sama." And she bowed at the name of the Emperor.

"You told me once," he said hoarsely, "that you were the only child. Were you lying to me then or are you now?"

She was quite calm under the accusation.

"I tell you truth. I only child my honorable parent got. My brother belong to Emperor. He not come bag aenly more from those war. He going mek a die for hees country!"

HER cheeks flushed with a sudden excitement. She moved around on her knees and held out her hands imploringly to her husband.

"Be not angery wiz me account that soldier of Mikado. Ah think! He give his honorable life for Japan! The gods reward him splendidly. I pray unto them—every day and every nide that they so kindly give him those honorable

death for Emperor—that gloriously naevers he may come bag ad Japan!"

"You pray for your brother to die?"

"Thas glorious die!" she said fervently.

He made a mute motion of disbelief.

"What is his name?"

"Omi," said the girl softly.

He looked at the picture thoughtfully, then picked up his hat.

"It may be," he said, "you have told me the truth, dear; but I am not—satisfied, and it means a great deal to me. I have got to know. I will know no peace otherwise. Spring-morning—I am going to find out who this is."

She followed him to the door, holding to his arm, and entreating him not to leave her this evening; she declared she was very lonely and there was a pain throbbing right there in her little head, where she placed his hands. Wouldn't he please, please, remain, just for this single evening, that she might have the comfort of his presence. But he was firm in his resolve, and, though he yielded sufficiently to her blandishments to kiss her lovingly before departing, she could not hold him, and, once in the street, he hastened upon his errand.

CHAPTER XVII

HE FOUND Madam Yamada in the same miserable house she had occupied when first he had seen Spring-morning.

Snarling over her tobacco-box, she scarcely returned the civil greetings of her caller, whom she, however, recognized.

"First of all," said he abruptly, "I am going to ask you if you are the mother of—Spring-morning, the girl who used to live with you here and whom you tried to drive to the Yoshiwara."

At the mention of Spring-morning the old woman hobbled to her feet excitedly. Mumbling incoherent curses in her own language, she finally shot out savagely at the intruder:

"It is better to nourish a dog than an unfaithful child" says the proverb. The gods will avenge me, rest assured."

"You consider she has wronged you?" he asked quietly.

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"It is the duty of the young to succor the old," said she in her shaking, yet furious, old voice. "What has Spring-morning done for me, her mother?"

Then she was the mother of his wife! He felt gentler, kinder toward the fearful-looking old creature.

"Has she sent you no help at all during the past year?" he asked, as it seemed to him his wife had repeatedly told him of having sent the sums of money he gave her to her mother.

"Ha!" she cried, contemptuously. "Little sums of cash—enough to keep the food in the honorable insides—but what left for—my son?"

"You have a son?"

"A son! Gloriously a son! May his journey to the Lotus Land be one of bliss!"

"Is this—he?"

He had drawn out and held toward her the picture he had taken from his wife. The old woman clutched at it in a piteous excitement.

"Where got?" she cried as she tried to force it from his hands. "Give it to me, I pray you, Mister Foreigner."

"One minute," said the young man gently. "Tell me first: what is his name?"

"Omi! That is the name of my honorable son." She put her face upon the portrait of the soldier and mumbled and sobbed against it.

JAMISON watched her a moment in silence, intensely moved. After a moment he said huskily:

"You've made me happy. I want to help you in some way." He paused, debating just what proposition of help to make to the old woman, who was now looking up at him somewhat venomously from under her towering gray eyebrows.

"You are Spring-morning's mother, you say. She is my wife. If you wish—I offer you a home—with us."

Upon the old woman's face a look of wild amazement swept. Suddenly she began to chuckle in a hideous fashion, rocking herself back and forth. The young man watched her in silence a moment. Then he took some coin from his pocket and laid them gravely down before her on the floor.

"No," he said, "I take back that offer. I cannot have you near my wife. But here is money—and there will be more—as much as you may need."

Madam Yamada's fearful mirth stopped for a moment. She seized upon the coins avariciously, and began to toss them up and down on the hearth, listening eagerly to their clink as they fell. Assured that they were all right, she knotted them in her sleeve. She resumed her chuckling and muttered horribly to herself, and Jamison, who had got as far as the door, felt a sense of nausea at the thought that this fearful old witch should be the mother of his wife. Her words as she hobbled to her feet, struck him strangely, and he paused a moment before going out. She shrieked at him with an almost wild defiance now:

"Mister White Man! You make better for my son than the Yoshiwara. That is very good. Very good. You are most excellent Yoshiwara for my son!"

He went out quickly, closing the door hard behind him. And the air of the street felt good to him as almost he fled from the wretched locality.

CHAPTER XVIII

HIS confidence in his wife restored, Tyrrell tried to make amends to her for his seeming defection. To her somewhat fearful questions touching his visit to her mother he replied briefly that he had learned she had spoken the truth. Omi was her brother. He wished, however, that she had told him about her brother long ago. It might have saved all this misunderstanding. However, he did not pursue the subject. His wife's family was not one he felt he was likely ever to be attracted by, and he determined to remove his wife as far as possible from any future intimacy with them.

It was a few days later that Spring-morning begged permission to travel to Sasebo, where a military hospital was maintained. She said she wished to take flowers and other gifts to the soldiers.

Her husband, though he felt he was keenly sympathetic with her over this

supposed brother, refused, though not without some little feeling of compunction.

He considered his wife's health delicate. She certainly appeared very languid and pale at this time, and he determined that she should not be further excited by reminders of the war. He admired this passionate patriotism the Japanese had always exhibited, but now that he was experiencing some of its effects in his own house, he could not banish a certain feeling of irritation. Moreover, he experienced toward this unknown soldier-brother of Spring-morning's a positive aversion which was half jealousy, half admiration. He begrudged sharing his wife's heart with even this absent brother. He believed she had idealized Omi beyond his actual deserts, and her sensitiveness upon the subject—she repelled every effort on his part to induce her to talk about her brother—added to his rancor. A request for a description of the young man brought the fevered response that he was like all heroes—"too grade to make a speak about. His like shining like the sun—Ah! like those gods!" So she fervently asserted.

His refusal to permit her to go to Saseho was received in a still silence by Spring-morning. She did not urge him; she simply turned away from him.

HE TOLD her then, roughly, the reason why he would not permit her to go to the military hospital. He did not wish her upset. She was permitting this war to trouble her more than was necessary, and he intended now within a week or so to wind up his affairs in Japan and take her at once with him to America.

She turned slowly about at this and her wide eyes looked calmly at her husband. In them he saw, or fancied he did, such a mournful look of pain and resignation that he cried out roughly:

"I thought you wished to go! You said so when we were in Zuiganji."

"I lig go still!" she said, in a low voice. "But now—it is all change wiz me, *Ejin-san*. Me? I cannot now leave theese Japan!"

He said doggedly and wrathfully:

"You may as well make up your mind to this. You are going with me."

Her moods, he told himself, were getting upon his nerves, and for the first time he left her angrily.

Smoking for a time under the stars, he reviewed the various occurrences of recent days which had tended to aggravate and alienate him from his wife. Things had not continued as ideally as he had believed. Spring-morning had not proved the angel-mate he so ardently believed her to be in those blissful early days of their honeymoon. He felt his estrangement from his mother, and it seemed to him that Spring-morning should make the first overture of peace with the older lady. This she had stubbornly refused to do, insisting that the *Okusama* would repulse her, did she go to her, however humbly, for the girl had never forgotten that last interview with her husband's mother, when the latter had pulled her bodily from the arms of the *Ejin-san*.

Jamison felt, moreover, that, as Spring-morning was the cause of the estrangement from his mother, she should make some effort to atone to him for this. He was very much in love with her, but lately her moods were becoming quite beyond the understanding of an ordinary mortal, and, confound it, he sometimes wished his wife had been born in his own country; then she would not cherish such fantastic and preposterous notions concerning Japanese honor and soldiers, etc.

EVEN while he turned the matter over in his mind, she came from the house and on to the little balcony where he sat alone. Stealing softly up behind him, she put arms suddenly about his neck, and her fragrant, soft little cheek came pressing against his own.

There was something so pathetic, so eloquent and moving in this simple act of contrition, as it were, that Jamison impulsively drew her around to his knee. She slipped from there to the floor suddenly and hid her face against him. Without a moment's hesitation, somewhat roughly indeed, he forcibly lifted her face upward, and found she was crying again. It seemed to him he surprised her crying constantly in these

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days, and because she had not confided to him the cause of her tears, they irritated him rather than aroused his sympathy.

"Now what am I going to do with you?" he complained. "Such a foolish, silly little girl—always crying, and about nothing! Nothing in the world! Why should you cry like this, sweetheart?"

"I got do so," she said faintly. "Oh, I got do those cry, *Eijin-san!*"

"Got? Why?"

"Bi-cause—sup-pose I—I soon nod god eny longer you, *Eijin-san*, for my hosban'? You got sail those west oceans. I kinnod do. Alas, me, I got stay ad Japan!"

"You have, heh? Well, we'll soon see about that," he growled. "I guess a wife's place is with her husband—even in Japan!"

She drew away from him at that, and stared at him with eyes that had become very wide and dark with excitement.

"Alas, thas—true!" she said, in a whisper. "Wife—got stay wiz her hosban' even ad Japan. Me—I got—go—wiz—my husband! Excuse me, *Eijin-san!*"

CHAPTER XIX

THE following morning Jamison Tyrrell awoke early. His head ached so abominably that he could barely see, as he sat up, his hands pressed to his forehead.

Spring-morning apparently had already arisen, for she was not in her bed. Accustomed always to retire earlier than her husband, she had sat up late with him the previous night, and to serve him especially, so she said, had prepared some sweet native drink for him. It was shortly after that, that her husband became very drowsy, and he had slept throughout the night as soundly as though he had been in some trance.

Now he called hoarsely for Spring-morning; but though he went to the doors and called her name through the halls, there was no response to his summons, though a maid showed a curious face; and, seeing her, he withdrew, frowning, to his room.

Only his wife could rid him of such a

beastly headache, he thought, and, stumbling across the room, he clumsily bathed his head, and then dressed. Feeling very little better, and intending to seek his wife in the garden, whither he presumed she had gone, as was her early-morning custom, he descended to the lower floor. Here he found the *amado* were still in place. They were a sort of heavy storm-door or window, put up in the night, and Jamison knew that if his wife had gone down to the gardens she could not have closed the *amado* from the outside.

She was not in the living-room, however, and he stood frowning, puzzlingly, over her curious absence. Ume, yawning and stretching herself, with her skirts and sleeves tucked up about her, appeared in the room with bamboo broom and duster, to begin her morning's customary toil. She stopped, open-mouthed, at seeing the master so early in the *ozashiki*.

"Where is Mrs. Tyrrell?" he inquired.

The servant did not answer, and he prompted her with an irritable "Well?" as she continued to stare at him wonderingly.

"Well? Why don't you answer me?" he demanded.

"*Oku-sa-ma!*" stammered the wench. (They had now transferred to the young wife the name of *Okusama*, as it meant literally, "Honorable lady of the house.")

"Yes—my—our *Okusama*, where is she? Upstairs?"

The maid shook her head uncertainly and then began a discomfiting series of deep and most humble bows, which merely moved her master to deeper wrath.

"Stop your kow-tow-ing, and answer my question,"—and in an inward aside he anathematized the polite habits of the natives and determined to have his wife institute a new order of things in their own house. He felt out of humor and really sick.

The maid, still on her knees, then announced in a placid, sing-song voice, that: "*Okusama* long way gone away last night."

As though unaware of the electrical effect of her words, she added:

"Okusama say, excellency know allee 'bout same. No need humble one mek excuse."

EVEN after Ume had picked up her broom and pattered stolidly across the floor, Jamison Tyrrell found himself unable to arouse himself from the sudden condition of shock. It seemed as if his mind had, without the slightest further explanation, grasped at the actual facts of the case. His wife had simply gone—Spring-morning had left him. He had failed to make her happy, and she was gone!

The mere statement of the maid brought out from him not a single ejaculation or question. Slowly his mind, so dull and slow it seemed, this morning, set to work to recall the various acts of his wife lately—her unhappy looks—her unexpected tears, her piteous pleas that he would forgive her "mebbe ad those udder life."

When finally he aroused himself from the stupor which had seized him at the maid's words, he rose slowly to his feet, though his knees felt weak as those of one long ill. He walked unsteadily toward the stairs and found his way to their room. He examined her bed and saw it had not been slept upon. It was strange he had not noticed this before, he thought. She must have lain down for a while upon the coverlets, for there was the slight pressure of her body still upon the bed. He remembered how quickly he had fallen asleep the previous night. Suddenly he recalled the drink she had made for him. His teeth gritted together, stifling the groan which would come despite his best efforts. He had been drugged! Spring-morning had drugged him! It was unbelievable, that she could do such a thing! Spring-morning! His wife!

He buried his face in his hands. The room swam about him. He felt he was going with it. It was the effect of that cursed drug. No, it was the knowledge of his wife's falsity. He had endowed her with graces and qualities she did not possess. Never again would he believe in any woman. And then he thought of his mother, and his head cleared. He felt strong enough to find his way at least to her.

CHAPTER XX

IT WAS late in the evening of the same day that he finally went to his mother's house. Once glance only at his haggard, drawn face was enough for her. Before he could tell her what had befallen him, her mother-heart sensed his trouble and knew almost instinctively the cause.

"Spring—?" she began, and he finished hoarsely,

"—has gone, Mother. I found her gone when I got up this morning. I've been looking for her all day."

"My poor Jamy!"

"Listen, Mother: promise me that you wont say anything against her—or—or I can't speak to you then. I—I think there was something wrong—from the first."

"Oh, there was; there was, indeed. I never did believe in these mixed marriages, Jamy. It broke my heart when—but I wont say a word about it now, dear. There! We'll forget all about it. Do sit down beside me here, and try to tell me all."

Her trembling hands drew him down beside her. Her glasses dropped from her nose and hung by the ribbon from her ear in a characteristic way.

"Dear, dear," said she, "if only Edith were here. But—she was called away quite unexpectedly last night."

He still sat forward, with his chin hugged in his hand, his brows drawn, the lines deep about his mouth.

"I am trying to think where she could have gone—and why?"

"Her mother—?"

"I have been there. She too had left the previous night. No one knew where she had gone."

"Where did Spring-morning come from originally, Jamy? What was her native town?"

"I don't know. Curious, she never told me. I never thought to ask her. She never wanted to speak about her people, for some reason or other—I don't know why."

"Had she spoken of going anywhere lately?"

"Yes—she did." He sat up abruptly. "She asked my permission to go to Saseho. There's a military hospital

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there. Why didn't I think of that before? My head feels thick."

He picked up his hat and turned toward the door.

"I shall go there at once."

He had forgotten in his abstraction even to kiss his mother, and with a little cry she ran to him now and put her arms around him, drawing his face down to hers.

"Oh, Jamy—Jamy—you don't know how I have longed to see you!" she cried brokenly.

He patted her on the shoulder.

"You might've let me know then, Mother. You know you wouldn't see me before we went away, and since we got back, why—Spring-morning—"

SOME one had opened the door, and they both turned toward it, to see Edith Latimer standing in the doorway, her wide, clear eyes looking strangely troubled. As soon as she saw Jamison, a slow, hectic flush mantled her face, suffusing her eyes with tears. Dumbly she held out her hand to him, and he took it without speaking.

Even then, while his mind was whirling in a haze of his own miseries, it occurred to him that Edith's face was astonishing beautiful, with that expression of gentle compassion and sympathy in it.

"You know?" he inquired briefly. She nodded, silently.

"I am going to Saseho now." He made the statement simply, as if he knew that Edith would know the reason why, without his saying more. Her hand still retained his own, and now she put her other upon it.

"No, Jamison," she said gently, "Spring-morning is—not in Saseho."

"You know where—?"

She turned away from his eager face, looking almost desperately about her to escape his hopeful scrutiny.

"Where—?"

His voice was hoarse. All the pent-up agony of the long day when he had tramped the terrible streets of the city seeking his wife, filled with horrible forebodings of the fate that might have befallen her, so weak, so helpless and so lovely—showed now in his voice.

"Tell me, Edith—if you know. For

the love of God, answer me. Where is my wife?"

"Jamy, dear, don't look like that," said the girl, pleadingly. "Try and be brave. You know we all have certain things to bear—certain things that come to us. I—I have—them, just as you have. It's part of life, I suppose—meant to strengthen us."

"But I want to know—about my wife. Nothing else matters now to me. Do you know where she is?"

"Yes. I can answer you that, at least, but the rest she must tell you herself, though I promised her I—I would try to. I can't. Jamison—she is home—at your house now. I left her there—I—I took her back there."

"Thank God!" he said. Then, recovering himself slightly, he added somewhat vaguely. "She—she's not been very well, and—I planned to take her to America, and I broke the news to her clumsily. She—she's not herself lately."

"JAMISON," said Edith gently, "there are things you must know about Spring-morning. I think she will tell you. And—and—there is some one else there at your house. I—I'm afraid you'll have to see him, too."

"Him?"

"Yes. Don't ask me about it. Please go!"

"She—my wife was with *you* last night, Edith?" he demanded suddenly.

"Yes—all night—with me," she responded quickly.

"But, my dear," put in Mrs. Tyrrell, "you were not at home. Don't you remember you were called away—?"

"I was called away by—Spring-morning," said Edith. "We—we traveled part way, to—Saseho, and then—she came back with me to-day. That is all."

She started nervously when the door banged as Jamison went out, and, sitting down on a couch, she began to sob, gaspingly.

"Why, Edith, Edith, dear child, I have never seen you like this before," said Mrs. Tyrrell. "Something has happened to you, dear. You are in trouble, too. What is it?"

"Oh n-no!" she said. "I am not in

trouble at all. I am just crying—I can't help myself—because I am so sorry—so sorry for some one else. Oh, it is a dreadful thing to have one's ideals fall—to lose one's faith in lovely things. Poor Jamy Tyrrell! He always made such beautiful idols and pictures—he always dreamed such beautiful dreams. I used to say that no one—no one at all could ever be fine enough to realize even the poorest of poor Jamy's ideals. And now he is going to be hurt—hurt just dreadfully, Mrs. Tyrrell, and I wish, with all my heart, that there was some little way in which I could help him."

CHAPTER XXI

THE torturing events of the day had left Jamison Tyrrell so stunned that he scarcely realized Edith's words that there was something he must know concerning his wife; that there was some one else, besides Spring-morning, waiting to see him at his house. His chief thought, as he entered his house, was that his wife was back! She had been a "bad child," but he was not going to scold her. Poor little suffering soul! Who could tell what she had been through mentally?

Crossing the great living-room toward the stairway that led directly to his own room above, he was made aware of the presence of a stranger in the room by that curious hissing in and out of the breath peculiar to the Japanese when bowing formally.

Inwardly he damned his caller for coming at such an unseasonable time, and he continued hastily toward the little stairs, determined to go to his wife in spite of his visitor, who, however, deliberately stepped before him and addressed him.

"You are Misterer Tearel?"

Jamison now perceived that his caller was a young soldier, very straight and stiff as a mannikin, his bronzed face impassive and proud.

"I am Mr. Tyrrell, yes. What can I do for you?"

"I am Yamada Omi," said the soldier simply.

"Omi? My wife's brother!"

His whole manner had melted in an

instant, and he went toward his visitor with outstretched hand, which, however, the Japanese seemed not to see. He seemed to have drawn himself up straighter, if that were possible.

"I am Spring-morning's husband!" he said distinctly.

"Spring-morn—"

The room began to swim about Jamison. He staggered backward, almost falling into the chair by the low study-table at which he worked. He grasped the sides of the chair, and when he could command himself sufficiently to speak, the words seemed wrung from him in a savage, agonized whisper.

"What—did you—say?"

Apparently unmoved, his gaze fixed calmly above the head of the American, Omi answered quietly:

"I am Spring-morning's husband. We were married in Yawata, in the Province of Echizen. It may be you recall the occasion, for you were a guest of my Captain Taganouchi at the time the ceremony took place."

The American stared at the soldier dully. Slowly through his mind filtered the memory of the little town of Yawata—of the marriage music across the way—of the girl upon the balcony—of Spring-morning, as he had seen her first at the window of the old rickety house in Yokohama—little Spring-morning, soft, yielding, lovely, appealing to every sense of desire in him. She was the bride of that day—the bride whose fate had so moved him! It was impossible! She was his—his own!

THE face of the boy before him seemed to recede into darkness and disappear. He seemed to hear his silken, monotonous voice as in a dream.

"I did not know myself till I returned to Japan of my wife's marriage also to you. It is impossible for one to blame a mother; yet I wish to be just to my wife also. I believe her intentions were innocent. Hence I forgive her, and I am come now to take her back to my home."

"Do you imagine," said Jamison in a low, hoarse voice, "that I am going to give up my wife to you?"

"The law will force you to do so, Mr. Sir," said the soldier coldly. "Her mar-

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riage to you is invalid and not according to the laws of Japan."

Jamison started halfway to his feet, a savage imprecation upon his lips; then he sank down again into the chair, and buried his face in his hands.

For a long time there was silence in the room. The composed young Japanese soldier watched the white man with a curious look of wonder upon his face. The emotion of the Westerner aroused his interest rather than his pity. Omi had come from a field where men met death itself unflinchingly, aye, proudly! It was a matter of pride indeed among his countrymen that not even the hardest of pain could wring a murmur from the lips of a Japanese soldier. Yet here was this white man giving himself up to an exhibition of weak emotion over the matter of a mere wife!

Presently Tyrrell raised a drawn and haggard face, but he held himself now under control.

"I remember very well," he said in a low voice, "the marriage you speak of. I am trying to get used to the fact that my wife—that Spring-morning was—was—that girl."

"There is no question of it," returned the Japanese quietly.

"And if she were," went on the American, with more spirit, "I think I understand things now. Her marriage then to you was a farce. She was never your wife in fact. She was merely the victim of others. She was a poor, weak child forced into a union that she looked upon with horror. I saw her weeping—yes—I remember it all well. How was it possible for you to marry this poor, helpless little girl against her will? You did not love her—"

A dull red stole across the face of the Japanese. For a moment his stiff features relaxed, his eyes flashed. He seemed about to make some passionate rejoinder, but the next moment his figure became stiffer, his features more inscrutable.

"Japanese heart just the same as American," he said, looking steadily into the eye of the American.

"But—but if you had cared for her, you could not have left her like that on your marriage day."

A puzzled look came into Omi's face.

"You think it possible I could have remained at home?" he asked incredulously. "My wife herself would then have hated me."

"She is not your wife," said the American steadily. "She was an unwilling victim at that enforced ceremony with you. I married her in the only true way. My church recognizes only one form of marriage. My wife became a Christian before the ceremony. In her eyes, therefore, the Japanese ceremony with you was neither binding nor legal. She felt free, therefore, to marry the man she loved. I intend to uphold and protect her."

HE STOOD up, looking firmly and defiantly at his very grave little caller now. Indeed, his motion seemed to dismiss his caller, but the latter stood his ground steadily. His monotonous gentle voice had a curiously exasperating effect upon the white man, who curbed a savage impulse to spring upon and annihilate him.

"You forget," said Omi suavely, "that Spring-morning is a Japanese citizen, even though you say she is a Christian. By law, undoubtedly, sir, she is my wife."

"That too is a debatable question," said Jamison excitedly. "I think you will find that as my wife she is an American citizen. We will have the question settled, you may be sure, once and for all; and meanwhile, I am obliged to ask you to—go."

The Japanese bowed, but still he made no move to go. Very politely and respectfully he insisted that he must be accompanied by his wife. Jamison told him that was impossible, and the Japanese then asked him a question that the American appeared to regard as preposterous.

"Suppose, Mr. Tearerl, Spring-morning should desire to return to me. Is it not fair that she should be consulted in this matter?"

Jamison waved the question aside as too improbable for consideration.

"Why should she? She is happy here. She loves me. I am sure of that."

"Sir," said the Japanese, "I will explain to you some little thing. Japanese love is not the same as American. You

say you are sure of the love of Spring-morning. I also assert that I am very sure of that love of my wife for me. See how great was indeed that love when she was prepared to make the sacrifice of her insignificant body for my sake."

"For your sake? Preposterous. My poor young man, you are deceiving yourself."

"I am told by my honorable mother that my wife went first to the Yoshiwara that she might earn money to support my mother. When, later, she became your—wife, all that she earned in that capacity,"—he did not flinch, even when the other angrily took a threatening step toward him, at that—"she sent unto my mother, writing always that it was for *me!* I have seen the letters, Mr. Sir."

"You are deluding yourself," said Jamison. "My wife, it is true, appreciated what you were doing—it may be—she was unusually patriotic—she exaggerated your—your achievements. I knew that she sent what money I gave her to—you, but I believed you were her brother. That you are not, does not alter the main facts. She sent this money in the same way as she would some contribution to the war fund—and not for any personal affection for you. Of that I am sure."

"**I**F," said the Japanese, "I believed my wife had ceased to regard me as her husband—had ceased in fact to feel for me that proper wifely devotion—I would gladly set her free. Always I have found much courage and bravery to do my fight for my country and my Emperor. In so small matter then as insignificant wife, I am competent also to be equally brave!"

He paused, as if in troubled thought, a moment. Then very carefully, choosing his words, he added:

"Let but Spring-morning herself tell me that she wishes no longer to be my wife—and, at once, Mr. Foreigner, I will leave your house, never again to trouble you."

"That's the way to look at it," said Jamison, with an almost pitiful sense of relief.

After all, it was not the thought of

his wife's deceit, the revelation of her former marriage, that had weighed the heaviest upon him; it was the horrible fear of losing her. He tried even to smile at Omi now, and his tone was conciliatory.

"She is not very well. You won't say anything—anything that will upset her, will you? I—I appreciate your position—the claim you feel you have upon her—but if you could take my word—and let matters end there—"

Omi said nothing as the young fellow stammered on, but into his little eyes came that glitter of steel which they had borne when in the teeth of a storm of fire and hell itself, as it seemed, with his comrades dropping fast on all sides of him, he, Omi, a soldier of Japan, had torn up the hill at Port Arthur and attained the desired goal. It was an expression common to the Japanese face in time of peril, and the Russians had flinched before it, knowing the bull-dog tenacity and superb stubbornness that lurked behind it. Poor Jamison felt its sinister power now, and he knew that he could not save Spring-morning from the painful interview which this man demanded as his right.

CHAPTER XXII

AT FIRST he thought the room was empty, for there was no sign of Spring-morning. He called to her, but she did not answer, and he began opening and pushing the screens aside.

He found her doubled over in an agonizing little heap by the *hombaku*. From the drawers, she had been panically dragging her clothes, and they lay in a scattering mass about her now, a mute testimony of her intended flight.

With an exclamation of pity, Jamison lifted her up into his arms. She put her two little clinched fists before her face, trying now to shield it from his kisses.

"Listen to me, dear. You are not to think I am the least bit angry with you. Why, I love you, and I've married you—married you before God and man. You are my wife—and I intend to care for you and protect you. There's

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nothing to be afraid of—absolutely nothing."

He had drawn the hands forcibly down, and was speaking the words against her hot but fearless little face.

She seemed only half conscious of those dear, enveloping arms, of the honorable compassionate heart, which despite its own deep hurt found it possible to forgive and love her. She pushed him from her peevishly.

"I—I not afraid of you, *Ejin-san*. I—I got still for you those love—those beautiful love lig you tell me is mos' bes' thing in theese worl'. But alas, you not t'ink 'bout that other t'ing—mos' big of all to Japanese. I got do my duty! I—I—'fraid—of—my hosban'!"

"You mean—"

"Omi!" she said in a whisper. "I vaery sorry say those to—you! I—"

It was almost as if she had struck him. His arms fell at his side. He drew back from the girl and stared at her hard as if for the first time he was seeing clearly his Japanese wife.

"You do not regard *me* then as your husband, Spring-morning!"

A piteous, helpless look swept her face, and she threw out her hands to him passionately.

"I—I very sawry that Imek you those trobble! I lig' tell you I naever goin' forgit you, *Ejin-san*! Always you I got carry ad theese heart!"

HER words, her pleading face, so weak and suffering now, moved him. Yet, still dully, he felt a sense of wondering disillusionment gripping him, as he looked at her. Dimly, despite the love he still bore her, he recognized the pitiful frailty of the girl, her contemptible weakness, her unmoral attitude to life—her deceit and treachery; and still in spite of this, he could call up no anger or bitterness against her.

"Listen to me again, Spring-morning," he said gently. "You never were the wife of Omi. You merely went through a ceremony with him. But you married me according to the laws of my country and my church. It may be that this young man will attempt to invoke the laws of Japan to prove you are his wife, unless you do exactly what I tell you. You are not to be terrified by him.

He promised me, of his own volition, if you will simply tell him that you do not wish to remain his wife, he will go away and never trouble us again—he will set you free—legally. He is waiting for you now—downstairs, and I am going to take you to him."

"No, no!" she cried, suddenly terror-smitten. "Not hes here, not in your house, *Ejin-san*! I cannot speak to Omi—here."

"But you must, dear—it's the only way out. Come—come, now try and be my brave little girl again."

"No, no, *Ejin-san*—excusa-me theese day. Some other time I—do lig those."

"No, you must see him now. See, I will go with you. You need have no fear."

But she broke away from him, as he tried to lead her from the room.

"Go then before me, *Ejin-san*. After liddle while—I—come."

CHAPTER XXIII

IN A tense silence, in the *ozashiki* the two men awaited the advent of Spring-morning. It seemed an interminable interval before she suddenly appeared at the foot of the steps. She had come down the stairs swiftly and noiselessly, and her sudden appearance was startling, even to the impassive Omi.

In Jamison's short absence, she had made certain changes in her toilet. A fresh gray kimono had replaced the one she had worn in her room. Her hair had been smoothed, its towers readjusted firmly, and right at the side of her head, she had pinned some bright decoration of red and gold, which Jamison had never seen before, and which glittered startlingly against the dead black of her hair.

She stood for a moment at the foot of the stairs, looking straight at Omi, who had taken a step toward her. As if to meet him, she slowly advanced, bowing very deeply at every step; but when her head touched the mat she did not lift it. Omi's calm voice had a note of authority in it—as he looked, steadily, coldly, at Spring-morning.

"It is permitted," he said, "for the humble one to arise."

Slowly Spring-morning came to her feet, and now, her eyes traveling up Omi's face, became enlarged, and remained fixedly regarding him. After a moment:

"Omi-sama," she said, in a soft, weak voice, like one speaking almost in a dream, "is it indeed you—at last!"

"It is I," he replied somberly.

"There is a mark upon your face," she said tremulously. "Gloriously you have suffered for Tenshi-sama."

"It is nothing," said the soldier coldly; but he held up the empty sleeve of his kimono, and she turned pale as one dead as she saw the extent of his injuries. She went yet nearer to him, one little hand creeping out, as if, pityingly, to touch that eloquent sleeve of Omi's, which told better than any words could have done the terrible time he had passed through, and into the girl's eyes there crept a vague expression that was half pain and half exultation.

"The heroes of Tenshi-sama," said she, "carry always the mark of the gods upon them. Oh radiantly may your heart beat forever, Omi-sama!"

Her words, the shining fervor of her face, and the pitying expression in her eyes, moved the young man from his stolid impassiveness. For the first time his voice showed emotion.

"Spring-morning," said he, "you wear still the honorable *marumage*" (marriage ornament) "in your hair. Do not forget that it was I—who placed it there!"

HIS words, recalled her. She became tensely aware of that other silent, terrible figure in the room with them, and at whom now she felt that never again might she dare to look. She was thinking already of Jamison Tyrrell as one beloved—dead. With him she had passed the happiest days of her life; but now she was hearing the stern voices of the gods in her ears, and peremptorily they were demanding of the Japanese girl that she do her duty.

Here was her husband before her—Omi, whose young body had been torn and wracked in the service of his country and Emperor. She did not love him;

she loved that other one—the *Ejin-san*—but it was her duty humbly to follow and serve her lord.

Dimly only she heard the words of Omi, and knew that Jamison had come closely behind her, and was waiting—hanging in agony—upon her decision, but uttering no word to coerce or hold her. It was not in him to hold her against her will.

"Come then," was saying Omi, with that proud note of authority ringing out clearly now. "Prepare then to follow your honorable husband at once."

She continued to stare steadily into his face, but she did not move. Omi walked slowly toward the doors, turning back slightly, as if awaiting her, and presently she took a step toward him, then moved along, mechanically, falteringly, putting out her hand blindly as if to find the way. Omi now awaited her by the doors, and as she came slowly, painfully to him, he opened them. In the hall, standing waiting by the doors, where she had sought in vain for courage to enter, was Miss Latimer. Spring-morning suddenly screamed frantically, and she plunged forward into the arms of her friend.

CHAPTER XXIV

UNDER the cool linen sheets of the great Western bed which had once been such a source of mystery and joy to her, Spring-morning lay tossing and moaning. Kneeling by her side, her trembling fingers replacing the cloths upon the head of the girl, was the *Okusama*. Less than a year before, the Japanese girl had knelt by the side of her mistress and touched her aching head with her cool, soothing little fingers. Now the *Okusama*, patiently, and with even a brooding tenderness, ministered to her.

Out in the *ozashiki* the others could hear the cries of the sick girl, and no one made even an effort to speak until presently the moaning had died away, and they knew that, exhausted, Spring-morning rested.

It was Miss Latimer who broke the bitter silence as she turned from Jamison to Omi.

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"Jamison—Mr. Yamada—oh, I wish I could say something that would help you both. Jamison—"

She turned to her friend, who, sitting at his desk, with elbows planted squarely upon it, was staring out before him blankly.

"Jamy, please go upstairs to Spring-morning. Let *me* speak to this man. I am sure I can persuade him to—to go. I am sure that everything can be arranged rightly."

Jamison turned around heavily in his seat. There was an expression in his face that dismayed Miss Latimer. It was the same dogged, stubborn look that was in his face on that night when he had defied his mother for Spring-morning.

"My mother is with her," he said. "She will want for nothing."

"But, Jamison—" Edith went over and stood behind him, resting one hand lightly on his shoulder. "She needs you!"

"You are mistaken," he answered coolly.

"You are going to promise me," she said, "that you will not hold anything—that you will not be angry with that poor little thing."

"I had already told her that," said Jamison. "She knew I was not angry. I forgave her—wanted only to protect and cherish her." He passed his hand wearily across his eyes, as though they pained him, but a moment later, as though shaking off some temporary weakness, he straightened himself up in his seat, looked up at Miss Latimer and said:

"Just before you came in, Edith, my wife—I mean Spring-morning—deliberately made her choice between this man and me. She showed clearly that she considered herself the wife of Omi. She followed him—prepared to return to him, and only your sudden appearance startled and weakened her. She would be with him now—in his house, as his wife, but for that."

He gripped the arms of his chair hard.

"Under the circumstances I do not want her. When she has recovered from her seizure, let her go, as she wished to—with her husband!"

HE STOOD up, big and aggressive-looking now, no longer the loving, happy-natured, careless boy, who had fallen so desperately in love, and who had been so enamored with everything Japanese, but a cynical man, wounded and disillusioned.

"You don't mean that," cried Edith. "I won't believe it of you. You do not realize what you are saying, Jamison. You are bitter and unjust."

"On the contrary," he said, "I appreciate the situation precisely now, and I believe so does—this gentleman." To Edith's surprise, Omi gravely bowed in assent. She turned to him with an element of hauteur and indignation both in her look and voice.

"You ought to go out of this house, Mr. Yamada. You have no right here. You are taking advantage of Mr. Tyrrell's—" She sought a word and added "—indisposition. It is quite impossible for his wife to see you again."

As he did not reply, she turned back to Jamison, her eyes flashing with indignation.

"Tell him to go. Surely you are not going to let that man walk out of here with your wife—the girl you married. You *know* that she is your wife. Father Daly himself married you, and you cannot break a marriage like that. You know as well as I do that she never lived a day—an hour, even, with this man as his wife, and that foolish ceremony—why, she was nothing but a poor little martyr—a puppet for those ambitious wretches to move."

"That is the way I looked at it at first," said Jamison calmly, "but it seems she regarded it in another light. To her that marriage was more real than the one with me. She had been deceiving me, it seems, for months—in fact, ever since I married her. I was nothing in the eyes of her people, and her, it would seem, save a sort of—of—Yoshiwara, as her mother said, and like the women of the Yoshiwara she was calmly prepared to leave me and return to her husband after a stated period. It was a cool, miserable business proposition to these Japs, and she was one in the combination to fleece me."

"I would not have believed it of you," said the girl, looking at him with anger,

indignant eyes. "I wouldn't have believed you capable of such—meanness—injustice. Even if it were true that her people regarded you merely as a means of obtaining money, I am very sure that that was not in her mind when she married you. Ah, think a little while, Jamy. Why, I knew as soon as I looked at her face that day in the church that she loved you. She did, indeed."

SHE went nearer to him, her voice very sweet and pleading, and as she spoke for Spring-morning, Jamison Tyrrell looked at her curiously, wonderingly.

"Please promise that you will not hold anything against her now, Jamison—even her following this man. It's not easy to throw up the customs of centuries. She believed it to be her duty. I talked with her a long time last night trying to impress on her that she was wrong, and I only wish I had been as successful as I know you will be if you try to win her. We can see by the way she is suffering now the struggle that must have been going on within her."

Jamison turned his face away, and his head slightly dropped. He seemed to be gloomily ruminating over the situation. Presently in a low voice he asked her:

"What do you think I should do, Edith? So long as she considers herself the wife of this man and wishes to go with him, do you expect me, in spite of that, to hold her—to force her to stay with me here!"

"Yes, I do," said the girl, and suddenly she threw back her head with a beautiful motion of pride and bravery, and her clear gray eye met his squarely. "And I will tell you why, though I wonder that you do not know it already. Spring-morning is soon to become the mother of your child."

AT her words a startling change came to the faces of both men. Jamison's eyes were fastened as if in amazing doubt upon Miss Latimer's face, while the muscles on the face of the Japanese were jerking up and down, so that his yellow face seemed to move like some animated mask, as vainly he sought to

control it. A moment later Jamison sank down in his chair, and throwing out his arms in a motion of complete exhaustion and despair, he buried his face upon them. When Edith, who had bent above him with an exclamation of womanly pity, looked up again, she found the Japanese was gone.

"Look, Jamy," said she softly. "See, Omi is gone. Was not that fine of him! Now," she cried joyously, "everything is all right, and you and Spring-morning are going to be happy, just as the fairy-stories have it, forever and ever." But though her words were triumphantly joyous, they ended in a brave sob, and Jamison, looking up at her, saw that she too was crying.

"Did it mean so much to you, Edith?" he asked gently.

"Y-your happiness, Jamy?" she said. "It—it meant—everything!"

CHAPTER XXV

FOR many days, Spring-morning lay weak and only half conscious upon her bed. Then came a time when she awoke in the night and piercingly called for her mother.

Jamison started out frantically, dumbly hoping still to find Madam Yamada in the little house where first he had seen Spring-morning, and too stupefied to realize that it was her own mother, that vague little mother who had bound her inexorably at her birth to Omi, the son of her friend, that the girl was calling for.

Upon his return from his fruitless quest, he was met halfway down the street by Ume. She was running like a distracted little shadow up and down the street, vainly seeking the master, after whom the *Okusama* had hurriedly sent her. As his tall form, in the dim light of the breaking day, appeared at the end of the narrow street, Ume dropped on her knees in the middle of the road and beat her head despairingly upon the ground. Her shrill, wailing cries, oddly like those of a dog crying in the night, rang through the deserted streets, and shutters and doors were hastily opened. Lights were lit and faces appeared at easement and door. Presently the little

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street began to fill with the hurrying friendly neighbors of the white man who lived in their midst.

It needed no words of the weeping Ume to tell her master the truth. His little Japanese wife was dead.

The problem that had troubled him so bitterly since the return of Omi was solved now for him forever. His pride, the disenchantment, which despite his overwhelming pity for her had remained, his cynical vision of this people he had loved—what of it now?

Somewhere in the street there was heard the soft muffled beating of a little Buddhist drum, and a child put its chubby, warm little hand into his. A young girl, a friend of Spring-morning's, preceded him, sobbing softly, into the house.

THREE all was very still. On the lower floor, all alone in the *ozashiki*, in her old place by the *shoji*, where she had been wont to sit and watch with condemning eyes the passing throngs, was the *Okusama*. How bitterly she had hated Spring-morning! It was strange that Jamison should think of this now, as he moved uncertainly in the half-darkened room toward her; yet he felt no resentment or bitterness at the thought, only a nameless sadness.

She started to her feet, and threw her arms about him, murmuring her sorrow, and for a moment he let her cry there against his breast. Then suddenly he drew himself up stiffly, his nerves tingling electrically, as, his head lifted, his ears strained alertly, he listened to that strange new sound in his house, the tremulous, feeble, fearfully appealing cry of a new soul! It moved him as nothing in his life had ever done before, this seeking, weird cry of which he was the creator!

CHAPTER XXVI

MRS. TYRRELL thrust her needle into her emery strawberry and put her sewing by. For some time her attention had wandered from her work, to stray always with something of wistfulness and anxiety toward that smooth brown head

resting there against the back of the great leather chair by the blazing fireplace. Well she knew that though her son was with her, there in this pleasant room, his thoughts were very far away, as for hours at a time, he remained there silently gazing into the gleaming bosom of his fire. And she was right. In the glow of the fire, he saw as in a dream that other land he had loved so well. Always it seemed to Jamison to be suffused in a misty haze, as if a dim veil were gently laid upon its blue hills and fields, and he wondered dreamily, if they were but shadow landscapes he had seen. Had he indeed lived in that far-away fairy-land, or was it but a figment of his fancy? Had his arms, indeed, closed so passionately about that little palpitating sweet child of the Orient, upon whom all his senses of delight and desire had so intensely centered? There in the light of his fire, again he saw her small, dusky face. It shone up at him, appealing, laughing, mocking, hurting and bruising his soul. And even its memory, it seemed to him, had the power still to thrill and torment him.

He felt his mother's hand upon his cheek, and arousing himself with an effort, came to his feet.

"It's been such a wonderful day," she said, in that tremulous, almost deprecating way she always used now in addressing him. "Oh, Jamy," she went on, her eyes shining as she looked up at him, "you don't know how good it is to have you here, at home, with us again."

He wandered across to the great bay window and looked out over a wide expanse of rolling lawns that extended to the edge of woods, bronzed and reddened under the touch of the coming autumn. He was thinking how strangely clear and vivid were the American fall colors. The country seemed alive, not vaguely asleep, as that other land, in which he had sojourned so long, and to which he had felt a certain passionate loyalty after the death of his wife. It was the insistent prayerful letters of his mother, the fact that she was in poor health and also his desire to see his little girl, whose beauty his mother described so extravagantly in her letters, that had induced him to return at last. It had

been his intention of making but a transient visit to his home. He was very sure he would not be able long to resist the sweet, luring call of that other land, to which he believed, as many white men have before him, that he more truly belonged. By some fantastic error of fate, he told himself, he had been born white, but his inclinations, his heart, his soul, these he firmly believed, were purely Japanese.

NOW he felt unable to account for the restful sense of contentment and peace that pervaded his whole being. It was as if he were experiencing the sensations of some restless wandering expatriate who had roamed the world over, but at last had found his way—home!

And as he looked out at the clean-cut, homely, preposterously conventional, in-artistic landscape, Jamison was conscious, with a sense of ludicrous amazement, that he loved it. Even as he admitted this, to him, startling fact; a burst of merry, ringing, wholesome laughter was wafted to him from the edge of the woods.

Over the green clipped lawns, darting in and out among the flowering hydrangea bushes, the vigorous, graceful form of a young woman was seen, as with pretended speed she eluded the reach of the child who followed, shouting to her with overflowing joy.

As they burst into the quiet living-room, with its rich and somber furnishings, the light from the blazing logs seemed to leap up and dance upon their faces, and it seemed to the man that never in his life had he seen faces fairer or dearer.

THE big girl, graceful and light in her movements, with her fine, clear-cut face and wonderful coloring, the gray, candid eyes and large frank mouth, was very good to look at, and the elfish grace and beauty of the child was something to hold the eye entranced and delighted.

With a deep, sweeping movement Edith bent, and with the strength of a young athlete, she tossed the child upon her shoulder, and there in triumph the small rogue sat, smiling down at her father, and daring him to reach her.

He reached up impulsively to take her, and as she struggled to retain her place, his hand came in close, warm contact with Edith's cheek. Her flushed face, with its red, parted lips was close to his own. Their eyes met, as it seemed to him, for the first time, and suddenly Jamison-Tyrrell was conscious of a new, a wonderful awakening. In one great flash of overwhelming and illuminating intelligence he knew then that all that had gone before in his life was but a sweet aberration from which at last he had emerged—sane!

"THE WILDERNESS TRAIL"

NEXT month we will publish a delightful book-length historical novel by H. Bedford Jones, entitled "The Wilderness Trail." It is a vivid romance of Kentucky in the days of Daniel Boone; and throughout his story the author has contrived to achieve that combination of historical accuracy with swift action and romantic charm, which made "Alice of Old Vincennes," and "Richard Carvel" so captivating. Watch for this fine novel in the February BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, on the news-stands January 1st.