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THE SHOGUN'S DAUGHTER

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A VOLUNTEER WITH PIKE: The True Narrative of One Dr. John Robinson and his Love for the Fair Señorita Vallois. Illustrated in color by Charlotte Weber-Ditzler.

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CHICAGO



THE PRINCESS AZAI

THE SHOGUN'S DAUGHTER

BY
ROBERT AMES BENNET

Author of "*For the White Christ,*"
"*Into the Primitive,*" etc.

WITH 5 PICTURES IN COLOR
BY W. D. GOLDBECK



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1910

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NORWOOD MASS·U·S·A

To
MY WIFE

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THE SHOGUN'S DAUGHTER

CHAPTER I—EASTERN SEAS

My first cruise as a midshipman in the navy of the United States began a short month too late for me to share in the honors of the Mexican War. In other words, I came in at the foot of the service, with all the grades above me fresh-stocked with comparatively young and vigorous officers. As a consequence, the rate of promotion was so slow that the Summer of 1851 found me, at the age of twenty-four, still a middie, with my lieutenancy ever receding, like a will-o'-the-wisp, into the future.

Had I chosen a naval career through necessity, I might have continued to endure. But to the equal though younger heir of one of the largest plantations in South Carolina, the pay of even a post captain would have been of small concern. It is, therefore, hardly necessary to add that I had been lured into the service by the hope of winning fame and glory.

That my choice should have fallen upon the navy rather than the army may have been due to the impulse of heredity. According to family traditions and records, one of my ancestors was the famous English seaman Will Adams, who served Queen Elizabeth in the glorious fight against the Spanish Armada and afterwards piloted a Dutch ship through the dangerous Straits of Magellan and across the vast uncharted expanse of the Pacific to the mysterious island empire, then known as Cipango or Zipangu. 2

History itself verifies that wonderful voyage and the still more wonderful fact of my ancestor's life among the Japanese as one of the nobles and chief counsellors of the great Emperor Iyeyasu. So highly was the advice of the bold Englishman esteemed by the Emperor that he was never permitted to return home. For many years he dwelt honorably among that most peculiar of Oriental peoples, aiding freely the few English and Dutch who ventured into the remote Eastern seas. He had aided even the fanatical Portuguese and Spaniards, who, upon his arrival, had sought to have him and his handful of sick and starving shipmates executed as pirates. So it was he lived and died a Japanese noble, and was buried with all honor.

With the blood of such a man in my veins, it is not strange that I turned to the sea. Yet it is no less strange that three years in the service should bring me to an utter weariness of the dull naval routine. Notable as were the achievements of our navy throughout the world in respect to exploration and other peaceful triumphs, it has ever surprised me that in the absence of war and promotion I should have lingered so long in my inferior position. 3

In war the humiliation of servitude to seniority may be thrust from thought by the hope of winning superior rank through merit. Deprived of this opportunity, I could not but chafe under my galling subjection to the commands of men never more than my equals in social rank and far too often my inferiors.

The climax came after a year on the China Station, to which I had obtained an assignment in the hope of renewed action against the arrogant Celestials. Disappointed in this, and depressed by a severe spell of fever contracted at Honkong, I resigned the service at Shanghai, and took passage for New York, by way of San Francisco and the Horn, on the American clipper *Sea Flight*.

We cleared for the Sandwich Islands August the twenty-first, 1851. The second noon found us safe across the treacherous bars of the Yangtse-Kiang and headed out across the Eastern Sea, the southwest monsoon bowling us along at a round twelve knots.

The double lassitude of my convalescence and the season had rendered me too indifferent to inquire about my fellow-passengers. We were well under way before I learned that, aside from the officers and crew, I was the only person aboard ship. In view of the voyage of from five to six months' duration which lay before me, this discovery roused me to the point of observing the characters of the skipper and his mates. Much to my chagrin, I found that all were Yankees of the most pronounced nasal type. 4

As a late naval officer no less than as a Southern gentleman, I could not humble myself to social intercourse with the *bucko* mates. Fortunately Captain Downing was somewhat less unbearable, and had the good taste to share my interest in the mysterious islands of Japan, as well as my detestation of China. Even as the low, dreary coast of Kiangsu faded from view in our wake, we attained to a cordial exchange of congratulations over the fact that we were at last quit of the filth and fantasies of the Celestial Empire.

As we wheeled about from the last glance astern, Downing pointed over the side with a jerk of his thumb. "Look at that dirty flood, Mr. Adams. Just like a China river to try to turn the whole sea China yellow! Conceited as John Chinaman himself!"

"Give the devil his due," I drawled. "Biggest nation on earth, and close upon the biggest river." 5

"Aye, and thank Providence, every last one of their three hundred million pigtails lie abaft my taffrail, and every drop of that foul flood soon to lose itself in clean blue water!" He stared ahead, combing his fingers through his bushy whiskers, his shrewd eyes twinkling with satisfaction. "Aye! blue water—the whole breadth of the Pacific before us, and Asia astern."

"Not all Asia," I corrected. "We have yet to clear the Loo Choos."

"The Loo Choos," he repeated. "Queer people, I guess. They are said to be a kind of Chinamen."

"It's hard to tell," I replied. "They may be Chinese. Yet some say the islands are subject to Japan."

"To Japan? Then they've got good reason to be queer!" He paced across the deck and back, his jaw set and eyes keen with sudden resolve. "By ginger, I'll do it this passage, sir, danged if I won't! I've been wanting to see something of the Japanese islands ever since I came out to the China seas as a cabin-boy, and that's fifty years gone."

"You'd run out of your course for a glimpse of the Japanese coast?" I exclaimed, no less incredulous than delighted.

"More than a glimpse, Mr. Adams. Van Diemen Strait is a shorter course than the Loo Choo passage, and with this weather—"

"Midst of the typhoon season," I cut in with purposeful superciliousness of tone.

The captain of a clipper is as sensitive to any aspersions on his seamanship as the grayest master of navigation in the navy. Downing bit snappily. "Typhoon be damned! I navigated a whaler through uncharted seas twenty odd years, and never lost my ship. I'll take the *Sea Flight* through Van Diemen Strait, blow or calm, sir."

"No doubt," I murmured with ambiguous suavity.

He scowled, puzzled at my smile. "You naval officers! Commanded my first ship before you were born—before I had need of a razor. What's more, I'm third owner in this clipper, and I've discretion over my course. The skipper who carries the first cargo out of a Japanese port is going to get the cream, and I've an idee the Japs are loosening up a bit. I'm going to put into Kagoshima Bay, where the old *Morrison* tried to land the castaway Japs in 'thirty-seven."

"She was fired upon most savagely by the soldiers of the Prince of Satsuma," I replied. "Why not try Nagasaki?"

"Nagasaki?—Deshima!" he rumbled. "I'm no Dutchman or yellow Chinee, to be treated like a dog. What's more, it's too far up the west coast. No! I'll chance Kagoshima. That Satsuma king or mandarin, whatever he is, may have changed his mind since the *Morrison*, or there may be a new one now, with more liberal idee."

"Since you're resolved upon it, skipper, I must confess I have reasons of my own to be pleased with your plan," I said, and at his interested glance, I told him somewhat in detail of my daring ancestor Will Adams, the first Englishman ever to reach the Land of the Rising Sun and the only European ever made a Japanese noble.

"H'm. Married a Japanese wife, and left children by her," commented Downing, and he grinned broadly. "I must ask leave for you to land and look up your heathen kin."

"You forget yourself, sir," I caught him up. "Be kind enough hereafter to refrain from impertinence when speaking of persons related to me."

He stared in astonishment. "Well, I'll be durned! Two hundred years and more since your forefather died, you said—"

"None the less," I insisted sharply, "my cousins are my cousins, sir. If there are any of my ancestor's Japanese descendants now living, they are related to me, however remote may be the degree. Therefore they are entitled to be spoken of with respect."

"Well, I'll swan!" he muttered. "No offence, Mr. Adams."

I bowed my acceptance of his uncouth apology, but maintained my dignity. "As I have said, sir, my ancestor was ennobled by the great Emperor Iyeyasu. Heathen or not, rest assured that his Japanese descendants, if any survive, are at the least gentlefolk."

"No doubt, no doubt," he grunted. "You'll soon have a chance to inquire. I'm going to take my ship up Kagoshima Bay, fog, shine, or blow."

He turned on his heel, and ordered the helmsman to put the ship's head due east. I went below in a glow of pleasant anticipation. There was no mistaking the look in Downing's face. Nothing could now shake his stubborn resolve. I was to see the mysterious Cipango of Marco Polo and Mendez Pinto, the Iappan of my ancestor,—the land that for almost two and a half centuries had shut itself in from all communication with the wide world other than through the severely restricted trade with the Dutch and Chinese at Nagasaki.

CHAPTER II—IN KAGOSHIMA BAY

Dawn of the third day found us ten miles off the north shore of the small volcanic island that stands second in the entrance to Van Diemen Strait. The lurid glare reflected from its crater into the ascending clouds of smoke had served as a beacon during the last hours of darkness. Daylight confirmed the calculations of our position by the sight of the beautiful smoking cone of Horner's Peak, lying twenty-five or thirty miles to the northeast on the southern extremity of Satsuma, and the rugged peninsula of Osumi, ending in the sharp point of Cape Satanomi, a like distance to the eastward.

The moment our landfall was clear in the growing light, the *Sea Flight* came around and headed straight between the two peninsulas. A run of three hours before the monsoon, over the bluest of white-capped seas, brought us well up into the entrance of Kagoshima Bay, with Horner's Peak a few miles off on the port beam, and the bold, verdant hills of Osumi to starboard. Close along each shore the sea broke on half-submerged rocks, but the broad channel showed no signs of reefs or shoals, and Downing stood boldly in, without shortening sail. 10

Having none of the responsibility of navigating the ship, I was able to loll upon the rail and enjoy to the utmost the magnificent scenery of the bay. On either shore the mountainous coast trended off to the northward, an emerald setting to the sapphire bay, with the lofty broken peak of a smoking volcano towering precipitously at the head of the thirty-mile stretch of land-girded waters. Far inland still loftier peaks cast dim outlines through the summery haze.

Every valley and sheltered mountain-side along the bay showed heavy growths of pines and other trees, among which were scattered groups of straw-thatched, high-peaked cottages. Many of the slopes were under cultivation and terraced far up towards the crests, while every cove was fringed with the straggling hovels of a fishing village.

In every direction the bay was dotted with the square white sails of fishing smacks and small junks,—vessels that differed from Chinese craft in the absence of bamboo ribs to the sails and still more in the presence of the yawning port which gaped in their sterns. I concluded that this extraordinary build was due to the Japanese policy of keeping the population at home, for certainly none but a madman could have dreamed of undertaking any other than a coastwise cruise in one of these unseaworthy vessels. Another peculiarity was that not one of the craft showed a trace of paint. 11

The majestic apparition of the *Sea Flight* in their secluded haven seemed to fill the Japanese sailors with wildest panic. One and all, their craft scattered before her like flocks of startled waterfowl, for the most part running inshore for shelter at the nearest villages or behind the verdant islets that rose here and there above the rippling blue waters. A few stood up the bay, probably to spread the alarm, but the clipper easily overhauled and passed the swiftest.

By noon, though the wind had fallen to a light breeze, we had sailed some thirty miles up the bay and were within three miles of the volcano, which stood out, apparently on an island, with a deep inlet running in on either side. On the Satsuma shore, across the mouth of the western inlet, our glasses had long since brought to view the gray expanse of Kagoshima, rising to a walled hill crowned with large buildings, whose quaint, curved roofs and many-storied pagoda towers recalled China.

All along the bay shores, great bells were booming the alarm, and crowds of people rushed about the villages in wild disorder, while the junks and smacks continued to fly before us as if we were pirates. Smiling grimly at the commotion raised by his daring venture, Downing shortened sail and stood into the opening of the western inlet until we could make out clearly with the naked eye the general features of the city and its citadel. 12

So far the lead had given us from forty to eighty fathoms. When we found thirty fathoms with good holding ground, Downing decided that caution was the better part of curiosity, and gave orders to let go anchor. Hardly had we swung about to our cable when a large half-decked clipper-built boat bore down upon us from the city with the boldness of a hawk swooping upon a swan. The little craft was driven by the long sculls of a number of naked brown oarsmen in the stern. Amidships and forward swarmed twenty or thirty soldiers, clad in fantastic armor of brass and lacquered leather, and bearing antique muskets and matchlocks.

In the stern of the guard-boat fluttered a small flag with the design of a circled white cross, while from the staff on the prow a great tassel of silky filaments trailed down almost to the surface of the water. Beneath the tassel stood two men with robes of gray silk and mushroom-shaped hats tied to their chins with bows of ribbon. I should have taken them for priests had not each carried a brace of swords thrust horizontally through his sash-like belt. 13

At a sign from the older of these officers, the boat drove in alongside the starboard quarter. As Downing and I stepped to the rail and gazed down upon them, the younger officer flung aboard a bamboo stick that had been cleft at one end to hold a piece of folded paper. Downing spun about to pick up the message. But I, calling to mind the reputed courtesy of the Japanese, was seized with a whim to test their reputation in this respect, and bowed profoundly to the officers, addressing them with Oriental gravity: "Gentlemen, permit me to request you to come aboard and favor me with your company at dinner."

Together the two swordsmen returned my bow, slipping their hands down their thighs to their knees and bending until their backs were horizontal. After a marked pause they straightened, their olive faces aglow with polite smiles, and the younger man astonished me by replying in distinct though oddly accented English: "Honorable sir, thangs, no. To-morrow, yes. You wait to-morrow?"

Before I could answer, his companion muttered what seemed to be a grave remonstrance. He was replying in tones as liquid and musical as Italian when Downing swung back beside me.

"Look here, Mr. Adams," he grumbled, thrusting out a sheet of crinkly yellow paper. "Just like their heathen impudence!" 14

I hastened to read the message, which was written, in the Chinese manner, with an ink-brush instead of a quill, but the words were in English, as legible and brief as they were to the point:

"You bring our people shipwrecked? Yes? Take them Nagasaki. You come trade? Yes? Go. Cannon fire."

Downing scowled upon the bizarre soldiers and their commanders with contemptuous disapproval, and pointing to the message, bawled roughly: "Ahoy, there, you yellow heathen, this ain't any way to treat a peaceful merchantman. Must take us for pirates."

The younger officer looked up, with his polite smile, and asked in a placid tone: "You come why?"

"Trade, of course. What else d' you reckon?"

"Trade? You go Nagasaki. Thangs."

"Nagasaki!" growled Downing. "Take me for a Dutchman? You put back, fast as you can paddle, and tell your mandarin, or whatever he calls himself, that here's an American clipper lying in his harbor, ready to buy or barter for tea, chinaware, or silks."

"Thangs. You go Nagasaki—you go Nagasaki," reiterated the officer, smiling more politely than ever, and signing us down the bay with a graceful wave of his small fan. "No get things aboard. You go Nagasaki. Ships no can load." 15

"That's easy cured," replied Downing. "Tell your mandarin I'll get under way first thing to-morrow and run in close as our draught will let us. If we can't come 'longside his bund, we can lighter cargo in sampans."

The officers exchanged quick glances, and the younger one repeated his affable order with unshaken placidity: "You go Nagasaki. Thangs."

Without waiting for further words, both bowed, and the older one signed to the scullers with his fan. The men thrust off and brought their graceful craft about with admirable dexterity. Again their officers bent low in response to my parting bow, and the long sculls sent the boat skimming cityward, across the sparkling water, at racing speed.

Downing nodded after them and permitted his hard mouth to relax in a half grin. "That's the way to talk to heathen, Mr. Adams. No begging favors; just straight-for'a'd offer to trade. You'll see to-morrow, sir."

At this moment the impatient steward announced dinner, and we hastened below with appetites sharpened by pleasant anticipations. The more we discussed the courteous speech and manners of our visitors the more we became convinced that they had meant nothing by their notice to leave, but would soon return with a cordial assent to our proposals. 16

To our surprise, the afternoon wore away without a second visit either from the guard-boat or any other craft. Junk after junk and scores of fishing smacks sailed past us cityward, but all alike held off beyond hail. Still more noteworthy was the fact that no vessel came out of the inlet or across from the city.

At last, shortly before sunset, we sighted four guard-boats, armed with swivels, bearing down upon us from the nearest point of the city. Our first thought was that we were to be attacked as wantonly as had been the *Morrison* and other ships that had sought to open communication with the Japanese. But at half a cable's length they veered to starboard and began to circle around the *Sea Flight* in line ahead, forming a cordon. It was not difficult to divine that their purpose was to prevent us from making any attempt at landing.

That they intended to maintain their patrol throughout the night became evident to me when, after lingering over two bottles of my choice Madeira with the skipper, I withdrew from the supper-table to my stateroom. The cabin air being close and sweltering and my blood somewhat heated from the wine, I turned down my reading lamp and leaned out one of my stern windows. Refreshed by the cool puffs of the night breeze that came eddying around the ship's quarters as she rocked gently on a slight swell, I soon began to heed my surroundings with all the alertness of a sailor in a hostile port. 17

The night was moonless and partly overcast, but the pitch darkness served only to make clearer the beacon fires which blazed along the coast so far as my circle of vision extended. No beacons had been fired immediately about Kagoshima, but the city was aglow with a soft illumination of sufficient radiance to bring out the black outlines of the guard-boats whenever they passed between me and the shore in their slow circling of the ship. The booming of the bells, however, had ceased, and the only sounds that broke the hot, damp stillness of the night were the lapping of ripples alongside and the low creaking of the ship's rigging.

An hour passed and I still lolled half out of my window, puffing a Manila cheroot, when I heard a slight splash directly below me. It was a sound such as might be made by a leaping fish, but in Eastern waters life often depends on instant vigilance against treachery. I drew back on the second to grasp a revolver and extinguish the lamp. Within half a minute I was back again at my window, peering warily down into the blackness under the ship's stern. There seemed to be a blot on the phosphorescent water. 18

"Whoever you are," I said in a low tone, "sheer off until daylight, or I will fire."

The response was an unmistakable sigh of relief, followed by an eager whisper: "*Tojin sama*—honorable foreigner, only one man come."

Almost at the first word I knew that my visitor was the younger officer of the guard-boat.

"You come alone?" I demanded. "What for?"

"Make still, honorable foreigner!" he cautioned. "*Ometsuke* hear."

"*Ometsuke*?"

"Watchers—spies."

"You've slipped through the guard-boats on a secret visit!" I whispered, curiosity fast overcoming my

caution. "Why do you come?"

"To go in ship, honorable sir,—England, 'Merica, five continents go—no stop. In boat to pay, gold is."

For a moment astonishment held me mute. Who had ever before heard of a Japanese voluntarily leaving his own shores? Many as had been picked up by whalers and clippers in the neighboring seas, I knew of no instance where the rescued men had not been either wrecked or blown too far out to sea to be able to navigate their miserable junks into a home port. The thought flashed upon me that the man might be a criminal. Only the strongest of motives could have impelled him to seek to break the inflexible law of his country against foreign travel. But the memory of his smiling, high-bred face was against the supposition of guilt. 19

He broke in upon my hesitancy with an irresistible appeal: "*Tojin sama*, you no take me? One year I wait to board a black ship and go the five continents."

"Stand by," I answered. "I'll drop you a line. But bear in mind, no treachery, or I'll blow you to kingdom come!"

"Honorable sir!" he murmured, in a tone of such surprise and reproach as to sweep away my last doubt.

Having no line handy, I whipped the bedclothes from my berth and knotted the silken coverlet to one of the stout linen sheets. The latter I made fast to a handle of my sea-chest, and lowered the coverlet through the cabin window, exposing outboard as little as possible of the white sheet.

"Stand by," I whispered downward. "Here's your line."

In a moment I felt a gentle tugging at the end of the line, followed by a soft murmur: "Honorable sir, pleased to haul."

Though puzzled, I hauled in on the line, to which something of light weight had been made fast. The mystery was soon solved. The end of the line brought into my grasp two longish objects. A touch told me they were sheathed swords. My visitor had proved his faith by first sending up his weapons. 20

I cleared the line and dropped it down again, with a cordial word of invitation: "Come aboard! Can you climb?"

"I climb, *tojin sama*," he whispered back.

There was a short pause, and then the line taughtened. He came up with seamanlike quickness and agility. His form appeared dimly below me as he swung up, hand over hand. I reached out and helped him draw himself in through the window. Pushing him aside, I sought to jerk in my line. It taughtened with a heavy tug.

"What's this?" I exclaimed. "You made fast to your boat. It should have been cast adrift."

"Boat loose is," he replied, with unfailing suavity.

"The line is fast," I retorted.

I felt his hands on the sheet, and he leaned past me out of the window.

"Your dunnage, of course!" I muttered, and, regretful of my impatience, I fell to hauling with him.

One good heave cleared our load from the boat, which was left free to drift up the harbor with wind and tide. The thought that it might be sighted and overhauled by the guard-boat patrol quickened my pull at the line. A few more heaves brought up to the window a cylindrical bundle or bale, which the Japanese grasped and drew inboard before I could lend a hand. 21

My visitor was aboard, dunnage and all, and, so far as I could tell, he had not been detected either by the men of the guard-boats or the watch above us on the poop.

CHAPTER III—THE GENTLEMAN WITH TWO SWORDS

For a full half-minute I leaned out, listening intently. No alarm broke the peaceful stillness of the night. I closed the window and drew the curtains. Having carefully covered the panes, I struck a lucifer match and crossed over to light my large swinging lamp. Three more steps brought me to the stateroom door, which I locked and bolted. Turning about as the lamp flamed up to full brightness, I saw my guest standing well to one side of the window, his narrow oblique eyes glancing about the room with intense yet well-bred curiosity.

His dress was far different from what it had been aboard the guard-boat. In place of the baggy trousers and flowing robes of silk, his body was now scantily covered with a smock-like garment of coarse blue cotton, and his legs were wound about with black leggings of still coarser stuff. On his feet were straw sandals, secured only with a leather thong that passed between the great and second toes. His bare head gave me my first chance to view at close quarters the curious fashion in which, after the manner of his country, his hair was shaved off from brow to nape, and the side locks twisted together and laid forward on the crown in a small gun hammer cue. 23

All this I took in at a glance as I turned back towards him. Meeting my gaze, he beamed upon me with a grateful smile and bowed far over, sliding his hands down his thighs to his knees in the peculiar manner I had observed when he was aboard the guard-boat.

Not to be outdone in politeness, I bowed in response. "Welcome aboard the *Sea Flight*, sir. Pray be seated."

At the word, he dropped to what seemed to be a most uncomfortable posture on his knees and heels.

"Not that," I protested, and I pointed to a cushioned locker. "Have a seat."

He shook his head smilingly, and replied in an odd Dutch dialect, as inverted as his English but far more fluent, that he was quite comfortable.

"Very well," I said in the same language. "Let us become acquainted. I am Worth Adams of South Carolina, lately resigned from the navy of the United States."

"Merica?" he questioned.

I bowed, and catching up from under the window his curved long sword and straight short sword, or dirk, I presented them to him by the sheaths. He waved them aside, bowing and smiling in evident gratification at my offer. I insisted. He clasped his hands before him, palm to palm, in a gesture of polite protest. I drew back and hung the weapons on the wall rack that held my service sword. He flung himself across, beside his bale of dunnage, and plucked at the lashings. 24

As I turned to him he unrolled the oiled paper in which the bundles were wrapped. The contents opened out in a veritable curio shop of Oriental articles. There were three or four pairs of straw sandals, two pairs of lacquered clogs, a folding fan, a bundle of cream-colored, crinkly paper, a tiny silver-bowled pipe, two or three small red-lacquered cases, a black mushroom hat of lacquered paper, and a number of robes, toed socks and other garments, all of silk and some exquisitely embroidered in gold thread and colors.

From the midst of one of the silken heaps he uncovered a sword whose silk-corded hilt and shark-skin scabbard were alike decorated with gold dragons. Straightening on his knees, he held the weapon out to me, his face beaming with grateful friendship. "*Wo—Wort—Woroto Sama*, honorable gift take."

"Gift!" I exclaimed. "I cannot accept so splendid a gift from you."

"Exkoos!" he murmured in an apologetic tone, and holding the sword with the edge towards himself and the hilt to his left, he slowly drew it out until two or three inches of the mirror-like blade showed between the twisted dragon of the guard and the lip of the scabbard. Pointing first to the shark-tooth mark running down the length of the blade and then to a Chinese letter near the guard, he explained persuasively, "Good, Masamune him make." 25

"The more reason why I should refuse such a gift," I insisted.

He rose to his feet and bowed with utmost dignity. "You him take. Low down Yoritomo me, honorable son high honorable Owari *dono*, same Shogun brother."

"What! Your father a brother of the Shogun—of your Emperor?"

He stood a moment pondering. "Shogun cousin," he replied.

"You mean, your father and the Shogun are cousins?"

He nodded, and again held out the sword. "You him take."

"With pleasure!" I responded, and I accepted the gift as freely as it was offered. A cousin of the Emperor of Japan should be well able to afford even such extravagant gifts as this beautiful weapon.

"My thanks!" I cried, and I half turned to bare the sword in the full light of the lamp. Though of a shape entirely novel to me, the thick narrow blade balanced perfectly in my grasp. Being neither tall nor robust, I found it rather heavy, and the length of the hilt convinced me that it was intended to be used as a two-handed sword by the slightly built Japanese. I presented it, hilt foremost, to Yoritomo. "Pray show me, sir, how you hold it." 26

He stared at me in a bewildered manner. I repeated my request, and thrust the hilt into his hand. After a moment's hesitancy, which I mistook for confusion, he reached for the scabbard as well, sheathed the sword, and thrust it into his narrow cotton sash. When he turned to kneel beside his dunnage, I flushed with anger at what I took to be a deliberate refusal of my request.

He rose with a wooden chopstick in his hand. Politely waving me to one side, he stepped out into the clear centre of the stateroom and bent to set the chopstick upright on the floor. Even had the ship been motionless, I

doubt if he could have made the little six-inch piece of wood stand on end for more than a fraction of a second. Yet, having placed it in position, he suddenly freed it and sprang back to strike a two-handed blow with the sword, direct from the sheath, with amazing swiftness. The chopstick, caught by the razor-edged blade before it could topple over, was clipped in two across the middle. In a twinkling the blade was back in its sheath.

27

"*Mon Dieu!*" I gasped. "That is swordsmanship!"

I held out my hand to him impulsively. He bowed and placed the sword on my palm. The splendid fellow did not know the meaning of a handshake. Much to his astonishment I caught his hand and gave it a cordial grip. I addressed him in my best Dutch, inverting it as best I could to resemble his own dialect: "My dear sir! You wish to see the world? You shall travel as my guest."

He caught up one of his lacquer cases and opened it to my view. Within it lay a few dozen oval gold coins, hardly more than enough to have paid his passage to New York. There could be no doubt that he had vastly underestimated the purchasing value of his coins in foreign lands. He explained in his quaint Dutch: "The punishment for exchanging money with foreigners is death. So also it is death to leave Dai Nippon. I can die but once."

"They will never kill a cousin of their Emperor!"

He smiled. "Death will be welcome if I can first bring to my country a better knowledge of the *tojin* peoples and their ways."

Even an Adams of South Carolina might well be proud to act as cicerone to an Oriental prince. Yet I believe I was actuated more by the subtle sympathy and instinctive understanding that was already drawing me to him, despite the barriers of alien blood and thought and language which lay between us.

28

"Put up your gold," I said. "You will have no need for it. I am wealthy and free from all ties. You shall travel with me and see the world as my guest."

He caught my meaning with the intuition of a thorough gentleman, and his black eyes flashed me a glance of perfect comprehension. He laid down the box of coins and took up one of the silken garments, with an apologetic gesture at the coarse dress he was wearing. I shook my head.

"No," I said. "There's been no outcry from the guard-boats, so I'm sure I can stow you away until we are clear of your country. But it will be best to disguise you, to guard against any chance glimpse. What's more, the sooner you don Occidental clothes the better, if you wish to avoid annoyance from the rudeness of our shipmates. You're perhaps an inch the shorter; otherwise we are about of a build, and I've a well-stocked wardrobe."

While speaking I proceeded to haul out three or four suits from my lockers, and signed him to take his pick. The gesture was more intelligible to him than my words. He bowed, smiled, and chose the least foppish of the suits. I laid out my lightest slippers, a tasselled smoking-cap, linen, et cetera, and drew his attention to the conveniences of a well-furnished washstand.

29

He took up and smelled the small cake of perfumed soap and was about to try his flashing teeth upon it, when I showed him its use by washing my hands. At this his smile brightened into delight, and, casting loose his girdle, he dropped his short robe from him as one would fling off a cloak. The leggings and sandals followed the robe, and he stood before me nude yet unabashed, his lithe figure like a statue of gold bronze.

Fortunately I was too well acquainted with the peculiar variations of etiquette and manners exhibited by the different peoples of the East and West to betray my astonishment at this exposure. I poured him the bath for which he seemed so eager, and politely excused myself with the explanation that I must provide him with refreshments.

As I had my own private larder in the second stateroom, I had no need to call upon the steward for a luncheon, having on hand various sweets, potted meats, English biscuits, and Chinese conserves, in addition to my wines. When I returned with a well-stocked tray, I found my guest struggling to don his linen over his coat. His relief was unmistakable when I signed him to lay aside everything and slip on a loose lounging-robe.

Following my example, he seated himself at the little folding table. When served, he waited, seemingly reluctant to eat alone. Accordingly I served myself, and fell to without delay. At my first mouthful he also caught up knife and fork and began to eat with undisguised heartiness yet with a nicety and correctness of manners that astonished me. When I expressed my surprise that our table etiquette should be so similar, he explained with charming candor that he was but copying my actions.

30

I could not repress my admiration. "Here's to our friendship!" I said, raising my glass to him. "May it soon ripen to the mellowness of this wine."

I doubt if he sensed the meaning of the words, but he raised his glass, and his face glowed with responsive pleasure as together we drank the toast. The act of good-fellowship seemed to bring him still nearer to me, and as I gazed across into his glowing face I could almost forget our differences of race. In my robe and smoking-cap his color and the obliqueness of his eyes appeared less pronounced, and I realized that in all other respects his features differed little from my own. True, my eyes were dark blue and his jet black, and though my nose was rather low between the eyes, his was still flatter. But below their bridges our noses rose in the same softly aristocratic curve. The outlines of our faces were of a like oval contour, there was a close similarity about our mouths and chins, and even our eyebrows curved with an identical high and even arch.

31

"My friend," I said, "do not answer unless you feel free to explain,—but I wonder that you, a relative of the Emperor, should be compelled to start your travels in this secret manner."

"Shogun, not Emperor," he corrected. "Law over Shogun, too. I travel *naibun*—incognito. Shimadzu Satsuma-no-kami my friend. I teach *Raugaku*—the Dutch learning,—war ways, history, engineering. No man know real me at Kagoshima. Daimio of Satsuma gone Yedo. I steal aboard. No man know. Shogunate no punish *daimio*, my friend."

"They would punish even the Prince of Satsuma if they found you had escaped from his province?"

My guest nodded. "Very old law."

"Yet you would leave the country at the risk of death?"

His smile deepened into a look of solemn joy. I give his broken Dutch a fair translation.

"My soul is in the eyes of Woroto Sama. There is trust between us. I speak without concealment. The *tojin* peoples of the west have dealt harshly with the Chinese. The black ships have destroyed many forts and bombarded great cities. I fear the black ships may come to devastate Dai Nippon; yet my people know even less of your people than did the Chinese. The Dutch of Deshima warn us to heed the demands of the *tojin* to open our ports. The officials in control of the Shogunate shut their ears."

32

My lip curled. "The English are a nation of shopkeepers, and our Yankees are no less keen for bargains. They will never rest until they have found a market for their wares in every country on earth. If they cannot get into your ports peacefully, sooner or later they will break in by force."

"Such, then, is the truth," he murmured. "*Namu Amida Butsu!* I ask only that I may live to bring back to Dai Nippon a clear report of the power and ways of the *tojin* peoples."

"Nothing could please them more," I replied. "Count on me to help you fulfil your noble mission!"

He thanked me with almost effusive gratitude, yet with a nobility of look that dignified the Oriental obsequiousness of his words and manner. To cut short his thanks, I went out for a second bottle of wine. He had drunk his share of the first with gusto. Returning briskly, I caught sight of my guest's face for the first time without its pleasant smile. It was drawn and haggard with fatigue. Putting aside the wine, I asked him if he did not wish to turn in. He signed that he would lie down upon the floor. But I explained the use of a bed, which seemed an absolute novelty to him, and bundled him into my berth before he could protest. He fell asleep almost as his head sank upon the pillow.

33

I stowed his dunnage in a locker, and hastened to extinguish the lamp and open the window, for the room was suffocatingly hot. As I leaned out of the window I caught a glimpse of one of the guard-boats sculling leisurely across the belt of light between the *Sea Flight* and Kagoshima. Yoritomo's boat had evidently drifted away through their cordon undetected. Five minutes later I was outstretched on a locker, as fast asleep as my guest.

I awoke with what I took to be a crash of thunder dinning in my ears. But the bright glare of sunshine that poured in through the stern windows told of a clear sky. No less unmistakable was the loud shouting of commands on the deck above me and the sharp heeling of the ship to port. The *Sea Flight* was already under way and her crew piling on more sail as swiftly as Downing and his bucko mates could drive them with volleying oaths and orders.

As I sprang to my feet the explanation of the situation quickly came in the barking roar of an old-style twelve-pounder carronade. This was my supposed thunder. During the night the Satsuma men had either brought up a gun-boat or placed a battery on the nearest point of land, and now they had at last opened fire on the *tojin* ship that refused to leave after due warning.

34

I stared out the nearest window, and sighted our guard-boats of the night, sculling along in our wake, not a biscuit's throw distant. Their gunners stood by the little swivels, slow-match in hand, and the soldiers held their antique muskets trained upon us. But the firing was all from the shore. A puff of smoke showed me where the carronade was concealed behind a long stretch of canvas upon a point near the lower end of Kagoshima. The ball plunged into the water half a cable's length short of us.

Before the gunners could reload, the *Sea Flight* drew off on the starboard tack with swiftly gathering headway, and drew out of range. The crews of the guard-boats were for a time able to keep their swift clipper-built craft close astern, but the ship, once under full sail, soon began to outdistance her pursuers.

The purpose of the Japanese became clear to me when I saw them lay down their arms without giving over the pursuit. They had no desire to harm us, but were inflexibly determined to drive us out of their port. And follow us they did, though long before we had tacked down into the mouth of the great bay they were visible only through a glass, as little black dots bobbing among the whitecaps.

35

Yoritomo had roused from his profound sleep as we came about for the first time to tack off the Osumi shore. When I had returned his smiling salute, he listened to my account of our flight with quiet satisfaction, and explained that, since we had not left peaceably, the Satsuma men were compelled to resort to these forceful measures. Otherwise their lord, though in Yedo, would be punished for permitting our ship to remain in his harbor.

While my guest then took a morning bath, I closed the door between my staterooms, and ordered the steward to serve me a hearty breakfast in the vacant room. When he had gone, I locked the door and called in Yoritomo, whom I had assisted to dress in his Occidental garments. Thus attired, and with my smoking-cap over his cue, he might easily have passed for an Italian or Spanish gentleman had it not been for the slant of his eyes.

After we had breakfasted, we found seats beside one of the sternports, and spent the morning viewing the receding scenery of the bay and conversing in our inverted Dutch. Eager as I was to make inquiries about my friend and his country, he showed still greater curiosity regarding myself and the wide world from which his people had been cut off for so long a period. The result was that by midday I had told him a vast deal, and gathered in turn a mere handful of vaguely stated facts.

36

Meantime the *Sea Flight*, having tacked clear of the mouth of the bay, raced down to Cape Satanomi with the full sweep of the monsoon abeam. No less to my gratification than my surprise, Yoritomo proved to be a good sailor, and watched our swift flight along the coast with wondering delight. The heavy rolling of the ship in the trough of the sea affected him no more than myself.

Before long we cleared the outjutting point of Cape Satanomi and, veering to port until upon an easy

howline, drove due east into the vast expanse of the Pacific. I pointed to the craggy tip of the cape where the breakers foamed high on the dark rocks, and rose, with a wave of my hand. "Farewell to Dai Nippon! Come—Downing will be tumbling below for dinner, now that we are clear of land—come and meet the hairy *tojin*."

Yoritomo bowed and, with a last glance at the fast-receding cape, followed me out into the passage. We found Downing already at his pork and beans. But he paused, with knife in air, to stare at my companion, gaping as widely as did the steward.

"Good-day, skipper," I said. "Allow me to introduce to you my Japanese cousin Lord Yoritomo." 37

"Cousin?—lord?" he spluttered. "Danged if he's not the first danged stowaway I ever—"

"You mistake," I corrected, "I invited the gentleman aboard as my guest for the passage. He will share my staterooms, and you are to look to me for his passage money."

"Well, that's a different matter, Mr. Adams," grunted Downing. "If you're fool enough to—"

"Mason," I called sharply to the steward, "lay a plate for His Lordship."

CHAPTER IV—YORITOMO'S BETROTHED

As this is not an account of the travels incognito of my friend Yoritomo, I do not propose to give even a *résumé* of our trip to America and our European experiences. Nor shall I give the particulars of the family dissension that estranged me from home and, to a degree, from my country.

Enough to say that, despite our incongruous and mutually incomprehensible mental worlds, the Autumn of 1852 found me bound to my Japanese *protégé* and friend by indissoluble ties of sympathy and love. Strange and inverted as seemed many of his ideas to our western ways of thinking, he had proved himself worthy of the warmest friendship and esteem.

Considering this, together with my longing for adventure, and my freedom from all the ties of family, acquaintance, and habit that bind a man to his country, it will not be thought extraordinary that I at last determined to accompany my friend on his return to Japan. My decision was made at the time when he was spurred to redoubled effort in his studies of the Occident by the news that the proposed American expedition to his country was at last approaching a consummation under the vigorous superintendence of Commodore Perry. 39

It was then my friend told me, with his ever-ready smile, that, should the law be rigidly enforced against him upon his return, he would be bound to a cross and transfixed with spears. Yet under the menace of so atrocious a martyrdom, he labored night and day to complete his studies, that he might return to his people and guide them from disaster upon the coming of the hairy *tojin*—the Western barbarians.

Few could have resisted the inspiration of so lofty a spirit, the contagion of such utter devotion and self-sacrifice. When my friend was willing to give all for his country, should not I be willing to do a little for the constellation whose brightest star was my own sovereign State, the great Commonwealth of South Carolina?

After all, though President Fillmore and Commodore Perry were Yankees, the flag was the flag of the South no less than of the North, and I had served under it. The purpose of the expedition was peaceful. There flashed upon me a plan by which I might further the success of the expedition and at the same time aid my friend in his purpose.

"Tomo!" I cried, "you insist that you must sail before the American expedition,—that you must risk all to reach Yedo and advise your government to welcome the fleet of my countrymen. Very well! I will no longer seek to dissuade you. I will go with you and help you persuade Dai Nippon to enter into friendly relations with America." 40

He stared at me, startled and distressed. "Impossible, Worth! They might regard you as a spy. You would be risking death!"

"In all the world I have one friend, and only one," I rejoined. "The thought of parting from him has been for months a constant source of anxiety and pain. It is pleasant to be rid of such distress. I am going with you to Yedo."

His eyes widened almost to Occidental roundness, the pupils purpling with the intensity of his emotion. "My thanks, brother! But it is impossible—impossible!"

"At the worst they can only send me packing in a bamboo cage, to be shipped out of Nagasaki by the Dutch."

"That is the usual course with wrecked sailors, but should you go with me, they might torture and execute you as a spy."

"Not with Perry's fleet in Eastern waters," I replied. "I give your government credit for at least a modicum of statesmanship. Yet even supposing they lack all wisdom, I choose to take the risk. There is no room for argument. You are going, so am I. Why, sir, it's an adventure such as I have been longing for all my life! You cannot turn me from it." 41

"If not I, others can and will. The *ometsukes* are everywhere. You could not so much as effect a landing."

"And you?" I demanded.

"I am Japanese. There is a chance for me to slip through. But you—"

"Disguised in Japanese dress! Can I not talk good Japanese? Have I not accustomed myself to your costume? A little more practice with the chopsticks and clogs—"

"Your eyes! In all Japan there is to be found no one with round eyes of violet blue."

"I can learn to squint; and have you not told me of the deep-brimmed hats worn by your freelances, the *ronins*? You have said that many high-born Japanese have faces no darker than my own, and that brown hair is not unknown."

"You will risk your life to come with me!" he protested.

I laughed lightly. "You have so little to say of your Japanese ladies, Tomo. Perhaps I wish to see what they are like."

"That is a jest. I have told you that our women of noble families are seldom to be seen by strangers."

"There are those others," I suggested.

He gazed at me in mild reproach. "Do not jest, Woroto. I have seen that you have nothing to do with the *joro* of the Occident. You are not one to dally with those of the Orient." 42

"But the *geishas*—the artists—they must be charming."

"It is their art to charm."

"Tomo," I said, sobering myself, "I know it is a rudeness to ask, but, pardon me, are you married?"

"No."

"Is there no maiden of noble family—?"

"None," he answered. "There was once a *geisha*—But we men of *samurai* blood are supposed to despise such weakness. Since then I have devoted my life to that which you so generously have helped me to attain."

"You have no desire ever to marry?" I persisted.

"We hold it a duty to ancestors and families for every young man and maiden to marry," he replied. "It is not as we wish, but as our parents choose. More than ten years ago His Highness the Shogun arranged with my father that I should marry his daughter Azai."

"You refused! But of course you were still a boy."

"You mistake. The arrangement was for the future. The maiden was then only six years of age."

"Six? and ten years ago? Then she is now sixteen,—a princess of sixteen! Tomo, you're as cold-blooded as a fish! A princess of sixteen, and you never before so much as hinted at your good fortune! Of course she is beautiful?" 43

He gazed at me in patient bewilderment over the inexplicable romantic emotionalism of the *tojin*.

"She is said to be beautiful," he replied, calmly indifferent. "I cannot say. I have never seen her. You know that Japanese ladies do not mingle with men in your shocking *tojin* fashion."

CHAPTER V—THE COASTS OF NIPPON

At once I set about perfecting myself in certain practices which so far had afforded me little more than idle amusement. The knack of holding on a Japanese clog or the lighter sandal by gripping the thong that passes between the great toe and its mate is not acquired at the first trial or at many to follow. Still more difficult is the ability to sit for hours, crouched on knees and heels, in the Japanese fashion. I practised both feats with a patient endurance born of intense desire. Yoritomo had suffered as great inconvenience while learning to wear Occidental dress and to sit on chairs.

There were many other accomplishments, hardly less irksome, in which I had to drill myself, that I might be prepared to play the rôle of a Japanese gentleman. For recreation between times, I devoted my odd hours to cutlass fencing with an expert *maître d'armes* and to pistol practice. For this last I purchased a brace of Lefauchaux revolvers, which, though a trifle inferior to the Colt in accuracy, possessed the advantage of the inventor's water-proof metallic cartridges. The convenience and superiority of this cartridge over the old style of loading with loose charges of powder and ball only need be mentioned to be realized. 45

Yoritomo was so desirous of witnessing the outcome of President Bonaparte's manipulation of politics that we lingered in Paris until the *coup d'état* which marked the fall of the French Republic and the ascension of Bonaparte to the imperial throne as Napoleon III. Confirmed by this event in his opinion of the instability, violence, and chicanery of Occidental statesmanship, my friend announced his readiness to leave Europe.

The American packets had already brought word of the sailing of Commodore Perry from Newport News on November the twenty-fourth. As his route to China lay around the Cape of Good Hope, there had been no need to hurry away on our shorter passage by the Peninsular and Oriental route across the Isthmus of Suez and down the Red Sea.

We sailed on January the third, 1853, and, confident of our advantage of route, stopped twice on our way, that Yoritomo might study the administration of the British East India Company in Ceylon and India and the Dutch rule in Java. As a result, we did not reach Shanghai until the end of April.

It is in point to mention that during the voyage I gave my friend frequent lessons in Western swordsmanship and in turn received as many from him in Japanese fence, using heavy, two-handed foils of bamboo. Though the Japanese art is without thrusts, I was taught by many a bruise that it possesses clever and powerful cuts. 46

At Shanghai, we found already assembled three ships of the American squadron, including the huge steam frigate *Susquehanna*. The Commodore was expected to arrive soon from Hong-kong in the *Mississippi*.

My plan had been to charter a small vessel, and run across to the Japanese coast, where we hoped to be able to smuggle ourselves ashore, and make our way to Yedo in the disguise of priests. Owing, however, to the alarm of the foreign settlement over the victories of the Taiping rebels in the vicinity of Shanghai, there were few vessels in port and none open to charter.

We were already aware that, under the strict orders of the Navy Department, we could not join the American expedition without subjecting ourselves to the fetters of naval discipline. As a last resort and in the hope of gaining the assent of the Commodore to land us in disguise, we might have considered even this humiliating course. But the very object of Yoritomo's return to his native shores was to reach Yedo and present his case to the Shogun's government before the arrival of the foreigners. 47

Fearful of delay, we hired a Chinese escort and rode south across country to Cha-pu, on the Bay of Hang-chow, the port from which the ten annual Chinese junks sail to Nagasaki. Though our escort did not always manage to prevent their bigoted countrymen from making the journey disagreeable for the "foreign devils," we reached our destination without loss of life or limb.

The vile treatment of the Celestials was quickly forgotten in the graciousness of our welcome by the little colony of Japanese exiles whom we found located at Cha-pu. Careful as was Yoritomo to conceal his identity from his countrymen, they at once divined that he was a man of noble rank, and invariably knelt and bowed their foreheads to the dust whenever they came into his presence.

The Cha-pu merchants were greatly impressed by such deference on the part of the proud little men of Nippon, yet neither this nor my gold enabled us to obtain passage on one of their clumsy junks. The five vessels of the summer shipment to Nagasaki were not due to sail before August, and the jabbering heathen refused point-blank to risk the extinction of their Japanese trade either by advancing the date of sailing or by chartering a separate junk. Their unvarying reply was that no one could land anywhere in Japan without being detected by the spies. 48

One merchant alone betrayed a slight hesitancy over refusing us outright, and he, after dallying with my ultimate offer for a fortnight, at last positively declined the risk. I next proposed to buy a junk and man it with fishermen from the Japanese colony. But Yoritomo soon found that not one of the exiles dared return to Dai Nippon, great as was their longing.

Mid-May had now come and gone. Hopeless of obtaining aid from the Chinese, we rode back overland to Shanghai, agreed that it would be better to sail with Perry than after him. To our dismay, we discovered that the American squadron had sailed for the Loo Choo Islands two days before our arrival.

In this darkest hour of our enterprise we chanced upon our golden opportunity. Shortly after our departure for Cha-pu a New Bedford whaler, the *Nancy Briggs*, had put into Shanghai to replace a sprung foremast. She was now about to sail for the Straits of Sangar, bound for the whaling grounds east of the Kurile Islands. I met her skipper upon the bund, and within the hour had closed a bargain with him to land us on the Japanese coast within twenty miles of the Bay of Yedo. For this I was to pay him a thousand dollars in gold, and pilot his ship through Van Diemen Strait. 49

By nightfall Yoritomo and I were aboard the *Nancy Briggs* with our dunnage and had settled ourselves in the

little stateroom vacated by the first mate. We awoke at sunrise to find the ship under way down the Whang-po to the Yang-tse-Kiang. Another sunrise found the whaler in blue water, running before the monsoon out across the Eastern Sea.

Though far from a clipper, the *Nancy Briggs* was no tub. We sighted Kuro, the westernmost island of Van Diemen Strait, and its blazing volcanic neighbor Iwogoshima, on June the second, eight days over a year and nine months since the *Sea Flight* bore me up the superb Bay of Kagoshima. The interval had been crowded with events in our physical and mental worlds scarcely less momentous to myself than to my friend.

But it was no time for me to indulge in retrospection. I had engaged to navigate the *Nancy Briggs* through the narrow waters of an uncharted strait. The rainy season was well under way, with all the concomitants of heavy squalls and dense fogs. As already mentioned, a lucky glimpse of Kuro, soon confirmed as a landfall by the red glare of Iwogoshima, enabled me to set our course to pass through the strait.

We ran in under reefed topsails, feeling our way blindly by compass and log in true whaler fashion. The Yankees took the risk as a matter of course, but I, between the difficulty of calculating the effects of the capricious squalls on our headway and my ignorance of the set of the powerful currents around this southern extremity of Japan, found my responsibilities as pilot no light burden. I was correspondingly relieved when a rift opened in the smothering masses of vapor which shrouded all view of sea and land, and I saw looming up abeam the well-remembered point of bold Cape Satanomi. 50

Once clear of the strait, out in the open waters of the Pacific, we packed on all sail to outdrive the heavy following sea, and entered upon the run of over five hundred miles along the southeast coasts of Kiushiu, Shikoku, and Hondo, the main island. Though the weather continued wet and foggy, we were favored by a half gale from the south and by the drift of the Japan Current, which here flows little less swiftly than does our Gulf Stream off Hatteras.

Regardless of the whales which we frequently sighted, our skipper, true to his agreement, held on under full sail, night and day, until we made a landfall of Cape Idzu, the southernmost point of the great promontory which lies southwest of Yedo Bay. We could not have desired conditions more favorable to enable us to approach the coast unobserved. Night was coming on and the gale freshening, but there was no fog. Our skipper shortened sail, and stood boldly in between the east coast of Idzu and the chain of islands trending southward from the mouth of the outer Bay of Yedo. 51

Had the gale fallen at sundown, I might have persuaded the skipper to hold on across and land us on the west coast of Awa, off the mouth of the inner bay. Unfortunately the wind moderated so little and the sky became so overcast that he ran in under the lee of the great hulking volcano laid down on the charts as Vries Island, but by Yoritomo called Oshima.

We were here in the mouth of the outer bay, and the skipper stated that he was prepared to fulfil his contract by landing us on the island. When I protested against being thus marooned, he declared that he would put us ashore on Vries Island or nowhere. At this I demanded that he run up the outer bay and set us adrift in his gig. He declared that to do so would be sheer murder, since no boat could outride the billows in the open bay. However, an offer of half of Yoritomo's Japanese gold coins altered his opinion, and the appearance of the rising moon, which began to glimmer at intervals through the scurrying clouds, enabled us to persuade him that he could run up to within the southern point of Awa and beat out again without endangering his ship. 52

The moment he ordered the ship brought about, Yoritomo and I hastened to prepare ourselves for the landing by shifting into our *Yamabushi*, or mountain-priest robes, which with other articles of costume we had obtained from the Japanese at Cha-pu. We had been dressing each other's hair in the Japanese fashion and shaving clean ever since the passage of Van Diemen Strait. Our dunnage was already lashed together in two compact bundles, wrapped about with many thicknesses of waterproof oiled paper.

To the outside of the bundles, I now tied my revolvers and Yoritomo his sword and dirk, all alike wrapped in oil paper, together with two pairs of straw sandals and black leggings and our deep-brimmed basket hats of coarse-wove rattan. The night was far too wild for us to risk being flung into the breakers with any unnecessary weight about us. That we might not be hampered by our loose dress, we bound up our long sleeves to our shoulders and tucked the skirts of the robes through the back of our girdles.

When we went up on the deck with our dunnage, a gleam of moonlight showed us the dim, smoking mass of Vries Island already a full two leagues astern, while ahead, across eighteen miles or more of racing foam-crested billows, loomed the mountainous coast of Awa. We made our way along the pitching deck to where the skipper stood with a group of sailors beside the gig. They were lashing down a number of empty water breakers in the bow and stern and under the thwarts, and there was an oil cask made fast to the bow with a five-fathom line. 53

"Ready, hey?" shouted the skipper, when I made our presence known by touching his arm. "Well, it's on your own head, sir. I'm doing my best for you, as I'm a God-fearing Christian. But it'll take a sight of special providence to bear you safe into haven once you cut adrift."

I pointed to the oil cask. "A drag?"

"Aye. Keep you from broaching. Best kind of drag. She's three-quarters full of oil, and the head riddled with gimlet holes. The oil will spread and keep the waves from breaking over you."

"I've heard of that whaler's trick," I replied, gripping his broad hand. "And the gig is unsinkable with those breakers aboard. We're bound to win through. I'll lash our dunnage in the sternsheets myself."

The moon went behind a cloud, but one of the sailors raised the lantern that he was holding beneath the bulwark and set it within the gig. Our bundles were soon secured, and we had only to lean upon the bulwark and gaze over the starboard bow towards the dim coast of Awa. Though under shortened sail, the old *Nancy* ran before the gale at so famous a rate that within two hours the outpeeping moon showed us the furious surf along the rocky coast, two miles on our starboard beam. 54

As agreed, the skipper now put the ship's head to the northwest and stood on across the mouth of the inner bay until we sighted the surf on the western coast. Our time had come.

CHAPTER VI—A WILD NIGHT

The gig already hung outboard. At the word from the skipper, Yoritomo sprang into the sternsheets and I into the bow, ready to cast off. Six men stood by to lower away and one to cut loose our cask drag, which had been swung outboard in a handy sling.

"Ready, skipper!" I called.

"Aye, aye—Good luck to you, sir!" he cried, and wheeling about, he began bawling his orders to bring the ship about on the port tack.

I had chosen a moment when the moon was edging out through a cloud rift, so that the deft-handed Yankees had ample light for their work. Within half a minute the ship, already running close aslant the waves, came around into the trough of the sea. Over she heeled, until she was all but lying on her beam ends. A little more and she must have turned turtle. The sea boiled up alongside until the water poured over the bulwark. Yet our men stood coolly to their posts.

"Let go the falls!" I shouted, above the howl of the gale.

The gig splashed into the seething water. In an instant I had cast loose the bow block.

"Clear!" cried Yoritomo from the stern.

"Cut!" I yelled.

The oil cask plunged from its severed sling as the gig swung swiftly down the receding wave to the leeward of the *Nancy*. I caught one glimpse of the gallant old whaler staggering up and swinging her stem around into the gale. A faint cheer came ringing down the wind. Then we were out from under her lee, in the full sweep of the gale.

Though I had always prided myself upon my skill in handling small craft, I must confess that the narrow gig would have swamped or turned turtle within the first minute had it not been for our drag and the breaker floats. Before we had swung around to the drag, a comber broke over us and filled our little cockleshell to the gunwales. As she came out of the smother, still afloat but heavy as a log, we fell to with our bailers like madmen. We now knew she could not sink, but without freeboard she would not ride head on to the cask, and the first wave that caught us broadside might roll us over.

Fortunately the oil oozing from the cask was already filming over the surface around us, so that high as we were flung up by the racing billows and low as we sagged into their troughs, no more crests broke upon us. The moment the boat rode easier, I sprang upon a thwart and gazed about for a parting glance of the *Nancy Briggs*. But the moon was already covered by a wisp of the scurrying stormrack. When its silvery rays again shone upon the wild sea, I fancied that I caught a glimpse of the whaler standing out towards the open ocean on the starboard tack.

The deep booming of surf on a rocky shore brought my gaze about, and as we topped the next wave I saw that we were abeam the high cliffs of Cape Sagami, at the western point of the entrance to the inner bay. I swung aft into the sternsheets, where Yoritomo crouched ankle-deep in the wash, still frantically bailing.

"Belay!" I shouted.

He dropped his bailer, and looked over the side at the surf-whitened shore in blank astonishment.

"So swift!" he cried, "so swift!"

"Wind, wave, and tide," I rejoined. "I've known a boat to make less speed under sail. Only trouble, with our present bearings, we'll pile up on that outjutting point of the east coast."

"Before that, Uraga," he replied.

"According to chart, we'll drift clear of the west coast, and there'll be no guard-boats out of harbor to-night."

"But the moonlight; they may sight us," he insisted.

"A mile offshore, among these waves! Even if they had night-glasses, they could not tell the gig from a sampan, nor ourselves from storm-driven fishermen. You say the bay swarms with fishers."

"Then there is now only the danger of delay from being cast up on the east shore."

"A delay apt to prove permanent if we drift upon a lee shore in the surf that's running to-night," I added.

"I know you fear death as little as I do," he said. "We are brothers in spirit. But that my message should be delayed or lost—the gods forbid!"

"We're not yet on the rocks, Tomo. We've deep water and to spare for a while," I cried, springing up to take our bearings as the moon was again gliding behind the clouds.

We were now well past Cape Sagami and opposite a bight whose southern shore, lying under the lee of its hill-crowned cliffs, was free of all surf. Leading down through the face of the cliffs from the terraced hillsides above were many wooded ravines, at the foot of which villages nestled upon bits of level ground near the water's edge. Here was a haven that might possibly be gained by casting the drag adrift and rowing in aslant the wind. But it was below Uraga, Yedo's port of entry for the native craft, and Yoritomo had impressed upon me the great need to win our way past that nest of government inspectors and spies. The attempt to run under a lee would be no more desperate an undertaking beyond Uraga than here.

I crouched down again beside my friend, and waited anxiously for the next glimpse of the moon. But the weather had suddenly thickened. Gusts of rain began to dash upon us out of the blackening sky. The rifts closed up until there was not even a star visible, and the rain increased until it poured down aslant the gale in torrents. The roar of the pelting deluge drowned the boom of the surf and beat down the wave crests. We had not even

the phosphorescent foam of the combers to break the inky darkness about us.

The rain was too warm to chill us, but the down-whirling drops struck upon our bare limbs with the sting of sleet. We crouched together in the sternsheets, peering westward into the thick of the aqueous murk in search for the lights of Uruga. One glimpse would have given us fair warning to prepare for my desperate scheme to work under the lee of the point some two miles beyond.

Death was inevitable should we drive past that point, across the bend of the bay, to the outjutting cape on the east shore. Nor was it enough for us to clear the cape. Even should we escape destruction there, and even should we drift on up into the northeast corner of the bay, across from Yedo, we would no less certainly perish in the surf. On the other hand, could I but win the shelter of the point above Uruga, out of the full sweep of the in-rolling seas, I might be able to sheer over to the west shore and gain the shelter of one of the capes shown on the chart drawn for me by Yoritomo. 60

Failing to sight the lights of Uruga, I was in a pretty pickle. To cut adrift from our drag was quite sufficiently hazardous without the certainty that if we put in too soon we should go to wreck on the Uruga cape, and if we held on too late, be cast up on the outjutting point of the east coast. We were utterly lost in the dense night of whirling wind and rain and swift-heaving waves. Without means to measure the passage of time, I could not even reckon our position by estimating our rate of drift.

"No use watching, Tomo," I at last shouted. "We could not see even a lighthouse so thick a night, and we've drifted past by now. Hand me your dirk."

"Aye," he replied, and I felt him turn about to where his dunnage was lashed down. In a few minutes he turned back and thrust the hilt of his short sword into my hand. He asked no questions, but waited calmly for me to direct him.

With a few touches of the razor-edged blade I cut loose the oars, which had been lashed under the gunwales. As I pressed the dirk hilt back into his hand, I gave him his orders: "Go forward and cut the line when I say; then aft, and stand by to bail." 61

Without a word he crept away towards the bows through the down-whirling deluge and blackness. I followed to a seat on the forward thwart, and waited while three of the great billows flung us high and dropped us into the trough behind them. As we sagged down the slope of the third, I dipped my oar-blades and shouted, "Cut!"

The fourth wave shouldered us skyward. As we topped the crest the feel of the wind on my back told me that the gig's head was falling off to port. A quick stroke brought her back square into the wind. We shot down the watery slope, but before we could climb to another crest Yoritomo had crept past me to his post in the pointed stern.

With utmost caution I headed the boat a few points to westward, and began to pull aslant the waves, with the wind on our port bow. It was a ticklish moment, for I did not know how the gig would handle. Without the drag of our abandoned cask, she might well be expected to fall off into the trough of the sea.

The struggle was now on in desperate earnest. But as I bent to my oars with all my skill and strength, I realized by the way the gig responded to my efforts that we had at least a fighting chance. Yet it was no easy matter to hold the bows quarteringly to wind and waves as we shot up and down the dizzy slopes, and Yoritomo was kept busy bailing out the water that all too frequently poured in over the rocking gunwales. 62

At last, through the howling of the gale and the slashing roar of the rain on the waters, I heard a deeper note, the welcome boom of the surf on the west shore. Whether we were as yet abreast the cape above Uruga I could not tell, but I held on as before, regardless of whatever reefs or shoals might lie off this rocky coast. Soon the surf roar, which had sounded abreast of us, seemed to fall away. I gave a shout, and bent to my oars with redoubled energy. We were drifting past the point, out into the turn of the bay beyond.

After a quarter-hour or so, to my vast relief the force of the wind lessened and the waves ran lower. We were edging around the cape, under the high lee of the westerly trending shore. Another quarter-hour, and we were in comparatively quiet water.

"Tomo," I called, "shall we attempt a landing? We can make it with ease under the shelter of the hills."

"So near across the point from Uruga?" he answered. "Could we not coast up the west shore? Every mile we float nearer to Yedo is two miles of walking saved."

"But what if we should fetch up on a lee shore? You've marked more than one promontory on the west coast." 63

"Hold farther out, then," he said. "By morning we might drift all the way up the bay and across the Shinagawa Shoals, into the mouth of the Sumida River."

"Clear to Yedo?" I cried. "Yet your chart makes it less than thirty miles, and it's only a question of holding the boat a few points aslant the wind. We've seen how lightly the gig rides. There's only the danger of those promontories, and I've the wind to steer by. We'll do it, Tomo!"

"Commodore Perry may already be at Nagasaki," he added, by way of final argument for haste.

"Give me your robe," I said.

He slipped off the loose garment without demur, and crept forward to press it into my hand. We were now in water in which the boat could be safely allowed to drift without guidance. I flung the oars inboard and lashed the robe to one of them so as to make a small triangular sail. While I worked I gave Yoritomo his instructions. Soon the sail was ready. I handed it over to my friend, and with the second oar for rudder made my way aft to the sharp stern. A few strokes brought us around with the wind on our port quarter. Immediately Yoritomo stepped his oar mast through the socket in the forward thwart, and set sail. 64

Though so small, the little cotton triangle drew well, as I could tell by the ease with which the gig responded to her helm. Another proof was the quickness with which we ran out from under our sheltering highland into

the full sweep of the gale and the high waves of the open bay. Scudding aslant the wind as nearly north as I could reckon our bearings from the drive of the rain torrents, we hurled along through the black night, utterly lost to all sense of time and distance.

After what may have been two hours, or possibly three, the rain slackened to a fine drizzle and the wind began to lull, blowing in fitful gusts and veering about in a way that left me only the run of the waves by which to shape my course. Soon after, to my surprise, the great rollers began to lessen in height, clear proof that we had come under the lee of a headland. Outweared by the long struggle, I decided to try for the shelter which it seemed to offer. But before I could give the order to Yoritomo to shift sail, a roller broke aboard us, filling the gig to the gunwales.

"Unship and bail!" I yelled.

"Bailer gone!" he shouted, and he crawled aft with his robe sail wrapped about the oar.

A second roller broke over us. We were among breakers, either upon a bank or a shoaling beach. As I labored to hold the gig stern on to the waves, I cried out in anticipation of the coming shock: "Hold to your oar! Cut loose the bundles. Stand by to pass me mine." 65

"Ready!" he called back.

The gig struck softly on a mud bottom, and was instantly smothered under a third breaker. But the impact drove her over the bank, and we found ourselves afloat in fairly calm water. An attempt to pole with my oar showed me that we were in water deeper than I could sound. A last puff of the expiring gale caught the boat and swung her about broadsides. Before I could bring her bows on again she struck bottom on another mud bank.

Through the lessening drizzle I could see the outline of a rising shore near at hand. The boat lifted in the low swell that rolled over the outer shoal, drove forward a few yards, and stuck fast. A downward thrust of my oar told me there was hard bottom a foot below the ooze.

"My bundle, and follow!" I cried.

Yoritomo thrust my dunnage into my hands, and leaped overboard after me. Ten yards through knee-deep mud and water brought us to the foot of a sloping embankment. We climbed up it and stretched out upon its turf-covered crest, panting with the fatigue of our long battle against wind and wave, yet aglow with delight at our victory. 66

"Come," said Yoritomo, after a short rest. "The rain has ceased. I will put on my robe and lead you to an inn or farmhouse."

"Wait," I replied. "The dawn must be near. We cannot leave the gig to be found by the first man who comes this way. We must sink her."

Lightened of our weight, the gig had cleared and drifted in almost to the foot of the embankment. By rolling we sluiced enough water from her to set her afloat, and I set about knocking out the bungs of the breakers, while Yoritomo fetched heavy lumps of turf and clay from a break in the face of the embankment. As the boat sank deeper into the water with the filling of the breakers and the weight of the clay ballast, we thrust off into deeper water. At last I was satisfied, and shoving her out into the channel between the mud banks, I rocked under the gunwales until she filled and sank.

A few strokes brought me back into shallow water, and I soon regained the embankment. In the faintly gathering light I saw that Yoritomo had already put on not only his robe but also his leggings and sandals. He thrust my hat and revolvers into my hands and knelt to bind on my sandals and leggings.

"The clouds break," he exclaimed. "It is a good omen. Let us hasten on." 67

"On?" I said. "We cannot go far without rest."

"Until we find a farmhouse or inn," he urged. Springing up, he swung his dunnage upon his shoulder and led off inland.

A few steps brought us down the far side of the embankment into a shallow swamp. As we splashed through the oozy slush I felt tufts of soft grassy stems brushing against my ankles at regular intervals.

"Rice field," muttered my friend before I could question him.

The stench of the strongly fertilized paddy swamp was almost insufferable, and our discomfort was not lessened by the maddening swarms of mosquitoes. We crossed a narrow dyke and splashed along with quickened step through a second field worse than the first. Still another dyke, and then, beyond the third field, we sighted higher ground, above which loomed the dimly outlined tops of gigantic trees.

"The Tokaido!" cried Yoritomo.

A hundred yards across the last fetid swamp brought us up the bank and into a broad smooth road beneath the dense gloom of a double row of cryptomerias. We were upon the famed Tokaido, or East Sea Road, which connects Yedo with Kyoto and the southwestern provinces of Japan. To my surprise, Yoritomo crossed over, instead of turning along the road. As I followed, he pointed to a wooded hill, upon which a group of lofty trees and the black mass of a small peak-roofed building stood out against the brightening sky. 68

Skirting the edge of the Tokaido, we soon came to a path that led us windingly around through high coppices and up the far slope of the hill. The last of the clouds were now sweeping away to the northward, and the eastern sky was gray with the pallor of the false dawn. We gained the round of the hill, and passed between a pair of heavy wooden pillars, cross-tied with a square lintel-beam and a massive roof-beam, or framework, with upcurving ends.

"A *torii*," muttered Yoritomo. "We come to a temple, not an inn."

Though I caught a hint of disappointment in his tone, he led on up the bend of the hillcrest and across a shrubbery, to the front of the small grass-thatched building in the midst of the towering pines.

"It is a *miya*—a Shinto temple," he murmured. "Yet we need food as well as rest."

"They will give us no food, when we come as fellow-priests?" I exclaimed in mock indignation.

"Even when a *miya* is not deserted, the priests of Shinto seldom dwell in or near it," he replied, and I heard him sigh. He was as near outspent as myself. But suddenly I saw his bent form straighten. He faced about to the western sky, with upraised arms, and his voice rang clear and strong in a salute of reverent joy: "*Fuji-yama! Fuji-san!*"

69

I turned to look. Far away to the west-southwest, beyond the black silhouette of broken mountain ranges and lesser peaks, a marvellous pyramid of rosy flame towered high aloft in the starry sky. Red dawn, as yet unseen by us, had turned the snow-clad crest of the superb peak into the likeness of a gigantic blossom, pendent from mid-sky.

"*Fuji-san!*" repeated Yoritomo, and he fell upon his knees and bowed his forehead to the ground, overcome with rapture.

Swiftly the roseate effulgence brightened and shifted hue to a glorious gold that shone with dazzling brightness against the blue-black sky. The eastern sky was now flaming high with the red dawn. Lighter shone the great peak-crest, its gold changing under the magic transmutation of day into the cold, burnished silver of its glistening snows. The sun leaped above the horizon, and the last shadow of night fled.

Yoritomo rose from his knees and caught up his bundle.

"Come within," he said. "We can at least rest, and it is well we should not be seen until we have arranged our dress."

70

Caught in the midst of a yawn, I signed assent, and he led me past the stone image of a sitting fox to the narrow entrance of the temple. Pushing in after him with my bundle, I found myself in a gloomy chamber, shut off from the rear half of the temple by a close wall. There was no idol to be seen, and the only furnishing of the bare little room was a small mirror of polished bronze hung about with strips of white paper.

Yoritomo kowtowed before this curious symbol of Shinto, rose to his knees, and waved me to lie down. I stretched out, yawning, and he sank down beside me. In another minute we were both fast asleep.

71

CHAPTER VII—ON THE TOKAIDO

We wakened, stiff and sore, a full two hours after noon. Yoritomo, who was first to rouse up, ran to the door to look out. He turned about, with an urgent cry that cut short my yawnings in the midst: "Up! up, brother! We've slept past midday. We must lose no time if we expect to reach the heart of Yedo by nightfall."

"Do you remember the two biscuits I wrapped in my bundle?" I demanded. "I'm famished. A drink and a biscuit for me before I take to any road race."

"We must dress and eat. There is water outside," he responded, and he slashed open our bundles.

Not a drop of water had penetrated the oil-paper wrappings. We slipped off our stained and tattered Yamabushi robes to put on the silken garments which he had carried from his country all the long voyage to Europe and back. First came a pair each of the gorgeous baggy trousers, or *hakama*. They were provided with side slits, into which we tucked the skirts of our silk *kimonos*. The narrow twisted *obi*, or sash, served to hold my revolvers and the magnificent Masamune sword presented to me by Yoritomo that eventful night in the cabin of the *Sea Flight*. 72

My friend thrust his sword and dirk into his girdle, not in the horizontal Japanese fashion, but vertically, as I wore mine, that the scabbards might not show beneath our outer robes. His writing case and the bag containing his smoker's outfit were secured on the other side by passing the carved ivory buttons of their cords through a fold of the girdle. Inside, about my waist, I placed my twenty odd pounds of metallic revolver cartridges, while he packed within his bosom a lighter though bulkier load consisting of white silk foot-mittens, extra sandals, a roll of crinkly writing paper, and the box with the remainder of his gold coins.

Over all we drew our cloak-like coats, or *haoris*, of rich stiff silk, upon which the circled mallow-leaf trefoil of the Tokugawa crest was embroidered on back, breasts, and sleeves. These coats were in turn covered with our dingy priest robes, and we were outwardly prepared to take the road. There remained our inward preparation. We took our ship's biscuits and passed out the narrow entrance.

My first glance was directed towards Fujiyama. But the glorious peak was shrouded from view by a bank of envious clouds. Yoritomo turned at once to a hollowed stone from which trickled a rill of pure water. We drank and crouched down beside the spring to gnaw at our biscuits. At first I was too hungry to heed my surroundings. Yoritomo, however, soon pointed southward, through a gap in the shrubbery, to where, some four miles distant, a hilly promontory jutted out into the bay. 73

"That is the town of Kanagawa," he said.

"Where?" I asked. "I see no smoke. Do you mean that little gray blotch low down on the edge of the promontory?"

"No, that is only a small fishing village lying among the rice swamps,—Yokohama, I believe, is its name. Kanagawa lies about two miles to the west of it. You see no smoke because in Japan we use charcoal only. Kanagawa is the last station on the Tokaido where the *daimios* stop over night before marching into Yedo."

"But the sons of the *daimios* repose amidst the splendors of the temples," I bantered him.

He glanced about reverently at the decaying little edifice. "The spirit of Shinto is simplicity. Yet I wish I could have entertained you with proper hospitality, and that we might enter Yedo in the manner to which we are entitled by our rank."

"Ours?" I questioned.

"Are we not brothers?" he countered. 74

"You know the position of my family at home," I said. "But it is a far cry from America to Dai Nippon. I have read what the Dutch writers tell about the hauteur of your nobility. Even as a friend of a kinsman of your Emperor, will I be received?"

"I am not the kinsman of the Emperor," he replied.

"You're not? Yet you said that your father, the Prince of Owari—"

"He and the princes of Kii and Mito are the heads of the August Three Families, descendent from the three sons of Iyeyasu. He is the cousin of the Shogun, not of the Emperor. One alone can be called Emperor of Nippon. That is the Dairi—the Mikado, lineal descendant of Ama-terasu, the Sun Goddess. The sacred Son of Heaven lives in awesome seclusion at Kyoto."

"Yet I am aware that your shoguns, whom the outer world has known as the temporal emperors, have ruled Nippon with mailed fist since the days of my ancestor, the English counsellor of Iyeyasu."

He stared at me in blank astonishment. "The English counsellor of Iyeyasu!—he your ancestor?—Anjin Sama your ancestor?"

"Will Adams, the first Englishman to reach Japan," I answered. "Surely you have heard of him."

"Adams! Was that the English name of Anjin Sama?—and he your ancestor? You never told me!" 75

"How much have you told me of your family, Tomo?"

"But Anjin Sama, of all the *kami*—!" He gazed at me with a strange glow in his black eyes. "You know our belief, Worth, that the dead come back many times and are often born again."

"The Buddhistic reincarnation," I remarked.

"And the Shinto rebirth of the *kami*—the high ones," he added.

"But what of Will Adams?" I demanded, aflame with curiosity. "I know that he married a Japanese wife and left children by her. Have they any living descendants?"

He looked away, with an enigmatic smile.

"You may learn more of your ancestor, brother, after we reach Yedo. There is an Anjin Street, whose householders still hold a yearly festival in his memory.—Come; it is time for us to be going."

As he spoke, he rose and started around the corner of the temple. I followed him to the corner and back along the side of the decaying building, below the ragged thatch of the eaves. At the rear corner we came to a narrow gap in the shrubbery looking down upon the Tokaido. Yoritomo suddenly turned about, with his fingers to his lips, and drew me down.

"Kwannon be praised!" he whispered. "They did not see us! For common beggar-priests to be caught staring down upon a *daimio's* train—*Namu!*"

I peered forward and down into the Tokaido, which ran past less than a hundred yards below us. Along the broad roadway was marching the most curious and stately procession I had ever seen. It was the retinue of a *daimio* who was going up to Yedo for the half-year's visit required by law. By far the greater part of the procession was already strung out Yedo-ward farther than the eye could see. But half a thousand of the rearguard had yet to pass.

Used as I was to the sight of Yoritomo's garments, there was much to surprise and interest me in the appearance of the *daimio's* retainers. Though as short as our women, they were of a more stalwart build than I had expected, and the *samurais*, or two-sword men, carried themselves with a proud assurance that went far towards offsetting their lack of height. Among the loose ranks of these gentlemanly men-at-arms marched lesser retainers,—grooms with grotesquely accoutred led-horses and porters with rattan baskets and lacquered chests.

Yoritomo whispered that the box-like palanquin, or *norimon*, of the *daimio* had long since been carried past by its bearers. Yet this rear end of the procession marched slowly along with a demeanor that could not have been exceeded in solemnity and stateliness had the *daimio* been present in its midst. The hush was almost oppressive. No man among them called out or spoke or even whispered. The only sounds were the scuffle of sandals in the dusty road and the muffled thud of straw-shod horse hoofs.

"What is the crest?" I whispered, staring at the insignia embroidered on the outer garments of every retainer and marked on every piece of baggage. "It looks like a white cross in a circle."

"A circled cross," confirmed Yoritomo. "You saw it in Kagoshima Bay,—the crest of my friend Nariakiri, Daimio of Satsuma."

"The Prince of Satsuma!" I exclaimed. "Why not hasten down and join him?"

"Hasten down, and be slashed or beheaded by the first *samurai* we passed!" rejoined Yoritomo, grasping my sleeve as I sought to spring up. "Even without these tattered robes it would mean certain death. Each *daimio* is appointed a time for passing along the highroad. Any one who breaks in upon the procession may expect to die without benefit of medicine."

"But he is your friend, and if you are so anxious to reach home by nightfall—"

"There are no by-ways through the rice swamps," he replied. "We must trail after the rearguard."

"They move at a snail's pace!"

"It will bring them into Shinagawa, the southern suburb of Yedo, about sunset. In Shinagawa I expect to find a friend with whom we can spend the night. Meantime we may as well wait here until the cortege has gone on four or five miles. I will take advantage of the opportunity to write a petition asking permission to present a memorial to the Shogun."

He crept back around the corner of the temple. I stretched out in the balsamic shade of the pines, and watched the slow passing of the procession. When the last strutting *samurai* had marched on up the road, I gazed around at the landscape. Across the full width of the bay the mountains on the promontory of Awa loomed dimly through the haze, while the blue waters between, already stilled from their night's turmoil, were dotted with the white sails of junks and fishing smacks.

Inland the golden sunlight streamed down out of the sapphire sky upon a scene no less peaceful and charming. About me and far to the northward the land lay in broad plain, for the most part cut up into a checkerboard of rice fields. Here and there rose knolls and hills, some terraced to the top for rice, others wooded, and the most eminent crowned with temples that reminded me of China. In the rice swamps naked peasants, knee-deep in the slush, were transplanting tufts of young rice, while about them waterfowl waded or paddled, untroubled by the presence of man. Above them soared numbers of eagles and hawks. Birds were to be seen or heard on every side, but I noticed a marked absence of animals from the landscape.

Some time after the rear of the procession had disappeared up the Tokaido, Yoritomo came back around the temple, and said that we must start. I pulled my hat brim low over my face, and swung after him down the hillside to the smooth road.

For a time we met no other traveller. The road had been swept clear by the procession. But we soon came to groups of odd little shops and inns, strung along the roadside in almost continuous rows. Within the open fronts of the shops cotton-robed tradesmen knelt on matted platforms in the midst of their cheap wares, while from under the shallow porticos of the inns quaint little maidens with powdered doll-like faces and narrow skirts smiled at us invitingly and bowed until we could see the great bows at the back of their sashes. But Yoritomo kept on up the road at a fast pace, unmoved by the alluring glances of these charming little waitresses.

Within the second mile we began to encounter a stream of travellers released from the post town of Kawasaki by the passage of the *daimio's* train. We were the first to come up from the south in the wake of the *daimio*, but the people we met had no more than a casual glance for a pair of dirty-robed Yamabushi priests.

As we swung along through their midst I peeped out at them between the meshes of my loosely woven hat brim. My first observations were that they averaged far below the height of Americans, and that clothing was

rather a minus quantity among all but the white-robed pilgrims and the silk-clad *samurais*. The brown skins of peasants and fishermen, porters, grooms, and beggars were either innocent of all covering except narrow loincloths or at most limited to a shirt-like *kimono* of blue-figured cotton, a straw hat, and sandals.

Aside from the aristocratic swordsmen, these people were the merriest I had ever met. When not smiling and chatting, they were laughing or singing. Among the peasants and groups of pilgrims were several women, the younger of whom possessed a buxom rural prettiness. The married women looked aged and withered, and pleasant as were their smiles, my Western eye was repulsed by their shaven brows and the gray-black teeth which showed between their rouged lips at every smile.

At Kawasaki we swung briskly down to the bank of the Rokugu River, where bronzed ferrymen, stripped to loincloths, stood waiting for passengers in their big flat-bottomed punts. A boat in which the party of a *samurai* horseman had embarked was being thrust off. Before Yoritomo could check me, I sprang forward to leap aboard. In a flash the *samurai* drew his two-handed sword and aimed a blow at me that would have split my head in two had I not dropped backwards beyond reach. Furious at the wanton attempt to murder me, I sprang up and fumbled for a revolver as the boat shot out from the bank. 81

"Hold, brother!" warned Yoritomo, springing to catch my arm. "Remember, we are only begging priests. He had the right to resent our company. What's more, he is a *hatamoto*, one of the Shogun's *samurais*. If I remember aright, he is Yuki, a captain of the palace guard."

"He tried to cut me down in cold blood!" I protested.

"It is a right of all *samurais* to kill lower-class men, and you affronted Yuki by seeking to board the same boat. Here's a smaller boat putting off."

We ran and leaped aboard the small boat as it swung into the stream. For fellow-passengers we had a wealthy old merchant, dressed in plain cotton robes, and the half-naked bearers of his narrow U-shaped basket-litter. In paying our ferry fees, Yoritomo offered one of his gold pieces, and the boat's owner being unable to make full change, he gave him the difference. As a result the polers bent to their work with such hearty goodwill that we reached the opposite bank a full three lengths in advance of the *samurai's* boat. 82

We sprang ashore past a bevy of little brown children who were paddling, stark naked, in the mud. Shortly beyond we met a pair of neatly dressed girls, whose large mushroom hats rested upon black silk skullcaps. They smiled and greeted us in a familiar manner. Yoritomo muttered a hasty response, and pointed back at the *samurai*. The girls hastened to advance upon that quick-tempered gentleman, with their battery of charming smiles and alluring glances in full action.

"Courtesans?" I asked, as we swung on along the Tokaido.

"No, not *joros*, only *bikunis*—begging nuns, daughters of Yamabushi priests. None would be quicker to penetrate our disguise," replied Yoritomo, and he quickened his pace.

After a mile or so we again met a crowd of southbound travellers, people caught at Omuri by the closing of the highroad. We hastened on to Omuri, the first post village out of Shinagawa. Recently as the *daimio's* procession had passed, the place was already alert for business, its shops wide open and teahouse girls standing coy-eyed in the verandas. We hastened on through, pausing only to buy some large dried persimmons that caught my eye. 83

A mile behind the town we came up with the rear of the Satsuma procession, and were compelled by prudence to slacken our pace to a tortoise-like gait. Making the best of the situation, I relished my persimmons and viewed the scenery. There was much novelty and pleasure in the sight of orange trees and bamboos and even an occasional banana and palm growing in the same garden with pines and other evergreens, while the deep-thatched roofs of the farmhouses were oddly attractive with the beds of blue irises and vivid red lilies blooming on their flattened ridges.

Above us towered the giant red-limbed cryptomerias of the Tokaido, with their pine-like foliage, while on our right the road skirted along near the sparkling blue waters of the bay, upon which sailed flotillas of quaint fishing craft and high-sterned junks that might have served as models for a painter of the sixteenth century.

Yoritomo touched my arm and pointed to something lying on the opposite side of the road. I looked closer, and saw that it was the corpse of a peasant, mangled by terrible sword cuts.

"A drunken fool," he said, unmoved by the horrible sight. "No sober man would have been found in the road after it had been sanded for the passage of a *daimio*." 84

Before I could reply, a little bell tinkled in the road behind us, and Yoritomo drew me quickly out of the middle of the thoroughfare. I glanced about and saw two runners racing towards us at headlong speed. One carried the little bell I had heard, the other bore a small bundle on a stick, across his shoulder. Both were stripped to their loincloths, though at first glance I thought that they were clad in tights, so completely were they covered with animal designs tattooed in red, blue, and white.

In a moment the couriers had dashed past us and were flying on, regardless of the stately cortege that barred the road. With the murdered peasant fresh in mind, I looked to see the Satsuma men turn about with sword and lance to avenge this outrage upon the dignity of their lord. To my vast astonishment, the solemn ranks split apart all along the centre of the road at the first tinkle of the little bell, and the naked runners raced on without a check through the midst of the procession.

"Carriers of despatches for the Shogun," explained Yoritomo in response to my look of amazed inquiry.

Here was food for thought to last me into Shinagawa, slow as was our pace. Nowhere in the world had I witnessed such solemn state as was exhibited by this *daimio* cortege, a state so exalted that men were killed for venturing within sword-sweep of the procession's vanguard. Yet at the tinkle of a bell, all had yielded the road to a pair of naked, sweaty, unarmed postmen. What, then, must be the sublimity of rank and state arrogated to himself by the master of this prince? Yet the father of the quiet, mild-mannered gentleman trudging along in the 85

dust beside me was the blood kinsman of that Oriental lord of lords.

We were close upon Shinagawa before I realized that the sun was far down the western sky and fast sinking behind a bank of black clouds. As I looked up my eye fell upon a rude pillory, standing near the roadside on ground raised above the level of the rice swamp. Along the top of the rude structure sat five roundish objects sharply outlined against the blood-red sky. Looking closer, I made out ghastly human faces—a crow flapped up from the ground, with a hoarse cry, and began pecking at one of the severed heads.

CHAPTER VIII—THE GEISHA

Day was fading into twilight as we trailed after the Satsuma men into the heart of Shinagawa. On either side of the Tokaido extended rows of handsome two-storied inns and teahouses, set one against the other without a gap except where divided by narrow cross streets. The upper windows and balconies of every building were sealed over with opaque screens to prevent persons from looking down upon the *daimio* and his retinue, and across the entrances of the side streets were stretched frail ropes of twisted straw, behind which kneeling crowds waited for the passage of the last Satsuma man.

The street was guarded by wardsmen, or householders, bearing iron staves with large rings at the top. We shuffled along between these warders, with downbent heads, perilously close to the rear of the procession. Three or four times the wardsmen seemed inclined to halt us, but we passed by them with outward indifference, keeping well in advance of the crowds that surged out behind us into the Tokaido from the unbarred side streets.

Midway of the long suburb Yoritomo turned sharply into a narrow street leading towards the bay. I stooped under the barring rope after him, and found myself in the midst of a dense crowd of men, many of whom were still kneeling. Packed side by side in the jam were cotton-clad tradesmen and silk-gowned *samurais*, half-naked artisans and nobles in lacquered *norimon* palanquins. All alike were provided with paper lanterns, round, square, or octagonal in shape, and inscribed with crest or name in Chinese ideographs. These lanterns and the rows of similar ones hung along the fronts of the houses were being lighted as twilight deepened into darkness.

Suddenly the crowd through which we were attempting to pass swayed forward and filled the air with the clash of their wooden clogs on the hard ground. The rope had been taken down and the crowd permitted to surge out into the Tokaido. While we worked our way in against the outpouring stream, I was pleased to see that there were no women in the jam. But on either side of the street wide-flung screens exposed to view artistically decorated interiors where smiling young girls in gorgeous dress knelt on the mats, twanging odd music on their three-string *samisens* or preening themselves before mirrors of polished bronze. In other houses dainty waiting maids fluttered about like butterflies, serving the hungry guests.

The crowd in the street was the sweetest one with which I had ever come in contact, and this was no less true when we elbowed our way through a band of breech-clouted porters. The explanation was not far off when, with the breaking of the jam, we approached a building through whose latticed front issued clouds of vapor and a babel of chatter and laughter.

When opposite this house I glanced in through the wide spaces of the lattice and was startled to see a large company of nude men and women splashing about together in a great tank of hot water. It was a public bath—public in all senses of the term! As we passed by, a dripping nymph stepped up from the water within a foot of the lattice and gazed idly out into the street, as naively unconscious in look and manner and as innocent of costume as Eve before the Fall.

Yoritomo swung by unheeding, and hastened on to the open front of one of the larger teahouses. A moment later we had entered a long stone-paved passageway that ran back through the centre of the building. On one side we looked in upon the charcoal ranges and sniffed the savory odors of the inn kitchen, on the other we viewed through half-closed screens the commoner guest-rooms of the house.

At sight of our tattered robes bowing waitresses sought to usher us into one of these front apartments. Yoritomo thrust past them and on down the passage, fifty paces or more, until we came out into a veritable fairy garden, strung with myriads of painted lanterns. As we seated ourselves on a low bench under a grape arbor, the host overtook us and, bowing curtly, asked what we desired.

"Does Kohana, the free *geisha*, still live here?" asked Yoritomo.

"Kohana San, the artist patronized by princes, still honors my poor establishment," replied the man.

"We would speak with her," said Yoritomo, pushing back his hat until his pale aristocratic face could be seen in the soft lantern light.

The landlord, who had been about to turn us off, hesitated and answered in a more respectful tone: "The most famous dancer of Yedo enjoys the favor of *daimios*. How then can I bid her come to attend those who seem no more than Yamabushi?"

Yoritomo drew a sheet of paper from his bosom, and taking his brush pen from the case at his girdle, wrote a few small ideographs in the classical Chinese character. Swift as were his strokes, the first letter was scarcely drawn before the host was kowtowing, forehead to earth. He rose, touched the finished writing to his brow, and clattered off on his high wooden clogs across the fairyland of his garden.

"You have declared yourself!" I exclaimed.

"To him, no. My manner of writing convinced him that I am of high rank. But I wrote only a quotation from one of the ancient poems. Even if he is learned enough to read it—"

"Will this dancer then grasp your meaning?"

"Kohana is one of the higher class of *geisha* called *shirabyoshi*,—one of the superior artists. She is of *samurai* blood, and the old *geisha* who bought her in childhood, and trained her after the manner of *geishas*, gave her the highest of women's culture. Before I left Yedo I bought the girl's freedom from service. She was then in her eighteenth year."

"You bought her freedom!" I murmured. "You who look so coldly upon women!"

"I could do no more for her,—and no less. We loved, but love cannot bind a true *samurai* when duty calls. I vowed to give my life to the service of the Mikado and Dai Nippon. To have lingered with her after that would have been despicable."

I sat silent, reflecting upon the strange customs of this queer people and the hidden depths in the nature of my friend. All my intimacy with him, backed by close study of Kämpfer and Siebold, had failed to prepare me for the bizarre contrasts and impressions of the mysterious land of Nippon.

In the garden about us pleasure-seekers strolled along the rough-paved walks on lacquered clogs, but none disturbed our seclusion in the arbor until the landlord came shuffling back. He kowtowed before us, with loud insuckings of his breath. I could scarcely hear his murmured words: "Kohana San sends humble greetings to the honorable writer, and entreats him and his honorable companion to honor her lowly dwelling with their august presence."

"We need no guide," replied Yoritomo, as the landlord rose to conduct us.

The man again prostrated himself and held to the obsequious salute until we had moved away. The moon gave no light through the curtain of drifting cloud, but as we hastened along a winding path, in through the gay rows of swaying paper lanterns, I made out amidst the graceful trees and flowering shrubs grotesque bronze figures, odd shaped rocks, and quaint pagoda-topped stone lanterns.

Soon the path led down along the shore of a tiny lake, whose still surface glinted with the many-hued reflections of the lanterns. We crossed over at one corner on a frail bamboo bridge, arched like a quarter-round of hoop, and passed through a fern-set rockery, to a gateless opening in a hedge of bamboos. Beside this entrance, resplendent in a miniature *kimono* of silver-wrought blue silk, waited a doll-like little maiden of twelve, who, having duly kowtowed to us, tottered ahead on her high clogs, to conduct us to the house of her mistress.

A few steps brought us to a rambling red-tiled bungalow with broad, low eaves and deep-set verandas. Mounting daintily before us up the rough stone steps, the child knelt upon the polished planking of the veranda, to remove our sandals. If she was astonished at our mudstained leggings, she showed not the slightest sign, but bowed us into the house with winsome smiles.

Though all the screens were open, the interior before us was dark as midnight. The little maiden reached down one of the lanterns that hung from the eaves among the tinkling wind-bells, and lighted us in across two tiny rooms to a large apartment fronting on a miniature garden court. All one side of the room was open to the court veranda, and two of the other walls were formed of sliding screens, but the far end of the room was closed with a solid partition containing a shallow double alcove.

The little maid hastened to place two soft leather cushions for us, hesitating just perceptibly over the second until Yoritomo indicated that it was to be laid beside the first, close before the raised floor of the larger recess. Having kowtowed while we reposed ourselves on knees and heels, she pattered about the room with a taper, lighting the pith wicks of several little saucer lamps that were set about the room in square paper frames.

I glanced around the apartment in the increasing glow. The soft, thick mats, all about three by six feet in size, were set in the floor on a level with the slotted sill-beams of the wall-screens. Unlike those I had seen in the front rooms of the inns, they were not only immaculately white and clean but were bordered with strips of silk. The sliding screens of the room were rimmed with gold leaf and painted with exquisite landscapes in rich soft colors. The low ceiling and the recessed wall behind us were finished in fanciful cabinetwork, and the beautiful grain of the two woods used was polished without oil or varnish to a surface that shone like satin.

The one side of the recess was an open closet, filled with shelves and drawers; the other was the sacred *tokonoma* mentioned by the Dutch writers. Upon its wall hung a blue silk banner, painted with a summer view of Fuji-yama. Below, on the polished floor, a vase of plain earthenware held a single fragrant spray of Cape jasmine. Across from the vase stood the bronze figure of a playful kitten, with paw outstretched in graceful invitation. Before it were placed a few grains of boiled rice, a tiny cup of amber liquid, and a stick of burning incense. It was the emblem and godlet of the *geishas*,—a frolicsome young cat, behind whose velvet touch lurked cruel claws, ever ready to mangle.

Would the worshipper of this image meet her former lover with feline treachery?

As I asked myself the question the room re-echoed with a ripple of gentle laughter, melodious as the note of an Æolian harp, sweeter than the tinkle of fairy bells. I faced to front, and saw floating towards us a vision as wondrously beautiful as a Buddhist angel. Against the jet blackness of her high coiffure glinted comb crests and pin heads of amber and coral, while from slender throat to tiny feet she was enveloped in a robe of scarlet silk, gorgeously embroidered with flowers in gold thread, and her plump little hand fluttered a vividly colored fan.

Like my friend's, the girl's face showed the *samurai* type in its oval contour, small mouth, and aristocratic nose,—features so markedly different from the broad, flat faces of the lower classes. The characteristic lack of prominence of her brows and the bridge of her nose lent to the upper part of her face a mildness of expression well in keeping with the inimitable gracefulness and gentleness of her bearing, but her rosebud mouth and lustrous black eyes held all the subtle allurements of a Spanish Carmen's.

Bound about as she is by narrow skirts, modesty compels the Japanese woman to assume in walking a short, scuffling, intoed gait, with forward bent body and head. Yet even to this awkward movement Kohana San, the dancer, contrived to give a semblance of grace as she hastened forward to prostrate herself at the feet of my friend.

The little maid was tripping from the room. The *geisha* sank down before us, her forehead upon the mat between her little olive-hued hands, and her body quivering with an excess of emotion which even a lifetime of training could not enable her to repress.

Yoritomo gazed down upon her as serenely impassive in look as a bronze Buddha. Yet beneath his placid tone even I could detect the hidden note of tenderness: "Kohana, we have come to you from a long journey."

"My lord!" she murmured, "to my lowly house first of all!"

She rose to her knees and gazed into his face with a look of such radiant love and devotion that I forgot on

the instant my suspicion of her loyalty. And in the same moment I forgave the thick powdering of rice flour upon her face, and the dark red stain of thistle juice upon her lips, and the greasy pomade with which her hair was matted and stiffened.

For a minute or more the lovers sat silent and motionless, gazing into one another's eyes, Yoritomo gravely smiling, Kohana melting to happy tears. That was their greeting after three years of separation! 96

"Tomo," I whispered in English, "do you not see how she has waited and longed for you all the time since you left her? Console her for the past! I will go out and leave you."

"Do not trouble," he replied. "Have I not told you that we Japanese do not kiss and embrace?" He turned and spoke to the girl, who was glancing at me out of the corners of her long eyes with intense curiosity: "Kohana, my brother is weary, and we have not bathed in two days."

"My lord! no bath in two days!" she gasped, and she clapped her hands sharply. There sounded an answering "*Hai!*" and the little serving maid appeared at the end of the room—"Quick, girl! see that the bath is heated."

As the child trotted away, Yoritomo peered out through the open side of the room into the dim garden. "Close the *shoji*," he ordered.

Kohana hastened across, and from either end of the room drew white paper screens out along the slotted sill and lintel-beams, until the room was shut in from the garden. Within a minute she was again kneeling before us. Yoritomo smiled into her beaming face, and said: "You will now be honored by seeing the countenance of my august brother. He is my friend and benefactor." 97

At the word, I lifted off my deep-brimmed hat and looked at her, smiling. What she had expected to see I cannot say. My oval face and even my nose might easily have passed for Japanese, and my cheeks were tanned almost to the darkness of Yoritomo's. But the two days' stubble upon my lip and chin was very thick for the beard of an Oriental, and my forehead much too white, while yet far more my round blue eyes spoke of a terrifying world all unknown to this gentle girl. Before my look her eyes widened and purpled with terror. She sank down at my feet in speechless fear.

"Is it so Kohana welcomes my friend and brother?" asked Yoritomo in quiet reproach. "There is nothing to fear."

The girl straightened and gazed up at me, wide-eyed yet with a smile on her trembling lips. "*Tojin sama!* forgive the rudeness of one who is foolish and ignorant! Accept the humble greetings of your servant!"

"Is the *tojin* so fearful a beast or devil in the eyes of Kohana San that she still trembles?" I asked.

"Woroto Sama is my friend and brother. He has been my benefactor during all my travels among the *tojin*," added Yoritomo.

"Among the *tojin*, my lord! You have travelled among the barbarians?—beyond the sea?"

"To the five continents. I sailed away with Woroto Sama towards the rising sun, and sailed back with him from the setting sun. The world is an enormous ball, Kohana, and I have been around it as a gnat might crawl around Fujiyama." 98

"My lord is no gnat!" she laughed. "I do not understand. Even Fuji-san rests broadly upon the back of Dai Nippon, and Dai Nippon upon the back of the great fish. How then could my lord go beneath? Did my lord see the great fish?"

"I saw greater things than the fish of our myth. Beyond the seas are lands vastly greater than Nippon. I have sailed in the black ships and seen the power of the *tojin*. Tell me quickly. Has word come of the fleet from America?"

"No more, my lord, than a message from the *tojin* at Deshima that the black ships had sailed for Dai Nippon and would force the Shogunate to open other ports than Nagasaki."

Yoritomo's eyes glowed. "We are in time, brother! All now turns upon the wisdom or folly of the Elder Council."

Kohana rose to her feet barely in time to mask my face from the gaze of the child-maid. She had returned to announce that the bath was ready.

"Go bid the landlord prepare his best dishes for my guests. Then see that no one enters unannounced," said her mistress.



SHE DROPPED HER BLUE ROBE FROM HER GRACEFUL SHOULDERS

The child turned away in smiling obedience. Yoritomo signed me to rise and follow Kohana, who took up a lantern and thrust open one of the screens of the inner wall. We walked along a smooth planked passage twenty or thirty paces to a little room with sloping slatted floor. Beside the door stood clothes-racks, on which hung thin towels of cotton print. Three or four buckets of cold water ranged along the wall, and at the lower end, half sunk below the level of the floor, was a great tub, or wide-mouthed barrel, from which warm vapors were beginning to rise. 99

The *geisha* hung her lantern to a convenient hook, and unwrapped her long crepe *obi*, or sash. In a moment she had slipped off her gold-brocaded robe and disclosed a still more beautiful under *kimono* of azure silk embroidered with gold dragons. Loosening the inner *obi*, she dropped her blue robe from her graceful shoulders, and stood before us as nude and as unconscious as the nymph of the public bath. Though I was aware that she was a member of a profession that her people class little above the courtesans, one look into her earnest, smiling face convinced me that her thoughts were innocent of all immodesty.

"Our customs are not the customs of the Occident, but they are now your customs, Woroto," said Yoritomo, and he ungirt his priest robe.

There was no escape, and my hesitancy was brief. My friend had submitted to many customs repugnant to him, in my country. Since this was a custom of his country, I could do no less. His matter-of-fact manner, taken with the girl's naive unconsciousness of all wrong, helped me to realize that true modesty and purity are of the spirit and not of outward convention. 100

The ordeal was no light one, yet long before the bath was finished I had begun to forget my embarrassment in the girl's ecstasies of wonder and delight over the whiteness of my skin. Though distinctly a brunette in all else than the color of my eyes, I seemed marvellously fair to this daughter of the Orient, whose own skin was of the olive tint of southern Italy and Spain.

With strict impartiality she aided our ablutions with the cold water, and then, at a sign from Yoritomo, led me first to the tub. It was scalding hot, yet the girl betrayed surprise when I insisted upon the addition of two cooling buckets before I would venture in. Even with that I was almost parboiled before Kohana had finished shaving my friend and dressing his hair.

When at last he came to take my place in purgatory, the girl deftly set about drying and shampooing me, still exclaiming upon the fairness of my skin, though it was now far other than "snow white." Having dried the "honorable *tojin sama*," she proceeded to shave my face and crown with her queer little razor and to reknit my cue. To my vast relief, she then cast aside my Yamabushi robe and soiled leggings, and left me to dress myself in the rich garments I had worn inside my tatters. 101

Cleansed and refreshed, we returned to compose ourselves upon our mats in the guest-room, while Kohana San, once more resplendent in gala dress, hastened out for our dinner. We were not long kept waiting. She returned with a lacquered tray, or rather, a low table, twelve or fourteen inches high. This she placed before me, and was out and back again in a few minutes with a similar tray for Yoritomo.

Each tray held many little bowls of steaming hot food and a pair of plain chopsticks, cut from a single piece of wood and not yet split apart at the upper end. At first I hesitated to begin eating under the eyes of this most cultured of *geishas*, but my single biscuit and the handful of persimmons had served only to whet my appetite, and the savory odors of many of the dishes before me were very tempting.

After a thimbleful of hot *sake*, a curious bittersweet wine made of fermented rice, we fell to on the dinner, which Kohana served with utmost deftness and grace, ever alert to refill our porcelain *sake* cups between dishes. The meal was odder than any I had eaten even in China,—soup, omelet, fishballs, and sponge cake; soup, boiled crawfish, lotus-root salad, and salted plums; thin soup, sweetmeats, pickled bamboo shoots, and stewed cuttlefish; thick soup, sliced duck, and stewed vegetables; sea slugs with soy sauce, loquats stewed with sugar, soup, more soup, and last of all plain boiled rice, without sugar—which is scarce in Japan,—and without milk—which is unknown.

Throughout the eating of this odd medley of exotic dishes, Kohana was either pattering out to her kitchen, or back with trays held level with her forehead, or replenishing our *sake* cups from her heated flask of the amber wine. The time came when we could eat no more. The last dish was removed, and Kohana set before us a tray with smoking materials and an embossed copper-lined brazier, or *hibachi*, in which a few twigs of charcoal glowed upon a bed of ashes. I had smoked too often in Japanese fashion with Yoritomo's outfit not to know how to roll a pellet of tobacco and fill the tiny silver bowl of the pipe now offered me.

As we settled back on our cushions and drew slowly at the silver mouthpieces, our hostess rose and began to dance for our entertainment. Well was she named the best dancer in Yedo! Unlike our Western *artistes*, she did not glide about, but stood in one place, seldom shifting her feet, yet swaying body and arms and head in movements of enravishing grace and beauty. For one of the dances she withdrew, to reappear in a *haori* whose gorgeously embroidered sleeves, fluttering from her extended arms, suggested to me the movements of a butterfly even before Yoritomo explained that the performance was called the Butterfly Dance.

My friend had, however, graver matters in mind than amusement. In consideration of my pleasure, he had waited this long. Now he made a slight gesture, and the girl sank down, flushed and smiling. He spoke with austere abruptness: "Enough of play. When I went upon my travels, Kohana said she would be my eye and ear in Yedo."

"My lord knows that few things fail to reach the ear of the free *geisha*."

"Begin. Dai Nippon has been a sealed book to me since I sailed from Kagoshima in the black ship with Woroto Sama."

She kowtowed and whispered: "There has been no change at Kyoto."

He bowed low at the veiled reference to the mysterious Mikado. "And Yedo?" he demanded.

Again she kowtowed, though not so low. "His Highness, Minamoto Iyeyoshi, is still Sei-i-tai Shogun. Iyesada Sama, his august son, is no stronger either in head or body."

"The Council of Elders?"

"Midzuano Echizen-no-kami is now head of the Council. He does not enjoy the favor of the Household."

Yoritomo nodded slightly. "The *Gosanke*?"

"My lord's august father, Owari dono, enjoys excellent health. My lord's august elder brother, Mori—" she hesitated, "he is not so well."

She said nothing as to his mother, and he did not inquire, but sat silent, apparently meditating on her last words. I surmised that they carried a meaning beyond my knowledge of the idiom. When, after a few moments, he lifted his lowered lids, she went on without prompting: "The Prince of Kii is still given over to the pleasures of his women, the *No* dances, and the exploits of his wrestlers. His august heir is still a child, and Kii dono has not adopted an elder son to take over the burden of the title."

"The child may become a factor should Iyesada Sama depart this life before his august father," said Yoritomo.

"My lord!" exclaimed the girl, "the choice of the Mito faction is well known to be set on Keiki, who has been adopted by the Hitotsubashi family. He is the favorite of his father."

"The former Prince of Mito!" muttered Yoritomo, his handsome face distorted with the first look of hatred and anger I had ever known him to betray. "Old Rekko, lord of the frogs in the well! When I left he was still imprisoned in one of his secondary palaces."

"His Highness the Shogun holds steadfast to the counsel of your august father and of Ii Kamon-no-kami. Keiki has won over the Council of Elders, but the Household is with my lord's party."

"Satsuma also is with us. He does not forget that my father brought about the marriage of his adopted daughter to Iyesada," said Yoritomo.

"Over-confidence is a traitor in camp, my lord. Always before this, Kii has stood with Owari against Mito, until the saying has become a proverb that no son of Mito can be chosen to sit on the stool of the Shoguns. But now Kii swims in pleasure, and Owari stands alone against Mito. Keiki aims high. My lord has read how Hideyoshi, though barred from the title of Shogun, attained to the higher office of Kwambaku."

"He would climb to greater power on the ruins of the Shogunate!" muttered Yoritomo.

"Either Shogun or Kwambaku," replied the girl. "And what chance has he of the first as against my lord, should Iyesada Sama go from us and leave the heirship in doubt?"

Yoritomo gravely shook his head. "My life is given. If I live, it will not be to sit on the seat of Iyeyasu my forefather. Our choice is the child of Kii dono. I have overcome passion. The thought of power does not tempt me." 107

Kohana prostrated herself at his feet, with a soft insucking of her breath. "My lord has overcome all passion and desire! He has entered upon his Buddhahood!"

"Far from it, foolish girl!" he exclaimed. "My heart is black with hatred of my father's enemies, the real enemies of Dai Nippon, and I burn with desire to win glory in the service of the sacred Mikado. I am far indeed from the blessed peace of Buddhahood.—Tell me, has Keiki made any open move?"

"Not as yet, my lord," she replied, straightening and glancing apprehensively about the room, "not yet! But—" her voice sank to a whisper—"his plans are laid to win the release of his father. With the old Prince of Mito free and high in the favor of Iyeyoshi, my lord can easily foretell—"

"The plans?" demanded Yoritomo.

The girl began to breathe quickly. "My lord has heard how it is said that the Princess Azai holds the place that should be Iyesada's in the heart of their august father. It is unbelievable that a parent should consider a daughter before a son, yet this has come to me in a way that leaves no room for doubt. My lord, would a father turn his face away from one who had saved his heir from the blades of drunken *ronins*? The Princess Azai is more to His Highness than is his heir." 108

"Keiki thinks to win favor by a trick!"

"To-morrow, after midday, when the Princess is returning from worship at Zozoji, there will be *ronins* waiting. Blows will be struck. They will bear off the *norimon* of the august lady. Keiki will rush to the rescue. What wonder if a fond father soon signs the pardon of the rescuer's parent?"

"To-morrow, after midday," repeated Yoritomo, in a voice still and impassive as his face. He turned to me. "You will do well to get a full night's rest, brother. We have work before us."

"But what's in the wind, Tomo?" I demanded in English, as Kohana ran to draw out a pair of silk quilts from a drawer in the lesser recess of the *tokonoma*.

"There'll be the devil to pay," answered my friend, the glint in his narrowed eyes boding ill for the "devil." He nodded towards Kohana. "I will tell you more fully in the morning."

The hint was sufficient. I rose and followed the girl down a short passage to a small room that was to be my sleeping chamber. She prepared my bed by spreading the two quilts on the soft mats of the floor and placing at the head a little lacquered box rounded on the top with a small roll of soft paper. This was the pillow. Over all she hung a large canopy of mosquito netting. There remained only for her to light a tiny night-lamp, kowtow, and withdraw. Five minutes later I was fast asleep, with my jaw upon the paper pad of my wooden pillow. 109

How soon my dreams began and how long they continued I have not the slightest idea. But I had a prolonged succession of the most fantastic visions imaginable, in which brown-skinned, slant-eyed elves and gnomes, clad in outlandish costume, were ever committing *outré* and unexpected antics. Sometimes the performance was of grotesque horror, as when severed heads, dripping blood, flew at me with malignant ferocity. This must have come from a blending of Yoritomo's Japanese goblin tales with the ghastly spectacle of the execution-pillory outside Shinagawa.

After a time I found myself sauntering through an Oriental Paradise in company with a Buddhist angel, who bowed down and worshipped me as the God of Snow. Immediately I became a snow image, fast melting to liquid beneath the noontime sun. I melted and flowed away down through a fetid rice field, into the blue Bay of Yedo. Too late I discovered that my angel was none other than the beautiful Princess Azai, daughter of the Shogun.

I was now aboard a Japanese junk, flying up the bay to save the Princess from the guns of the American fleet. The giant steam frigates were fast overhauling my slow craft, their decks cleared for action and their gun-ports swung open, tier above tier, ready for the bombardment of ill-fated Yedo. Suddenly the junk struck upon a shoal, over which it was driven by the billows, only to strike again and again. As the mast went by the board and the hull crunched to splinters under my feet, the stately *Susquehanna*, flying the blue-starred broad pennant of Commodore Perry, swung around and fired a thunderous broadside into our shattered wreck. 110

With a shout of terror, I leaped up, and found myself reeling about a matted floor, in the dim light of a tiny lamp. An instant later the floor heaved and rocked under me with a sickening motion that flung me to my knees. All around I could hear the creak and groan of straining timbers. Above me my dizzy eyes made out a ceiling of odd-patterned bamboo-work and swaying walls whose gilt panels glinted in the faint light.

The screens of the end wall suddenly brightened, then shot open, and through the gap Yoritomo came darting towards me, lantern in hand.

"Earthquake!" he cried, springing across to extinguish my little night-lamp, which was on the point of jarring from its shelf.

The floor steadied with the passing of the shock. I crawled from under the mosquito net and staggered to my feet. Yoritomo seized me by the sleeve, and dragged me out the way he had come. I heard Kohana calling to us to hasten. We turned a corner, and saw her dart towards us across a room, beyond which gleamed a square of early daylight. Again the floor lurched. We all three sprawled prone upon the mats, while about us the rafters and beams creaked louder than before and the walls seemed toppling to crush us. 111

"This way!—the shutters are open—this way, my lord!" shrilled Kohana. She plucked at Yoritomo's sleeve, and scrambled back, tossing about in a manner that would have been irresistibly comic but for the terror of the

moment.

We followed as best we could, now crawling, now staggering half erect, like drunkards. Through it all Yoritomo clung fast to his lantern, too dazed to extinguish it, yet fearfully conscious of the peril of fire. All around me things were reeling. I clutched at a swaying wall-post, a few feet short of the gap in the wooden shutters that closed in the outer side of the veranda. Before I could glance about, a fearful shock flung me across the veranda and out into a bed of roses.

To my sorrow, I found that roses in Japan have thorns. Also I caught a glimpse of the massive tiled eaves seemingly about to pitch upon me. I leaped out of the roses, clear across a path, and fetched up with a skip and a trip, coming down squarely in a bed of purple irises. In perfect unison with my own arrival at stability, the earth spasms ceased as suddenly as they had begun. 112

From behind a bush on my left a voice murmured in quavering, gurgling delight: "My lord, you are safe, unharmed?"

"Unharmed," answered Yoritomo, and he called in an anxious tone, "Woroto!"

"All present and accounted for," I replied, rising dizzily, to face them across the bush in the red dawnlight. "You are not hurt, Kohana San?"

"Nor my lord!" she cried, with a soft chuckle of delight. "After all it was only a little wriggle of the fish's tail."

"Fish's tail?" I inquired.

"The great fish upon whose back rests the land of Dai Nippon," explained Yoritomo, with a twinkle in his black eyes.

"If my lords will pardon the rudeness of their servant, she will go in and prepare the morning bath for them," said Kohana, and before I could protest against such rashness, she hastened up across the veranda, into the house.

"Tomo!" I exclaimed, "you let her go, when the house may fall any moment! It must be shattered! That little wriggle was a cataclysm."

"The shock was sharper than the usual weekly tremor," he admitted. "But the house is built to withstand all but the heaviest quakes. The massive roof takes up the vibration of the shock, which is already broken at the loose post joints." 113

Following his gesture, I looked under the house, through the open lattice-work, and saw that the house posts rested each with its hollow foot perched upon the round point of a half-embedded boulder. He nodded reassuringly, and led the way back into the house. Within I found the mortised beams and panelled woodwork unharmed by the earthquake. Thanks to the absence of plaster and standing furniture, the only result of the shocks had been to fill the rooms with dust and upset the vase with the jasmine spray in the *tokonoma* of the guest chamber.

Yoritomo smiled and pointed to the undisturbed bronze kitten. "It is hard to disconcert a *geisha* or her god. Kohana will soon have the bath heated. After that, breakfast and a morning of delight. No other *geisha* in Dai Nippon can dance as dances Kohana."

"Morning?" I repeated. "But the feigned attack of Keiki upon the daughter of the Shogun?"

"There is ample time, and the more we refresh ourselves the better."

"Tell me more of the plot. Is it possible the government spies can be deceived by such a farce?"

"Death is never a farce." 114

"Death?"

"You have heard me speak of *ronins*,—*samurais* who, because of their own offences or the death of their *daimios*, have become masterless men. Whether scholars, teachers, or criminals, all alike are men for whose acts their former lords cannot be held responsible."

"And who no longer owe loyalty to their lords," I added.

"Not in law," he assented. "But suppose certain loyal retainers became *ronins* at the bidding of their master? The *samurai* code says that a man shall serve his lord even to the death. What greater joy to the Mito men than to give their lives for the freeing of their prince?"

"You should hasten to warn the Shogun!" I exclaimed.

He smiled in gentle reproof of my heat. "There are guards at the gateways of all bridges across the inner moat, and within are officials interested in barring out the bearer of a warning message. Remember, Keiki has won the favor of Midzuano, chief of the Council of Elders. Yet suppose the message should penetrate to the august ear of Iyeyoshi Sama. What follows? The Princess does not go to worship at the temple of Zozoji; no blows are struck; small credit accrues to the tale-bearer."

"You would risk the life of the Shogun's daughter—of the princess to whom you are betrothed!" 115

"There will be no risk of life—for her," he replied.

"But the shock?—her terror?"

"The most delicate of our ladies are taught to withstand fear."

"Consider the indignity to be suffered by a princess, your kinsman," I argued.

"What matters the terror or the death or even the dishonor of a woman, weighed in the balance against that which I seek to accomplish? No; whatever the cost, I must win a favorable audience with the Shogun, for the

sake of Dai Nippon and the sacred Mikado! It is a rare chance for us, Woroto. We will take part in Keiki's badger game."

"And, like the fox, snap the game from between his paws," I punned.

He nodded. "With the aid of Kohana, we are to become priests of the official Jodo sect."

"You said the Yamabushi are Buddhists. Why change?"

"Iyeyasu built Zozoji for the Jodo sect. They have charge of the temple and the tombs of the four Shoguns who are buried at Shiba Park. Therefore we go as Jodo priests, lately arrived from Kyoto."

"With sharp arguments and loud words for the Mito *ronins*," I added.

116

He caught at my sleeve. "Not that!—not your pistols, brother. To fire a gun within the bounds of Yedo is certain death!"

117

CHAPTER X—THE PRINCESS AZAI

Noon found us ready for the start, our swords girt on under the flowing priest robes, and hats drawn low to shade our faces. Upon our feet iron-shod sandals were bound firmly over the white silk foot mittens, in keeping with our role of monks of noble blood, vowed to a pilgrimage to Zozoji and just in off the road. But the hilts of our swords were within convenient reach inside the edge of our robes, and, despite Yoritomo's warning, my revolvers were no less ready. I assured him, however, that they would not be used unless the occasion justified.

When it came to the parting, I looked to see Kohana protest or at least shed a tear over this short ending of her lover's visit. After three weary years of absence he had come back to her for a single night, and was now going from her again, it might be to his death. Yet she neither wept nor betrayed any other sign of grief. Smilingly she conducted us from her house and down the path to the gateway, where he signed her to stop.

"If all goes well," he said, "I will send for you or come again to Shinagawa." 118

She kowtowed, with a softly murmured word of parting, "*Saionara!*"

"Farewell, Kohana San," I responded. "The *tojin* carries away with him grateful thoughts of his kind and beautiful hostess."

"Gracious indeed is the condescension of the august lord in deigning to overlook the conduct of one so rude and ignorant," she said. Yoritomo was swinging away at a rapid stride. She rose quickly, and held out her hands, clasped palm to palm. Her eyes gazed up into mine, full of timid appeal, and her lips quivered with a pitiful smile. "Woroto Sama is a lord of the *tojin*, he is powerful. While he slept I looked at the strange weapons he bears, and my lord told me their use. The *tojin sama* is a friend of Yoritomo Sama!"

"If they kill him, they kill me," I answered.

With a swift movement she drew from her sleeve and pressed into my hand a dirk whose richly ornamented hilt and sheath told of a precious blade within. I would have sought to return the gift, but she sank down and beat the ground at my feet with her forehead. I thrust the dirk in beside my sword, and turned away, feeling that this girl of a despised profession had honored me with her trust and gratitude. Indeed, I might say she had ennobled me, since I had needed the dirk to become a *samurai*, a two-sword gentleman. 119

With hat brim down, hands demurely folded within priestly sleeves, and body waddling *samurai*-fashion from the weight of cartridges about my waist, I followed after my friend across the beautiful little landscape garden of the teahouse. There were many guests strolling along the shaded walks or lunching in the little kiosks which from the crest of a terrace looked out over the blue bay. But, unheeded either by guests or attendants, we passed up the garden and out through a wicket gate in the wall across from the teahouse.

As we came into the narrow alley upon which the gate opened, Yoritomo warned me to keep my hand on my swordhilt. On either side, preening themselves behind barred verandas, I saw rows of pretty young girls clad in gorgeous robes. We had entered a street given over to the *joro*, or courtesans. Throughout the length of the lane, *samurais* flushed with *sake* and evil-eyed *ronins* swaggered aggressively up and down, with swords cocked high in their girdles.

Twice we saw pairs of swashbucklers draw upon each other, but hurried past while their blades were yet clashing together in furious cut and parry. Without looking back or so much as glancing to right or left, we swung ahead through the groups of cut-throats and drunkards, and our steadiness, together with the priest robes, won us safe passage to the Tokaido. 120

Along the highway vice was for the most part masked behind the disguise of legitimate teahouse entertainment, and the rakes and ruffians bore themselves with a less truculent manner among the light-hearted smiling throngs of travellers and townfolk.

As we swung into the busy thoroughfare I caught my first view of Yedo, a view impressive only in the vastness of the city's extent. Built in great part on low-lying ground, it stretched out along the curve of the shallow bayhead and inland to the northward, in a sea of gray unpainted roofs, partly relieved by an occasional temple or red-roofed pagoda rising among groves of trees. In the midst of this dull expanse rose an island of low hills, upon whose wooded crests the moated official quarter was built about the citadel-palace of the Shogun.

A mile along the high embankment which guards all the upper curve of the bay brought us to the black gate on the boundary between Shinagawa and Yedo. A few steps beyond it Yoritomo significantly drew my attention to a roofed notice-board, covered in large Chinese characters with the ancient edicts against Christianity. Shortly after he pointed out a temple in which were the tombs of the forty-seven loyal *ronins* and the lord for whose sake they achieved vengeance and martyrdom. 121

Somewhat farther on we left the Tokaido and angled off inland from the bay towards a great park called Shiba. It is formed of the grounds of Zozoji and its many subsidiary temples, tombs, and monastery buildings. A high-arched wooden bridge carried us over a canal, or tide-water stream, whose waters swarmed with the sampans of fishermen and roofed produce boats from up country.

A little beyond this muddy stream we entered the lovely cool glades of Shiba. The place was an Oriental paradise of giant trees and blooming shrubs, from which sounded the merry note of twittering birds, blended and dominated by the flute-like song of the Japanese nightingale; while about the smaller of the temples lotus leaves and blooming irises rose above the still waters of ponds stocked with tortoises and goldfish.

Yoritomo gravely led the way across this rear portion of the sacred park, along stately avenues of giant pines and cryptomerias and camphor trees, between rows of stone lanterns, under *torii* of wood and stone and bronze, and past grotesque bronze images, to enclosures where broad and massive temples shouldered up the ponderous weight of their gray-tiled roofs. We came out into the main road and turned along it a short distance to the entrance of Zozoji, a magnificent two-storied gate guarded on either side by hideous red and green demons. 122

"*Namu Amida Butsu!*" chanted my friend, and mingling with a crowd of worshippers, we passed through the ancient gateway into the great courtyard about Zozoji.

The temple stood at the head of a flight of red steps, and, with its huge red pillars and enormous Chinese roof of gray tiles, was by far the most imposing edifice I had yet seen in Japan. A mighty sonorous boom smote upon our ears. I looked to the right, and saw a priest swinging a suspended beam against the rim of an immense bell.

Yoritomo turned across to a building on our left, and between the thunderous peals of the great bell addressed a young priest who was writing in the veranda. I could not follow their low conversation, but presently I saw my friend hand the priest one of his gold coins, in return for a slip of paper. After this we joined another group of worshippers, climbed the temple stairway, and, transferring our sandals to our bosoms, glided in upon the mats of the great hall. We stopped a little way inside, between the great lacquered contribution-chest and a superb dragon-wrought brazier from which was rising clouds of incense.

Yoritomo stared for some moments into the gloom of the vast interior, shook his head slowly and edged about to watch the courtyard and gate. My experience in China had already acquainted me with the many startling resemblances between Catholic Christianity and Buddhism in respect to priestly costumes, ceremonial, and houses of worship. Yet I found much to interest me in the gorgeous panelled ceilings, the carvings and arabesques and bronze-work of this grand temple. 123

At the far end, within the railed space that I might call the chancel, appeared the high altar, crowded about with the shrines of various images, colossal candlesticks and lotus blossoms of silver, bells and drums for the use of the officiating priests, memorial tablets, bronze offerings, and emblematic banners. All about the hall on the soft matting moved crowds of priests and worshippers, tapping bells, murmuring prayers, clapping hands, and bowing before the many shrines.

A touch from Yoritomo drew my gaze around. I looked out into the dazzling sunlight of the courtyard, and saw the crowds falling back on either side before a band of *samurais*. In the midst of the band was a gilded *norimon*, beside which walked two silk-clad women.

"She comes. Follow," whispered Yoritomo.

He led the way up the dim-lit hall to the chancel, and showed the paper he had bought from the young priest to an old monk in chasuble and stole. The priest eyed us sharply and stood hesitating until Yoritomo slipped a gold piece into his itching palm. At that he led us in behind the bronze screen, or rail, and left us bowing in a recessed shrine before a huge many-handed image of Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy. 124

Hardly had we gained this post of vantage when the sudden hush throughout the temple told of the entrance of the Shogun's daughter. Though she had come incognito, a glance around the corner of our niche showed me the mass of the worshippers kneeling with forehead to floor. Through their midst advanced the cortege of the Princess, led by the venerable abbot, who, according to my friend, was a blood kinsman of the mysterious Mikado.

Fearful of discovery, Yoritomo drew me back into the denser shadow of the shrine. Soon, however, I heard the soft rustling of silk garments, followed by low murmurs and sibilant insuckings of breath. Aflame with curiosity, I turned half about, and ventured to raise my hat brim for a sidelong glance.

The lord abbot had passed on up to the high altar. But the Princess Azai stood only a few paces distant, a little in advance of her kowtowing women and *samurais*. She was looking up at the benevolent features of Kwannon in the gloom above us. The outline of her dusky hair blurred into the dark background, but her face, as if framed about with black velvet, stood out distinct in all the pure loveliness of an Italian Madonna's. 125

Overlapping *kimonos* of gold-wrought rose and azure crepes draped her about in graceful folds from the base of her round white throat to her tiny feet, and her hands were hidden in sleeves whose tips almost swept the floor. Beautiful as was her dress, it won from me only a passing glance. My eyes returned to feast themselves on the innocent tender beauty of her face.

Her complexion, untouched by any cosmetic, was of an ivory whiteness, slightly tinged on the cheeks with rose. The adorably curved lips of her little mouth were of a clear coral red. Below her delicate high-arched brows her black oval eyes gazed out between the long lashes with the mildness of a young child's and the divinely sweet artlessness of budding maidenhood.

Forgetful of all else in my wonder and delight, I thrust my hat brim higher and faced square about. A projecting corner of the shrine masked me from the kneeling attendants, but not from the Princess. Drawn by the intensity of my gaze, she lowered her glance and looked full into my face. On the instant, I knew from the widening of her eyes and the quick rise of her little bosom that she had made out my features through the shadow of our dim niche. 126

Yoritomo's voice breathed softly in my ear, "Do not move!"

I waited, breathless, expecting to see the Princess cry out or sink down as had Kohana. Yet, great as was the awe and wonder in her dilated eyes, she neither shrank away nor called upon the guard to protect her from the blue-eyed apparition. Such perfect control on the part of a girl so delicately nurtured, so exquisitely refined in look and bearing, was more than I could withstand. Regardless of Yoritomo's warning, I raised my head higher, and sought to express in a smile the utmost of my admiration for her courage and beauty.

Again her bosom rose and fell to a quick-drawn breath, and her lustrous eyes widened yet more. But the god or devil—whatever he might be—had been pleased to regard her with a kindly look. Etiquette, if not respect and gratitude, called for a polite response. A row of little pearls gleamed between her smiling red lips, and her lissome young body bent low in gracious obeisance.



**A ROW OF LITTLE PEARLS GLEAMED BETWEEN HER
SMILING RED LIPS**

Instantly Yoritomo grasped my arm and drew me around the far corner of the shrine. Before the Princess had straightened from her bow, we were slipping out through a narrow doorway into the broad veranda of the temple. The sudden vanishing of the priest-robed apparition must have seemed to her clear confirmation of its godly or ghostly nature. 127

In the veranda I would have stopped to whisper my blissful impressions of the girl's beauty, had not my friend snatched his sandals from his bosom and imperatively signed me to strap on my own. The moment our footgear was secure, he hastened down around the rear of the temple and out through a postern, into a winding road that led us past the enclosures of two or three mortuary chapels. Had the occasion been different, I might have pressed my friend to show me these magnificent memorial tombs and temples of departed Shoguns. As it was, he did not pause until we had passed down a long row of stone lanterns and out through one of the beautiful secondary gates of Shiba.

At last he stopped in a vacant space, and turned to reproach me with mild friendliness: "You should not have so risked discovery, brother!"

"How could I help it?" I demanded. "She is very beautiful, Tomo! Candidly, I envy you your good fortune."

He gazed into my glowing face, his own quickly stilling to the placid Buddha calm. "Form is an empty mask, a nothingness," he murmured. "The love of women, the craving for power, the greed for gold,—all alike are lures to decoy the soul out of the upward path to Nirvana."

"You have seen your future bride, and can speak of Nirvana!" I exclaimed. 128

"She is as pure and beautiful as an angel. Yet I looked into her luminous eyes and did not see my soul."

"I saw *her* soul, you cold-blooded Buddhist! Her spirit is as beautiful as her face!"

"No, Woroto,—it was your own soul you saw shining in her eyes," he replied.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

He shook his head gently. "Who may penetrate the mysteries of the future? You may have loved her in some previous incarnation. As for me, I have given my life to the Son of Heaven, the holy Mikado."

CHAPTER XI—ROUT OF THE RONINS

For an hour or more we loitered about within view of the great gate of Zozoji, waiting for the cortege of the Shogun's daughter to march out on its return trip to the citadel. That the Princess would come back through the main entrance was evident from the fact that the *norimons* of her ladies-in-waiting were stationed in the road at one side of the grand carved portal. Yoritomo stood beneath a camellia tree, seemingly lost in meditation, but I paced to and fro through the passing crowds, unable to restrain my impatience.

At last between the meshes of my hat brim I caught sight of the *samurai* escort of the Princess issuing from the gateway. In their lead was the quick-tempered *hatamoto* Yuki who had struck at me from the ferryboat at the passage of the Rokugu River. The bearers of the *norimons* moved around, and as soon as the ladies-in-waiting had taken their seats, the cortege formed in line, with one of the *norimons* before and the other behind the gold-lacquered palanquin of the Princess. We drew back behind a hedge of blooming privet.

Soon the cortege marched past us, at a slow and stately pace, though the absence of standards indicated to the public that the noble person escorted was travelling incognito and dispensed with the usual kneeling of the common folk along the road. I examined with intense interest the sturdy *norimon* bearers and the score of proud *hatamotos*, or shogunate *samurais*, who made up Yuki's company. 130

These gentlemen-soldiers seemed to me to be picked men, but they wore no armor and carried no other weapons than the customary sword and dirk. Though their petticoat-trousers were neatly tucked up above the knees in the tops of long silk stockings, freeing their legs for quick action, their arms and forebodies were encumbered with the peculiar gauze-winged ceremonial jackets and the long sleeves of their *haoris*.

"That guard looks more like dress parade than action," I commented.

"They are the pick of the best swordsmen among the *hatamotos*; yet they are all doomed men," replied Yoritomo.

I caught at my swordhilt, no longer intent on the fringe of split bamboo which curtained the window of the Princess's *norimon*. "All doomed?—And ourselves?"

"Mito will have planned to sacrifice as few retainers as possible. But though they will not be many, they will have the advantage of armor. Our sole chance of success lies in the method of fence you have taught me. Lunge for face or neck. Waste no thrusts on mail-clad bodies." 131

"We can at least hold them until other rescuers run up," I said.

He shook his head doubtfully. "Look down the bay. A rain-squall is coming. There will be few in the streets, and if Keiki rushes up first with his rescue party, we will be cut down with the *ronins*. As you say, we are playing against long odds, but the stake is big."

"A little hot soy will flavor the rice," I replied. "Lead on."

He shuffled about, and we strolled out and along the road, keeping half a hundred paces behind the rearmost of the strutting *hatamotos*. Leisurely as was the advance of the cortege, we were soon clear of Shiba and approaching a hill that Yoritomo called Atago-yama. The eminence was provided with two means of ascent, a straight steep stairway and another one long and winding. The cortege passed by on one side.

We now descended into a low and thickly populated quarter, passing at every two hundred paces one of the gloomy gates which divide off all the streets of the lower city into wards of fifty or sixty houses. Each ward was given over to a particular trade or the sale of a certain article,—as a street of blacksmiths, squatting before their primitive forges, a street of toy merchants, another of lacquer-dealers, fan-makers, cabinet-workers, and so forth. 132

Shops and people differed little from those I had already seen, but for the first time I observed the lofty ladder watch towers, at the top of which hung firebells. The urgent need of such means of warning in a city built, for the most part, of tinder-like materials, was evident from a belt of ash-covered ground off to our right, in which the only buildings unburned were a few mud-walled storehouses.

My roving eye was recalled by a word from Yoritomo to be on my guard. Kohana had conjectured that the attack would be made near one of the moats, and we were approaching a boat-crowded canal or moat, the outermost of the line of fortifications that gird in the Shogun's palace and the *yashikis*, or palaces, of the *daimios*. I loosened my swordblade in its scabbard, and held my hand ready to jerk up the skirts of my robes and tuck them in the back of my girdle.

The cortege moved slowly on down the busy street and out upon the old wooden bridge that arched across from the grassy slope of the nearer bank to the abrupt stone wall which Kämpfer calls the Outer Castle. We followed, warily scanning the band of *samurais* that approached from the far end of the bridge and the scattered groups that clattered up behind us through the crowds of common people. All alike, however, showed the utmost deference in avoiding close contact with the attendants of the Princess, and the crests of their respective *daimios*, conspicuous on the backs, breast, and sleeves of their *haoris*, proved that they were not *ronins*. 133

We plodded after the cortege, across the canal and through the bastioned gateway on the far side, out into one of the smooth wide streets of the official quarter. Here there were no commoners to be seen, and the few *samurais* scattered up and down the broad way were hastening to shelter before the first gusts of the coming rain-squall. But even the threatened downpour failed to hurry the *hatamotos* out of their stately strut. Seeing no sign of any *ronins*, I relaxed my tense nerves and looked about at the long walls of the *yashikis* which lined each side of the street.

I knew that these residences of the *daimios* each consisted of a mansion house surrounded by courts and gardens, all set in the defensive hollow square of the retainers' barracks. What I had failed to picture from Yoritomo's descriptions was the extent and odd appearance of these *samurai* quarters. One of them stretched

along the road nearly a quarter of a mile, its continuous roof of red tiles broken only by a grand, ornate gate, midway of the monotonous façade.

The mortarless stone foundation walls of the *yashikis* rose from deep, curbed ditches that flowed along each side of the street. Above the high foundations the walls were of diagonally-set black tiles with wide joints of white plaster. Well up in this checkerboard surface, rows of small windows, stoutly barred against attack, projected in shallow bays. 134

A turn in the street brought us in view of the citadel just as the rain-squall came swirling upon us. Across the head of the street loomed up a mighty wall of cyclopean masonry, its granite base deep beneath the placid waters of a broad moat, its crest crowned with trees and square pagoda guardtowers. Our street rose to meet the causeway that ran along the moat bank and curved in to cross a wooden bridge. At the far side a huge bastioned gateway led up into the higher ground of the citadel.

Beyond the trees and pagodas that fringed the top of the titanic wall, I saw outlined against the blackening sky the lofty white peak of the "Lord of Heaven" tower, in the O Shira, or innermost castle. Then the full force of the storm struck us and wrapped us about in blinding, swirling torrents of rain. Yoritomo pressed up close to me, and bent over to make himself heard above the howls of the wind and the drumming splatter of the deluge.

"Be ready!" he warned. "Watch this street that runs in on the left where the vanguard is passing—There is one just beyond, on the right. At the moat gate is stationed a powerful guard. If the *ronins* fail to attack here—" 135

"Look!" I cried, grasping at my swordhilt.

Out of the narrow street on the left were streaming a number of cloaked figures, silent and downbent as though intent only upon making their way through the storm. As they filed out into the broad roadway alongside the *norimon* of the Princess, a gust of wind tore open the cloak of one in the rear and exposed to our gaze the bright links of chain armor within.

"The *ronins*!" hissed Yoritomo. "Wait! Make ready."

I let go my half-drawn sword, and hastened to follow his example by tucking my robe skirts in the back of my girdle and tying up my long sleeves. In the midst I saw one of the *hatamotos* turn upon the nearest *ronin* with a repellent gesture. Instantly the assassin drew his sword and struck a fearful two-handed blow. The head of the luckless *hatamoto* leaped from his shoulders and fell after the blood-gushing corpse into the mud and water.

At the treacherous blow all the *hatamotos* who had seen it yelled with fury and amazement, and flashed out their swords to strike down the murderer. But their blades clashed without effect upon his hidden helmet and armor, and in an instant the other *ronins* were beside their chief, slashing back at the armorless *hatamotos*. Half a dozen guardsmen fell beneath the razor-edged blades, slain outright or hideously maimed, all in the brief moment before those in the van of the cortege could turn about and rush to their aid. 136

I found myself with drawn sword, struggling frantically to free myself from the grip of my friend. Though I was the stronger, he held me fast by some subtle trick of wrestlers' art that, without injuring, rendered me as helpless as a child.

"Not yet!" he muttered, "not yet, brother!"

Unable to free myself, I was forced to stand and glare impotently through the whirling rain at the terrible massacre. At the beginning of the fight the *hatamotos* had numbered a fourth more than the assailants. Now they were already less than equal in number. With merciless swiftness, the *ronins* struck out in terrific blows that split heads to the chin and hewed off arms and legs and ripped open bodies with hideous slashes.

Vainly the brave *hatamotos* parried and slashed back at their foes with strokes no less powerful and often more skilful. For the most part, their blows served only to slice the false covering from the helmets of the *ronins* or nick the steel and brass under the masking cloaks. But every stroke of the *ronin* blades that reached its mark meant a ghastly wound. 137

Yet the *hatamotos* were not the only ones that fell in the bloody shambles. Twice I saw *ronins* go down under blows that split clean through their steel helmets; others were bitten deep by blades that slashed through the firmest chain mail; while more lost a foot or a hand from the lightning strokes of the Shogun's swordsmen. But gloriously as the *hatamotos* fought, the *ronins* were no less brave and little less skilful, and the armor gave them an advantage impossible to overcome.

Never had I dreamt of such terrific fighting. In as many seconds a dozen of the guard were lying mutilated under the iron-shod sandals of the *ronins*. Every *hatamoto* near the *norimon* of the Princess and all but three or four of those in the rear were slain. One of the bearers of the rearmost *norimon* caught up a sword and struck out manfully. Back flashed a blow that split him to the middle. His fellow-bearers, who so far had stood as though paralyzed by fright, fled past us shrieking.

But not one of the proud *hatamotos* sought to escape. Shouting fierce imprecations, the last of the rearguard parried and struck, each as long as he could stand,—without giving back an inch before the merciless attack of their murderers. The six members of the vanguard still left, burst through the ring of *ronins* that was closing about them, and fought their way back towards the *norimon* of the Princess, whose bearers were being forced by threatening blades to swing about to the narrow side street. 138

"Now!" shouted Yoritomo, as the *ronins* again closed around the vanguard. He freed me and leaped away up the street, flourishing his sword and yelling, "*Owari! Owari!*"

I rushed after him, blood-mad with the sight of the fighting and slaughter, and utterly lost to all sense of danger in my fury at the ferocious treachery of the assassins.

"Avast!" I roared in English, "avast, you devils!"

For answer, the head of the last rear-guardsmen came rolling towards us along the wet pavement. Close after it a pair of *ronins* sprang to meet and slash down the audacious priests. Out lunged Yoritomo's sword, and

the foremost murderer fell headlong, stabbed through the throat. The second slashed at my head. But the stroke glanced harmlessly down my parrying blade, and before the fellow could recover guard, I drove my point into one of his glaring eyes.

As my man fell across Yoritomo's, three others came running at us with the ferocity of tigers. We sprang to meet them half-way. One, fortunately, was slightly outdistanced by his fellows. The swords of the two leaders clashed against ours in fierce, eager strokes. A blow, barely warded, struck off my hat and exposed fully to the gaze of my opponent my distended blue eyes. A look of horror flashed across his vengeful face. Doubtless he thought me a demon. For the barest fraction of a second he faltered—it was enough for me. Before his gaping mouth could snap shut, he fell to my lunge. 139

I wheeled to meet the third man, who, as Yoritomo parried with the second for an opening, had sprung around for a treacherous side slash. My outstretched blade met but failed to check entirely the blow, which fell across the back of Yoritomo's right shoulder. Meeting my gaze, the ronin faltered as had his mate, and the result was as fatal to him. How seriously Yoritomo had been wounded I could not tell. I doubt if he was aware he had been struck. His lunge followed after mine, flash upon flash.

We darted forward, leaving five of the murderous band already accounted for. Four more were intent upon driving the bearers of Azai's *norimon* on across into the side street. All the others were crowding around the few survivors of the vanguard in furious attack. Only supreme masters of Japanese swordcraft could have so long withstood the tremendous blows of the assassins throughout this atrocious massacre.

To fling ourselves into the midst of the deadly struggle was sheer madness—but it was a glorious madness. Having a moment's start of my friend, I dashed ahead, past the rearmost *norimon*, from which the younger lady-in-waiting was frantically struggling to free herself. The *norimon* of the princess had been swung about, and its reluctant bearers were being forced into a trot by prodding dirks. 140

Shouting a command for the bearers to halt, I ran upon the *ronins* at the rear, who were directly before me. Until this moment they had been too intent upon driving the bearers to perceive us. The sight of their fallen comrades and the possibility of a check in their plans seemed to madden them. They rushed to meet me with a silent rage that flamed into wildest fury at sight of my *tojin* eyes.

"Demon! Kill! kill!" they yelled, and their strokes flashed out at me so swift and strong that I was beaten back a full two yards, and saved myself from the whistling blades only by the nimblest of footwork and parrying.

In a moment, though none too soon, Yoritomo sprang to my side and crippled one of the grinning fiends with a leg cut. This man must have been the leader of the band, for as he and his mate fell to our thrusts, the pair at the head of the *norimon* checked their charge upon us, and shouted loudly to their fellows.

Only three of the *hatamotos* now stood in the merciless circle of swords, and but one of their assailants had fallen. At the cry for help, the greater number of the *ronins* wheeled about and charged upon us, with the rain splashing upon their downbent helmet brims. 141

"Shoot!" gasped Yoritomo, bending over to lean upon his sword. "My arm weakens!—Shoot!"

Already my right hand was thrusting into my bosom. As I drew out one of the revolvers and cocked it, I stepped forward and to the left, that I might have the *norimon* between me and the charging *ronins*. At the same moment the young *samurai* woman from the rear *norimon* darted between the bearers and stood up across from me, facing the *ronins*, with upraised dirk. She could not have hoped to stop the ruffians for an instant, but she thought they meant to injure her mistress, and so was offering her own bosom first to the murderous blades.

The sight of such absolute courage and devotion steadied my twitching hand. I raised my revolver, and fired as rapidly as I could work hammer and trigger. The *ronins* were too close for me to miss even through the swirl of wind and rain. I risked no glancing of balls from mailed breasts, but aimed at the devilish faces below their broad helmet brims. To shoot wide of such large marks within a distance of ten paces and less would have been difficult, and a man shot from the front anywhere between mouth and brows never requires a second ball. Down went the foremost *ronins*, sprawling backwards in the flooded roadway, one at every shot. 142

To these mediæval warriors, acquainted only with antique matchlocks and Tower muskets, the mysterious appearance and rapid fire of my revolver must have been even more appalling than the death of their leaders. Before I could snatch out my second pistol, every man of them still on his feet fled towards the narrow cross street, shrieking that I was the *daimio* of demons. To aid their flight, I sent after them a leaden message that glanced from the helmet of the rearmost man, yet sent him staggering for a dozen yards.

CHAPTER XII—ESCORT TO THE PRINCESS

A gust whirled the smoke of the shot into my face. As I paused with half-raised pistol, waiting for the puff to sweep aside, I heard the *samurai* lady calling cheerfully to her mistress, "My Princess! august lady! Fear nothing. The *ronins* have fled!"

I gazed about at the *norimon*. On the far side the brave girl was kneeling in her drenched silks, intent upon reassuring the occupant of the palanquin with word and smile. But the Princess had turned to the window on my side, and, heedless of the rain, was peering out at me through the parted bamboo curtain with even more awe and wonder in her dusky eyes than when she saw me in the temple.

My features, flushed and distorted as they were from the rage of battle and bloodshed, and fully exposed to view by the loss of my hat, must have appeared to her both *outré* and terrifying. Yet she was aware that I had helped to save her from the *ronins*. The *samurai* girl was exclaiming the fact through the other window. I bent toward her with a reassuring smile, but before I could speak, Yoritomo shouted to the bearers, "About, men! To the palace!" 144

The *samurai* girl sprang up as the willing bearers swung around over the bodies of the dead and wounded. The two *hatamotos* who alone had lived to witness the flight of the *ronins* came staggering to meet the litter, the blood of their many wounds dripping with the rain from their tattered coats. One of them I recognized as Yuki the captain. Past the wounded men darted the aged *samurai* woman of the foremost *norimon*, whose bearers had fled at the beginning of the attack, and who had only just contrived to squeeze from her narrow box.

I drew a deep breath, and stared around at the bloody scene through the lessening rain, in sudden bewilderment. To have witnessed the butchery of all those brave *hatamotos*, to have had so large a part in the defeat and rout of their murderers, to have met again the soft gaze of the Shogun's daughter, all within little more than two minutes—small wonder I stood dazed! It was my first fight, the first time I had ever met and struck down men in mortal combat.

One of the wounded *ronins* had dragged himself a little aside and, crouched on knees and heels, was bending forward with the point of his dirk at his bared left loin. I caught at Yoritomo's arm to point out the man, but before he could turn to look, the *ronin* had stabbed himself and was drawing the blade across his middle with a horrible deliberateness. After the cross stroke there followed an upward cut. The suicide swayed forward in silent agony, yet still had strength and resolution to draw out the blade and plunge it through his neck. 145

"*Hara-kiri!*" murmured Yoritomo, in a tone of deepest respect. "He has saved his family from disgrace and punishment. See! There are two others who would do the same."

One had been enough for me. I turned, shuddering, to pick my way over the water-and-blood-soaked bodies of the dead, in the wake of the slowly advancing *norimon*. The rain-squall was blowing away as swiftly as it had dashed upon us.

With the passing of the last shower, a burst of golden light from the low western sun flooded over the roof of the *yashiki* on our left. At the same moment I heard the sound of rushing iron-shod feet. As I flung up my downbent head the sun-rays glittered on the wet silks and bared steel of a band of *samurais* that came charging out of the street on the right.

"*Keiki!*" cried Yoritomo, and clapping his hat upon my head, he darted forward to thrust a roll of writing through the window of the *norimon*, into the lap of the Princess.

With my second revolver held loose under the edge of my robe, I sprang after him to the side of the *norimon*, as the Mito men swarmed out and closed about the crippled cortege. The first glance had shown them the failure of their diabolical plot. Utterly disconcerted and bewildered by the defeat of the *ronins*, they ran about like wolves that have overshot the trail of their quarry. The two wounded *hatamotos* sought to wave them aside, but so many blocked the way that our party was forced to halt. 146

The thought flashed upon me that they might butcher every one of us except the Princess, and then claim all the credit of the rescue. This I am certain would have been the course of action of the more hot-blooded among them, had not the older men bethought themselves that they could not silence the Shogun's daughter. To accomplish the object of their plot, they must bring her safe to her father.

In the midst of their flurry and confusion, a *norimon* came swaying around the corner of the side street at a most unlordly speed. Before it the excited *samurais* parted their ranks, and the bearers trotted across as if to range alongside the *norimon* of the Princess. Yoritomo sprang before them with barring sword.

"Stand!" he commanded.

The bearers halted at the word, but the *samurais* burst into angry yells, and turned to rush upon the audacious priest who had dared to oppose the advance of their lord. A glance around in search for some way of escape showed me the windows of the *yashikis* jammed with the heads of out-peering women and the main street full of running *hatamotos* and *samurais*. My pistol shots had been heard above the uproar of the squall. 147

Regardless of the swiftly gathering crowd, Keiki's men pressed upon Yoritomo, with upraised swords. I drew my revolver and stepped forward beside him, certain that the end had come. I could not hope to overawe so large a band with a few shots. Without doubt we would have been overwhelmed and cut down within the next quarter-minute, had not their master called upon our menacing opponents to fall back.

The bearers of the black *norimon* set down their burden, and the nearest *samurais* sprang to remove the top. The silk-clad aristocrat who arose from the depths of the box-like palanquin was younger and even handsomer than Yoritomo, but his eyes, between their excessively narrow lids, had a shiftiness that reminded me of the treacherous Malays.

Yoritomo bowed low to him in mock politeness.

"Ten thousand years to the heir of Hitotsubashi!" he said. "Had Keiki Sama come sooner, he might have aided the progress of the Shogun's daughter, instead of blocking the passage of the august lady." 148

"Seize that false priest!" commanded Keiki, stung beyond self-control.

But before the eager *samurais* could spring in upon him, Yoritomo flung the priest robe from his shoulders, and exposed to view the Tokugawa crests upon his silk *haori*. Angry as were the Mito men, they stopped short at that insignia of the ruling family.

Again Yoritomo bowed to Keiki and spoke with biting sarcasm: "The son of Owari dono greets the son of Mito dono. It may be possible that Keiki Sama is disappointed at having arrived too late to share in the slaying of certain *ronins*. Wounds have been received by those who defended the august lady, but if the heir of Hitotsubashi will condescend to soil his honorable feet, proposal is made that he exhibit his wide-famed skill as a swordsman."

For a moment I feared that the fiery young lord would snap at the ironical challenge. He flushed a dusky red beneath his olive skin and glared at my friend with a malignancy that caused me to raise and aim my revolver with an instinctive movement such as might have followed the sudden uprearing of a venomous snake. Had Keiki so much as signed to his retainers, he himself would have been the first to die. But a gray-bearded counsellor was murmuring quick words into the ear of his master. Keiki's hate-distorted features relaxed to the blank, inscrutable calmness of Yoritomo's. 149

"The heir of Hitotsubashi does not pollute himself by crossing swords with common street brawlers," he answered.

Yoritomo smiled suavely. "Keiki Sama need not fear to pollute his sword. Such of the brawlers as have not fled are all slain. Fortunate is the evil-doer who dies beneath another's sword or finds opportunity to commit *hara-kiri*. The stern torturers rack the limbs of criminals until they confess all the foul plans of themselves and their accomplices."

Unable to face my friend's challenging glance, Keiki turned to the wounded captain of Azai's guard. "Yuki," he called, "lead on again! My cortege is at the service of the Shogun's daughter, to escort her safe to the inner castle."

The younger *samurai* lady, who had knelt beside the *norimon* of the Princess, whispered across to the older lady. She in turn bowed and whispered to Yuki. Though tottering from his wounds, the *hatamoto* captain straightened and replied to Keiki in a tone of haughty command: "Stand aside with your men, lord. The daughter of the Tycoon is satisfied with the escort of the two priest-clad champions who, single-handed, destroyed the evil *ronins*."

At this the newly arrived *hatamotos* came shouldering their way in among the Mito men with scant ceremony, and Keiki hastened to give the signal for his retainers to fall back. Again the bearers of the Princess started forward, with the two wounded *hatamotos* in the lead, each supported between a pair of his fellow-retainers. The others stationed themselves behind, to act as rearguard. Yoritomo sheathed his sword, and placed himself before the old *samurai* lady, on the right side of the *norimon*. Following his example, I thrust my sword and revolver inside my robe, and stationed myself on the left of the *norimon*, in front of the *samurai* girl. 150

As we advanced through the crowd of curious onlookers, I glanced about at the baffled Mito men, who were attempting to "save the face" of their lord by forming about his *norimon* in the usual stately cortege. Chancing to catch the eager gaze of the *samurai* girl, I smiled and nodded. Encouraged by my condescension to venture a like breach of etiquette, she bowed low, and murmured, with a soft laugh: "August lord! pardon the rudeness of Setsu!"

"O Setsu San is free to speak," I said.

"Ten thousand years of happy life to my lord!" she murmured. "Again pardon the inexcusable rudeness,—but the awesome face of my lord has been seen by august eyes. Should report be made that my lord is to be numbered among the *kami*?—or is he a *tojin sama*?" 151

"A *daimio* of the *tojin*, come to aid Dai Nippon with sword and counsel," I answered.

She bowed low, with a gentle insucking of breath, and fell silent. But as I sauntered along beside the slowly moving *norimon*, I caught glimpses of a pair of soft black eyes peering at me through the fringe of the window curtain. There could be no doubt that the Shogun's daughter was studying such of my face as showed below the hat brim. The thought that she might be seeking to accustom herself to the "demon" eyes of the *tojin* set me aglow with blissful anticipations. But my amorous fancies quickly gave place to hot shame at the remembrance that the gentle little princess was the betrothed of my friend.

Our slow advance at last brought us up on the causeway, across the lake-like moat from the cyclopean wall and gate. The passage had been made through the midst of a multitude, drawn in rapidly increasing numbers by wild rumors of the fight. The causeway swarmed with hundreds of *samurais*, who stared at Yoritomo and myself in respectful silence.

A company of the *hatamotos* in charge of the great gate had advanced across the bridge to meet the Princess. Near the foot of the bridge Yoritomo signed me to stop. We stepped back while the *norimon* and those who followed it passed on between. 152

A venerable *samurai* wearing the circled cross of Satsuma saluted Yoritomo and pointed westward to the gate of one of the nearer *yashikis*.

"Shimadzu Satsuma-no-kami sends greeting to Yoritomo Sama, the heroic son of Owari dono, and to his heroic companion!" he said. "Will they honor the house of Shimadzu by entering and refreshing themselves?"

"Return our greetings and thanks to the Daimio of Satsuma," replied Yoritomo. "We hope soon to visit Shimadzu Sama, but now we have come from a long journey, and must hasten to salute my father."

"The son of Owari dono is wounded," suggested the *samurai*.

"A wound received in a good cause bears no sting," replied my friend with a Confucian sententiousness that drew an appreciative murmur from the crowd. He waved aside the old *samurai* with a courteous gesture, and crossed to me. "Come, brother, we must be on our way. The sun is low, and we have no lanterns."

The *samurai* again hastened around before him and bent low. "Fearing that Yoritomo Sama might be unable to linger for a call, my lord took the liberty to send *norimons* for the conveyance of the son of Owari dono and his companion."

"The gracious offer of Shimadzu, the Daimio of Satsuma, is accepted with grateful thanks," responded 153 Yoritomo.

At a sign from the *samurai*, two red-lacquered *norimons* were borne forward through the crowd, and their doors opened for us to enter. Calling to mind Yoritomo's instructions I slipped off my sandals and squeezed into one of the narrow boxes. Once inside, I crouched down on knees and heels in quite the correct manner, though I caught a murmur of politely smothered surprise at my failure to remove my hat.

A half-minute later our palanquins were swinging westward along the walled edge of the moat, an escort of Satsuma *samurais* in van and rear, and the old leader in attendance beside Yoritomo's *norimon*.

CHAPTER XIII—THE PRINCE OF OWARI

Our trip through the *daimio* quarter must have covered two miles and more. Though closely cramped in my elegant box, I managed by stooping over to peer out through the bamboo fringe of the windows. For some time we had on our left the walls of large *yashikis* and on our right the beautiful lotus-covered moat-lake, with the lofty rampart of the citadel across. The sun sank beneath the horizon as we turned westward down a wide thoroughfare.

Presently we turned again, and passed zigzag from one street to another between silent *yashikis*. The buildings were lighted only by quaint street lanterns hung beside their heavy gateways and by the dim glow of candles through the white paper screens of the windows. The few people passing along these aristocratic streets were provided against the gathering darkness by cylindrical lanterns marked with the crests of various *daimios*.

At last we came to one of the bastioned gateways of the outer moat, and, after a brief parley with the guard, passed through and out across the bridge. Shortly beyond, our escort halted before a grand double-roofed gateway. We had arrived at the main entrance to the largest of the *yashikis* belonging to the Prince of Owari. 155

While our bearers carried us across the stone bridge of the moat-ditch into the lighted space before the huge copper-faced gates, the old *samurai* leader announced us to the warden or captain of the gate. Almost instantly the ponderous leaves of the gate swung open before us, and a dozen Owari *samurais* hastened out to open the *norimons* and salute their occupants.

Yoritomo met their smiles and kowtowings and noisy insuckings of breath with an austere dignity that I took pains to imitate. But to my surprise, he accepted a pair of the lacquered clogs that were brought for us, and proceeded to leave his *norimon*. Catching my look, he explained in English: "I am yet to be made heir, and as a younger son I lack the rank required of one permitted to ride in through the gateway."

"Your rank is known," I replied. "Mine is yet to be established. I will make a start here and now. You know that in my country there is no man of better blood than myself. I will not enter your father's gateway except in my *norimon*."

"You are right. The point is shrewdly taken," he assented, and he spoke gravely to the gate warden.

The retainer accepted the statement of his master's son without a trace of hesitancy, and I was carried in beneath the carved and lacquered crossbeams of the gateway with Yoritomo walking beside my *norimon*. The iron-shod sandals of *samurais* and bearers clattered on the stone flags of the broad courtyard within the gate. 156

Crossing this court, we passed up a slope and through an ornamental fence, into a second court before the mansion of the prince. Wings and high hedges flanked the main building in such manner that we could have seen nothing of the *yashiki* gardens even had the day still lingered. I was, however, more than satisfied by the fairy-like vision of the palace. Though the building was of only one story, the white-tiled roof flung up its twisted gables against the blue-black sky with an effect of airy height, while the rows of lanterns, hung to the outcurving eaves, shed their soft glow over the artistic balustrades and polished planking of verandas wider than those of Zozoji.

In the centre of the façade was a grand portico of *keyaki* wood, supported by carved beams and pillars lacquered in vivid colors. Young pages came out to salute us and spread mats for us to step upon. I emerged from my *norimon*. Yoritomo returned our thanks to the old *samurai* for the courtesy of Satsuma, and stepped from his clogs onto the mats beside me as the bearers and escort turned back to the gate.

An elderly chamberlain in richest costume appeared from within and kowtowed before us. Mindful of my lessons in etiquette, I drew out my sheathed sword and handed it to the official as he rose. He took the priceless weapon reverently and raised it to his forehead before giving it into the keeping of one of the pages. Yoritomo handed his own sword to a second page, and addressed the chamberlain curtly: "Let my august father be informed of our arrival, Fujimaro." 157

"By what name shall I announce my lord's companion?" asked the chamberlain.

"Announce my friend as one entitled to sit at the left hand of the Prince of Owari."

Fujimaro bowed us into the keeping of a second chamberlain, and slipped noiselessly away over the white mats. The newcomer kowtowed, and, at a word from Yoritomo, conducted us in through a vestibule lined with halberds, lances, archers' equipage, armor, and battle-axes, to a dim-lit passage. The pages with our swords followed at a respectful distance.

Two or three turns brought us to the brightly illuminated dressing-room of a bath. As we entered several attendants saluted and began waiting on us, rising from their knees only when necessary. When my hat was removed, one man gave a gasp of amazement. Otherwise all preserved their bland smiles throughout my disrobing, too well trained to venture any comments upon my "snow white" skin. 158

But etiquette did not prevent them from uttering soft exclamations of grief and pity when the removal of Yoritomo's dress disclosed a deep cut across his shoulder blade. Though no longer bleeding, the wound gaped open to the bone. Yet with Spartan fortitude Yoritomo silenced their cries and ordered them to proceed with me. When, in turn, he had received his cold rub and hot immersion, he at last permitted the chamberlain to bind up the wound with moistened strips of the tough Japanese paper.

Blind shampooers reinvigorated our muscles with their skilful rubbing; other attendants shaved us, dressed our hair, and attired us in gorgeous ceremonial costume, including white silk socks and the gauze-winged jackets called *kamishimos*. Last of all our dirks were thrust into our girdles and my revolvers and cartridges placed on a red lacquer tray to be carried after us with our swords.

Fujimaro appeared to conduct us into the presence of the Prince. We followed him through well-lighted corridors, flanked by rooms varying in size but all alike in their silk-bordered mats, the beautiful pictures on

their lacquer-rimmed wall-screens, and the artistic fretwork in the space between the lintel-beams and the ceiling. Throughout the palace the woodwork was in natural finish, without paint or varnish, yet polished until the exquisitely grained surface shimmered like watered silk. 159

At the anteroom of the *daimio's* hall of audience two more chamberlains kowtowed and ushered us forward. At the head of the room there was an impressive pause. The chamberlains could not have looked more solemn had they been ushering us into the presence of the Shogun himself. The screens before us drew noiselessly aside and disclosed a chamber somewhat larger than the anteroom and a slight step higher.

The chamberlains kowtowed at the threshold and crept forward on their knees. We followed, erect. To our left, midway up the room, knelt six dignified *samurai* counsellors. The Daimio awaited us, seated Turk fashion upon a low dais before a lacquer-walled *tokonoma*. So far as I could judge of his figure within the loose robes, he was tall and slender. He wore a small beard and mustache whose snowy whiteness contrasted with his tall black bag-like cap of cobwebby tissue. His long face had a stern and saturnine expression and he bore himself with austere stateliness.

As the chamberlains neared the dais, they kowtowed and drew to one side. We advanced and knelt, and Yoritomo kowtowed. Resolved to maintain equality with the Prince, I went no further than a low bow. As I straightened, the Prince gazed keenly into my blue eyes, and after a moment's pause returned my bow. I was received as a *daimio* of the first class! 160

The kneeling chamberlains waved me to the cushion on the left of the Prince and Yoritomo to the cushion on his right. Our swordbearers slid around to the *tokonoma* and placed our swords upon the rack of honor below the Prince's glittering gold-mounted helmet and armor. At a sign from the Prince, the page bearing my revolvers and cartridges set his tray before us.

The solemn silence which had prevailed since our entrance continued while attendants glided in with sweetmeats and a toy-like tea service of egg-shell china. When we had been served, the Daimio signed all the retainers except his counsellors to withdraw, and broke the silence by politely inquiring my name, age, and family.

"My father's guest is Adamisu Woroto Sama," answered Yoritomo for me. "He is a *daimio* of the great *tojin* people whose land is called America. His age is the same as my own. In all America there is no family of higher blood than the family of my friend and benefactor. He held honorable rank under the Government of America, but laid aside office, and has come with me to aid Dai Nippon."

The Prince looked across to the group of counsellors, and the aged *karo*, or chief counsellor, responded to the wordless inquiry without moving. 161

"My lord, in the Legacy of Iyeyasu it is forbidden to harbor a *tojin*. According to the ancient edict, all Christians shall be imprisoned in the common jail."

"August Prince and father," said Yoritomo, "the Legacy of Iyeyasu also forbids that any man shall leave the shores of Nippon, under penalty of crucifixion. Your son has travelled beyond the shores of Nippon; he has traversed the five continents, and proved the truth of the Dutch learning by sailing around the vast circuit of the world."

"My lord," said the *karo*, "the wording of the edict is explicit. Death is decreed against whomsoever shall presume to intercede for the life of a man returned from beyond the seas. Men of low class—fishermen—have been received back from *tojin* ships and forgiven their unintended crime. But according to his own words, Yoritomo Sama left the shore of Nippon with intent to contravene the ancient edict by bringing back the knowledge of the *tojins*. My lord, the enforcement of the laws has been lax in recent years; there has been much blinking at the study of the Dutch learning. Yet the laws stand ready for enforcement against my lord and Yoritomo Sama and the honorable guest, should enemies of my lord make demand upon Midzuano Echizen-nokami, chief of the Elder Council."

"A petition for a hearing has already gone to the Household in the *norimon* of the Princess Azai," replied Yoritomo, and without naming Kohana, he told succinctly how we had discovered and defeated the Mito plot. 162

The Daimio and his counsellors listened throughout with an impassiveness of manner which I should have mistaken for indifference had I not been near enough to see the glow in the jet eyes of the Prince. At the end of the account the great man murmured his comments in a voice that vibrated with suppressed exultance:

"In all that you have done, my son, I see the guidance of the gods and of the spirits of our forefathers. The Mito men walk with faces over their shoulders, looking to the past, and with ears closed against all reports of the disasters brought upon the Chinese by a like frog-in-the-well policy. The true cause of the Mikado owes much to your service and the service of this noble *tojin sama*."

"I have broken the law; I have brought danger upon the House of Owari," said Yoritomo. "I alone should receive punishment, and not my family. Shall it be *hara-kiri*, or shall I strip off the Tokugawa crest, and as a *ronin* seek to accomplish my mission, aided only by my *tojin* brother?"

His father looked across at the counsellors, and the old *karo* responded without a moment's hesitancy: "Yoritomo Sama has in truth been guided by the ancestral spirits of Owari. Chief and clan should stand or fall in the support of the heir of Owari." 163

"Heir?" murmured Yoritomo. "Such, then, is the truth!"

"Trusted men have been making secret search for you throughout Nippon," answered the Prince. "For a month your elder brother has lain sick beyond hope of recovery. His son is yet a child. The strong man has come to succeed the sick heir. To-morrow the death of your brother will be announced."

To give way to grief in the presence of a superior is a most serious breach of Japanese etiquette. The graver the grief or pain, the more pronounced the smile of the sufferer. Yoritomo uttered a soft laugh, and immediately turned the conversation to a less painful subject.

"My lord," he said, "I have told how Woroto Sama received me aboard the black ship, and how he proved himself the generous friend and brother of the stranger. We believe the saying that the spirits of our ancestors are ever about us. Here is proof. Only a day past Woroto Sama informed me that he is a descendant of Anjin Sama."

"Of Anjin Sama!" repeated the Prince, even his austere reserve shaken by the statement.

I bowed to mask my curiosity. The news of my ancestry could not be other than interesting to any one acquainted with the romantic history of Will Adams. But why should the announcement to this Oriental prince create such a sensation? 164

He looked at me with a slight smile, and asked his son: "Does Woroto Sama know?"

"He has yet to be informed, my lord."

The Prince turned to his *karo*: "What is written in the records of Owari regarding Anjin Sama, the *tojin* counsellor of Minamoto Iyeyasu?"

"My lord, it is written that the fourth Daimio of Owari took to wife the daughter of Satsuma-no-kami's brother Nagato. The wife of Nagato was the daughter of Anjin Sama's grandson."

The saturnine face of the Prince relaxed in a kindly smile, and Yoritomo bowed to me in grave salute. "My brother now sees that it was immutable Fate which drew us together in the bonds of friendship. We are blood kinsmen."

Accustomed as are we of the South to trace out the ties of family through all its ramifications, I was astonished at this recognition of cousinship through so remote an ancestor, especially as I knew the Japanese hold strictly to the male line. But if the princely House of Owari was inclined to receive me as a member of the clan and family, it was not for me to repudiate the connection.

The Daimio spoke to the counsellors: "The heir of the Prince of Owari is entitled to present his memorial direct to the Shogun. See that Yoritomo Sama is registered at Zozoji, in the place of his elder brother, who is about to go from us." 165

The counsellors kowtowed, and glided from the room. Yoritomo addressed his father, with a shade of anxiety beneath his smile: "My lord, I cannot go before the Shogun during my time of mourning. Yet the black ships may come any day."

"Prepare the memorial. I myself will present it to the Shogun in private audience," replied the Prince.

One of the screens of the side wall slipped open, and there entered a slender little old lady in dove-colored silk. She was the first aged woman I had yet seen in Japan whose features retained a share of youthful beauty. Her face was as exquisitely refined and almost as fair as that of the Shogun's daughter, while her teeth, owing either to greater skill in the application or to better dye, were of a glossy black not altogether unpleasing even to my Occidental ideas of attractiveness.

Softly as a thistledown, she drifted across the mats and knelt before Yoritomo, her lips parted in a smile that went far beyond the demands of etiquette. Tears of joy glided down her soft cheeks, and in her eyes was a look of mother love and devotion that made all clear to me. No less deep and overpowering was Yoritomo's joy at sight of his mother; his tears flowed quite as freely. Yet there followed no outburst of caressing words, no kisses and fond embraces. Weeping and smiling in decorous quiet, they kowtowed to one another and murmured formal words of greeting. 166

In the midst Yoritomo composed himself to introduce me as his friend and benefactor and a distant kinsman of the family. She welcomed me with exquisite courtesy. A *samurai* girl appeared with a light refreshment of tea, and rice-cakes covered with a sauce of red beans and sugar. This the Princess served to us herself, with a daintiness that would have drawn from me more than one compliment had I not been aware that my fine phrases would have been considered an outrageous breach of etiquette.

When the little lady had withdrawn with her assistant, the Prince unbent entirely from his austere reserve, and in a most genial manner showered upon me a hundred and one politely personal inquiries as to my opinions and ideas. Behind the mask of solemn state I found him a gentleman as cordial as he was dignified, and as kindly disposed as he was noble minded.

Returning to the fight with the *ronins*, he spoke wonderingly of my audacious resort to firearms within the bounds of Yedo, and insisted that I should show him the action of my revolvers. The weapons greatly pleased him, and he obtained my promise to fire them the next day in one of the archery walks of the *yashiki*. 167

After this, mindful of our need of rest, he touched a small gong, and ordered the chamberlain Fujimaro, who responded, to conduct me to apartments occupying one of the wings of the palace.

CHAPTER XIV—BEFORE THE SHOGUN

For several days I lived in strict seclusion. A semi-detached wing of the palace, surrounded by one of the most beautiful of the landscape gardens within the *yashiki*, had been set apart for my use. All my wants were attended to by a faultlessly polite corps of retainers and servants.

Fujimaro the chamberlain acted as my major-domo and incidentally as my instructor in language and etiquette. Much as I had derived both consciously and unconsciously from my intimacy with Yoritomo, I soon found that I had made no more than a fair beginning in the intricacies and niceties of one of the most difficult of languages and of the most complicated of all existing codes of etiquette, that of China not excepted.

My teacher proved to be invariably cordial and interested, but no less invariably formal and precise in his demeanor towards the *tojin daimio*. The Prince, who came to walk with me in the garden each day, was still more formal whenever any of his retainers were present. At other times, as when I showed him a little pistol practice in the seclusion of a rockery, he unbent to me as to a peer, always faultlessly polite and dignified yet flatteringly attentive to my conversation. 169

During this time I saw nothing of his wife, the quaintly beautiful little lady Tokiwa Sama. The family life of the Japanese nobility is extremely private, even as regards relatives. Yoritomo found time to pay me only one brief visit. He was dressed in white, the Japanese mourning, and was greatly worn by his labor in preparing his memorial to the Shogun during the nights and his daytime duties as chief mourner for his brother.

Japanese etiquette does not permit the official mourning of parents for children. Upon Yoritomo had fallen the sorrowful task of receiving the family friends at the bier of his brother and of attending to all the Buddhistic and Shinto funeral rites. The day after our arrival the death of his brother had been officially announced, and the corpse, which had been embalmed in vermilion for a month past, was mourned over for the prescribed number of days before the interment in one of the cemeteries at Shiba.

In the meantime my friend had completed a summary of the knowledge he had acquired regarding the outer world, and the new foreign policy to which that knowledge pointed. He was now writing the full report and memorial, while his father, who had already smuggled the summary into the Castle, was intriguing for permission to present the memorial direct to the Shogun, unknown to Midzuano and the other members of the Council of Elders. 170

As the Council was secretly pledged to the Mito faction, it was necessary for us to obtain an unprejudiced hearing from the Shogun. Delay was dangerous, since at any moment Keiki might invoke the ancient laws against us, or the inopportune arrival of the American expedition might checkmate our purpose by throwing the Government into an irrevocably hostile attitude towards the foreigners and ourselves.

Weary of inaction, I welcomed a message from the Prince requesting me to join him on an informal visit. Where we were to go was not stated, but I accepted the invitation on the instant, and asked no questions. My attendants dressed me with utmost care, in rich though sober-colored garments, and I noticed that a ceremonial winged jacket, or *kamishimo*, of hemp-cloth was laid in a lacquered case to be carried along.

When, shortly after midday, I was led through the palace to the state portico, I found that the Prince had already entered his *norimon*, and was being borne away in the midst of his slow-moving cortege. I stepped into my *norimon* and was borne after him, Fujimaro and other officials walking beside me. My led-horse and grooms, my two-sword men, and the bearers of my state umbrella, hat, fan, and all the other ceremonial paraphernalia of a *daimio*, were strung out before or behind me. 171

Upon issuing from the *yashiki*, we did not cross the outer moat at the nearest bridge, but skirted southward along it to the Yotsuya Gate, which opens into the great Kojimachi Street. Up Kojimachi we swung at a pace far brisker than dignity would have permitted had not the absence of ceremonial standards indicated that we were travelling *naibun*. The incognito of the Prince, however, was no more than a conventional fiction, since his cortege was immediately recognized by every man in the throngs of *samurais* that passed us within the official quarter.

Gazing out through my curtains, I caught the politely veiled glances with which the two-sword men regarded our cortege. The intensity of party feeling among them was evident from the total absence of indifference. There was not one who failed to show indications of either warm friendship or bitter hatred. This was no less true of the helmetted riders we met. Some rode by with the heads of their barbed and grotesquely caparisoned horses curved high and the huge slipper stirrups of the high-peaked saddles thrust out aggressively. Others courteously swerved to the far side of the street, and a few even dismounted, despite our conventional incognito.

A mile along the Kojimachi Street brought us to the moat of the citadel. I expected our cortege to turn to the right into the great causeway and skirt the moat towards the Sakaruda Gate where Yoritomo and I had parted from the cortege of the Princess Azai. Instead, our escort led straight on across the bridge that headed the street. The thought flashed upon me that we were about to enter the Shogun's sacred enclosure and call upon one of the high officials of the Household. 172

On either side I looked down over the waters of the beautiful moat, among whose blue-green lotus pads swarmed ducks and geese, swans, ibises, storks, and cranes. The outer bank rose to the causeway in a steep grassy slope, set with wide-spreading oaks and pines. Nearing the far side, I studied at close view the granite blocks of the citadel wall, many of which measured at least four feet by sixteen. They were neatly fitted together without mortar or iron cramps, and showed no crevices or displacements from the earthquakes of three centuries.

At the head of the bridge our cortege halted, and Fujimaro informed me that I was to alight. The Prince, as the head of one of the August Three Families, was entitled to ride in through this lesser gate, but no other *daimio* could be accorded the privilege.

"Very well," I replied, determined to make a test of the matter. "Let the Prince of Owari proceed. I will wait his return here." 173

"Impossible, my lord!" exclaimed the chamberlain.

"Then take me back to the *yashiki*," I demanded. "The Prince was pleased to receive me as a *daimio* of rank equal to his own. I will enter the citadel in the same manner that he enters, or not at all."

This was a bold stand for a foreigner whose very presence in Japan was against the ancient laws. But my natural disposition to insist upon a correct valuation of my dignity was backed by a careful consideration of Japanese manners and customs. As an American gentleman, I had the right to rank myself as an equal to any one beneath the ruler of the country. To accept a lower station would result in humiliations that I was not disposed to suffer, either from white men or brown.

There followed a prolonged conference between the captain of the gate, the chamberlain, and the Prince, during which Fujimaro twice came back and begged me to change my determination. I refused. The gate captain in turn refused to admit the unknown occupant of the second *norimon* other than on foot. The deadlock that followed was broken by the appearance of a *hatamoto* whom I at once recognized as the only member of the Princess's guard, except the leader, that had survived the attack of the *ronins*. His dress indicated that he had been promoted to the rank of court chamberlain. He had come to conduct us into the citadel, and at a word from him, the obstinate gate captain yielded his will to mine. 174

We moved forward beneath the huge ancient gateway into a small court between the lofty bastions, and out at right angles, through an inner gateway, into the marvellously beautiful gardens of the Shogun. After winding about for half a mile or more among hillocks and rockeries and groves interspersed with kiosks and toy-like red-lacquered temples, we came to the wall and moat that surrounds the O Shiro.

Here the Prince and I left our *norimons*, and walked over a slender high-arched bridge, accompanied only by our chamberlains and the newly made court chamberlain, who had ostentatiously ushered us from the citadel gate. In compliance with the request of the Prince, I walked behind him as if lost in meditation, my head downbent and eyes narrowed to a line.

At the far side of the bridge we passed between the vigilant guards of the inner gateway, who, however, seemed to detect nothing foreign in my appearance. Beyond them we came into a garden court, surrounded with high walls on three sides and on the fourth with a wing of the palace. There was no person to be seen either in the court or in the broad veranda of the palace wing, to which we were conducted. Mounting a set of movable lacquered steps, we crossed the veranda to the threshold of a small waiting room. 175

When our clogs had been removed, the Prince handed over not only his sword but his dirk as well into the keeping of his chief attendant. The act convinced me that we were about to be received by the Shogun himself. It was absurd to suppose that one of so exalted a rank as the Prince would lay aside his dirk as well as his sword for any personage in Yedo other than the head of the Government. Fujimaro did not have to ask twice for my swords. I handed them over at the first word.

We entered and seated ourselves. The court chamberlain kowtowed and withdrew, and our attendants proceeded to slip on our winged jackets and adjust our court caps. These were odd black-lacquered affairs, not unlike inverted boats in shape, and were tied on the crown of our heads with cords passing under our chins. Our chamberlains then handed us the ceremonial fans, and withdrew to the lower end of the room.

After a short wait, the court official reappeared and bowed to the Prince and myself. We rose and followed him through a deserted corridor into a large square room, where he signed us to kneel on three mats below the cushions in front of the *tokonoma*. He slipped out again by the way he had entered, drawing shut the screen behind him. 176

There followed a wait of ten or fifteen minutes, during which I sought to quiet my apprehensions as to the outcome of the audience with this mysterious Oriental potentate, by studying the exquisite cabinetwork and decorations of the room. I was admiring the priceless *cloisonné* vase which shared the floor of the *tokonoma* with a common water-worn stone, when the Prince drew in his breath with a soft sibilant, and kowtowed until his forehead pressed the floor.

A quick glance showed me a gap between the screens of the side wall, through which was entering a portly, stern-faced, black-bearded man in yellow *kimono* and black *haori*. In his girdle were thrust a sword and dirk that glittered with gold fretwork, but the bell-shaped cap, or hat, on the crown of his head was of plain black lacquer. The salute of the Prince was, however, quite sufficient to convince me that we were in the presence of the Shogun. I kowtowed beside my companion.

We maintained our salute until the Shogun had seated himself on the cushioned dais before the *tokonoma* and commanded us to rise. As we straightened and sat back on knees and heels, I was astonished to perceive that we were alone with this exclusive and jealously guarded ruler of the most exclusive and jealously guarded empire on earth. But I had heard too much about the ways of Oriental potentates to doubt that palace guards waited within instant call behind the frail barrier of the wall screens. 177

"The petition of Yoritomo Sama for permission to present a memorial through Owari dono has been received and read," he began in a clear, colorless voice. "The summary of the intended memorial of Yoritomo Sama has been received but not read. The Legacy of Iyeyasu forbids the reading of documents or letters that refer to *tojin* countries."

"The will of Minamoto Iyeyoshi is the delight of his servants!" exclaimed the Prince, smiling as though he had received a favor. "May inquiry be made whether the Tycoon has laid the matter before the Elder Council?"

If the Shogun was flattered by the adulatory Chinese title, which properly belonged only to the Mikado, there was nothing to indicate the fact in his stern look. He replied curtly, "The Council has not yet been consulted."

Though so ungraciously stated, I divined that this answer implied a point in our favor, and I smiled quite as suavely as the Prince. The Shogun turned his gloomy eyes upon me in a fixed stare. As a matter of courtesy I was willing to conform to the etiquette of the country, but I was not inclined to cringe before any man. No thought of insolence or bravado entered my mind. The rank of this Oriental ruler entitled him to my respect. I met his look with the calm and steady gaze with which a gentleman regards a new acquaintance. 178

The experiment was not lacking in danger. Deference is the breath of life to the normal Oriental potentate. But the pride of race and family is hard to overcome, even though expediency counsel a subservient attitude. I could not have humbled myself had I desired.

The event proved that Minamoto Iyeyoshi was far other than a typical tyrant. His dark eyes lighted and he expressed his opinion of me with royal conciseness: "The American *tojin* is brave."

I bowed in acknowledgment. "Your Highness is pleased to be gracious! Permit me to speak for one who is my friend,—a man who, for the sake of his country, laid aside riches and rank, and, at the risk of life and honor, crossed the seas to search out the secrets of *tojin* power. Your Highness, do the records of Nippon's heroes tell of any nobler deed of courage and devotion?"

"The Legacy of Iyeyasu may not be altered," he replied.

"Your Highness," I said, "since the days of your august ancestor Iyeyasu Sama, Dai Nippon has stood still among the nations of the earth while all the *tojin* world has rolled forward. Even China stirs from the sleep of cycles. The time has come for the people of Nippon to learn that the *tojins* are neither beasts nor demons nor even barbarians. Your Highness, the son of the wise Prince of Owari honored me with his friendship. For the sake of that friendship I have come with him to Nippon to advise the altering of the laws of Iyeyasu." 179

"A *tojin* counsellor in the Shogunate!"

"Your Highness may recall one precedent," I replied. "Iyeyasu Sama listened to the counsel of Anjin Sama, my ancestor."

The curiosity in the Shogun's eyes deepened without a trace of change in his impassive face. He glanced inquiringly at my companion, who responded in a tone of calm conviction: "Anjin Sama, the favorite and most trusted counsellor of our august ancestor, has returned in a new birth to advise Minamoto Iyeyoshi regarding the *tojin* peoples."

"Does the *tojin* himself make claim that he is a reincarnation of Anjin?" demanded the Shogun.

"No claim is made by myself, Your Highness," I answered. "I am not conscious that my soul is the soul of Anjin. But I know that I am lineally descended from Anjin through his English son, and Owari dono honors me with an acknowledgment of kinship." 180

The Prince bowed in confirmation.

Iyeyoshi's face darkened. "Woroto is a believer in the accursed sect!"

"Your Highness is mistaken," I replied. "The sect denounced by your laws is that body of Christians which acknowledges the rule of the Pope of Rome. There are many Christian sects which reject the Pope."

"All Christian sects seek to subvert filial piety and the reverent worship of the august ancestors, upon which rest the foundations of morality and order."

"Your Highness," I ventured, "whatever may be the foundations of order and morality, the life of nations depends either upon the power to meet force with force or the wisdom to avoid conflict. For generations Dai Nippon has been safe owing to her isolation from the lands beyond the wide seas. But now the *tojin* peoples have attained to a power inconceivable to one who has not seen. Their warships cover the seas."

"So also did the war junks of Kublai Khan," he rejoined.

"The fleet of Kublai Khan was destroyed off the shores of Nippon by the great storm no less than by the valor of Nippon's *samurais*," I replied. "But the warships of the *tojins* move without sails against the greatest of typhoons, and their cannon shoot far. Your Highness may have heard of Chinese arrogance. The *tojins* said, 'Trade with us.' The Chinese spat at them and called them 'foreign devils.' The *tojins* said, 'Trade with us.' They attacked the *tojins*. The *tojin* warships came to them in anger. Now they trade with the *tojins* in many open ports. The *tojin* trade is a rising tide that is sweeping its way around the world. Your Highness knows that the Government of my country is sending a very great official honorably to request that the ports of Dai Nippon be unblocked before the rising tide." 181

"Earthquake waves have rolled up on our coasts, destroying thousands. The waters have ever receded, and Dai Nippon still stands."

"The tide of *tojin* trade has never receded from wherever it has flowed. *Tojin* power is far beyond the knowledge of Your Highness. Do not judge by the Dutch. They are now a very little people in the *tojin* world. In the august name of Minamoto Iyeyasu and in the name of Anjin Sama, his counsellor, I ask Minamoto Iyeyoshi to receive and ponder on the memorial of Yoritomo Sama."

"The prayer of Woroto will be considered," replied the Shogun, and with this half concession, he touched a small gong that stood beside him on an elbow rest.

CHAPTER XV—REQUITAL

In quick response to the signal, the chamberlain who had conducted us to the palace entered at the side of the room. Over his feet and a yard behind trailed a grotesque prolongation of his trouser legs that gave him the appearance of walking on his knees. I supposed he had been summoned to usher us out. But when he crept forward on hands and knees and kowtowed, the Shogun commanded harshly: "Look at the *tojin*, Gengo. Report has been made that he committed the crime of firing a gun within the bounds of Yedo. Speak the truth."

The chamberlain raised his head a little above the floor, and stared across at me, his face gray with fear beneath its set smile.

"Your Highness," he murmured, "the truth cannot be concealed. This is the *tojin* who, in company with Yoritomo, son of Owari dono, fired many shots from a little gun the like of which has never before been seen in Yedo. Your Highness knows that I had no share in the crime. Yuki was captain of the cortege, and the responsibility—"

"Enough," interrupted the Shogun. "Send in Setsu." 183

As the fellow crept from the room I stared after him, astounded that fear could so debase one who had outmatched by his skill and braveness the armored *ronins*. He had stood unflinching before the bloody swords that had cut down his comrades, yet now, at the bare intimation that his lord was displeased with me, crawled away without venturing a word in favor of the *tojin* whose so-called crime had saved him from death and his Princess from the disgrace of capture.

I turned to the Prince, expecting him to burst into warm protests against the injustice of the Shogun's attitude. He sat in placid silence, his face wreathed in the polite smile of the Japanese courtier. Yet I knew that he could not be indifferent. Ruin to me would spell ruin to Yoritomo. Determined not to be outdone in self-control, I composed myself, and faced the Shogun with the same forced smile of etiquette.

Iyeyoshi regarded me with an inscrutable look. Though his features were as impassive as if cast in golden bronze, I fancied a sinister mockery behind the cold curiosity of his gaze. I felt as a mouse must feel between the paws of the cat. I had been so foolish as to leave my revolvers in my apartments. I was absolutely in the power of this gloomy-eyed ruler. I thought of all the hideous mediæval tortures still in practice in this benighted land, and a cold sweat oozed out upon my skin and chilled me. Yet I maintained my courtier's smile. 184

Noiselessly as a shadow a girl glided across the room and prostrated herself before the Shogun. It was the younger of the Princess Azai's *samurai* ladies. Iyeyoshi muttered a command. She raised her head a few inches, and spoke rapidly, but in tones so soft and low I could only conjecture that she was giving a detailed account of the attack and defeat of the *ronins*. Throughout the recital the Shogun held to his cold scrutiny of my face. I continued to smile.

At the end he signed her to go. In turning about, she cast at me a glance of modest interest, and I thought there was friendliness in her smile. She glided out as noiselessly as she had entered. There was a moment's pause, and another girl glided in to prostrate herself before the Shogun,—a girl still more graceful and lissome, dressed in crepes of gossamer texture. I stared in amazement, my heart skipping a beat and then bounding with a force that sent a flood of color into my face. The girl was the Shogun's daughter, the Princess Azai.

"Speak the full truth!" commanded the Shogun, with the barest suggestion of tenderness beneath his stern tone. "This is not the first time you have seen the *tojin*."

"Your Highness," she murmured, in a voice as clear and musical as it was low, "the *tojin sama* appeared before me first below the holy image of Kwannon at Zozoji. I thought him a god or a spirit. Again he appeared, in the midst of the attack by the evil *ronins*, and then I knew him to be a hero such as are told of in the ancient writings." 185

"The privilege of rulers is to honor heroes," said the Shogun, and he made a sign with his fan.

Azai glided to the opening in the screens, and returned with a tea tray of unvarnished cypress wood, which she held above her white brow until she had knelt to set it before her father. Having served him, she glided across again, to return with a tray and service of vermilion lacquer. This she brought to the Prince, holding it not so high as the first tray. Last of all she came to serve me in precisely the same manner as my fellow-guest. Tray and service and ceremonial were identical. In other words, I was received by the Shogun as a personage of rank equal to that of the Prince of Owari.

But I gave scant thought to this triumph of diplomacy when I looked down upon the quaint coiffure and slender figure of the kowtowing girl. As she straightened from the salute and, still upon her knees, bent forward to offer me my tea and sweetmeats, her eyes rose to mine in a timid glance. By good fortune I was able to restrain my tongue. But I could not withhold from my gaze the adoration which overwhelmed me at this close view of her exquisite purity and loveliness. 186

I had barely a glimpse of the soft brown-black eyes, purpling with emotion. Then the lids drooped their long lashes, and a scarlet blush leaped into her ivory cheeks. Yet with consummate grace and composure, she maintained her delicious little smile of greeting, and served me without a falter.

Her blush passed as swiftly as it had come, but it left me stunned and dizzy with the realization that I loved this divinely sweet and innocent maiden,—the daughter of the proud ruler of Nippon,—the promised bride of my true friend Tomo. She was as far beyond my reach as the silvery moon. What of that? Love does not reason. Even in the midst of my shame at the thought of my friend, I found myself unable to resist the mad longing to win the lovely girl.

My infatuated gaze could not have escaped the keen eyes of her father and the Prince. To my surprise, instead of reproving me with word or look, they sipped their tiny cups of tea as fast as the little Princess could refill them, and exchanged cryptic verses from the Chinese classics. The poetic contest continued until we had 187

finished our refreshment and Azai had withdrawn with her trays.

The Shogun quoted a last verse, and turned upon me with pedagogical severity. "Woroto gives no heed to the golden words of the Chinese sage!"

"Your Highness," I replied, "if ignorance of Confucius is the sole test, regard me as a barbarian. Less than two years have passed since I began the study of your language with Yoritomo Sama."

"In the matter of *tojin* learning, Woroto Sama is a scholar," interposed the Prince.

"And a true *samurai* in battle," added the Shogun with a graciousness that, I must confess, relieved me not a little.

"Your Highness," I asked, "if inquiry is admissible—there were two *hatamotos* who lived to see the flight of the *ronins*. Both fought with utmost skill and courage."

"Gengo, as you have seen, has been promoted," answered the Shogun. "He did all that his position called for. Yuki, as captain of the cortege, was guilty of falling into an ambush. In consideration of his loyal valor, his life has been mercifully spared, and his punishment limited to degradation from the service of the Shogunate."

Only with utmost difficulty could I maintain my set smile. Here was bitter requital for service,—the loyal and courageous *hatamoto* made a *ronin* and beggared because of a surprise which he had no shadow of reason to anticipate. 188

"Rumor says that one of the traitors was taken alive," remarked the Prince. "Is permission given to inquire?"

"The criminal refused to speak, and so died under examination."

A shudder passed through me at the terse reply. I called to mind what I had read of rack and boot and fire and all the other hideous tortures of mediæval court procedure.

The Prince must have been bitterly disappointed. He laughed softly, and ventured another inquiry: "It is rumored that the band came from the north."

"They were *ronins*, formerly in the service of Mito," replied the Shogun. "Written declarations found upon their bodies state that they had foresworn their loyalty to their lord, and intended to strike a blow against the Shogunate in favor of the temporal power of the Mikado."

"In Tenno's name, for Mito's fame," rhymed the Prince.

The verse was not improbably a paraphrase of a classic couplet and must have contained an allusion beyond the bare meaning of the words. Iyeyoshi's face darkened with a double suspicion.

"Eleven years have passed since the Prince of Mito was compelled to resign his *daimiate* to his eldest son and confine himself in his inferior Yedo *yashiki*," he stated. "Rekko's enemies have yet to furnish clear proof that his casting of bells into cannon was not for the conquest of the Ainos and the glory of the Shogunate, as was claimed by him." 189

"Mito walks with face to the past and eyes turned upward," murmured the Prince. "No Mito has yet sat on the stool of the Mikado's high commander of armies. But neither was Hideyoshi the Taiko Sama made Shogun. He held a higher title in the Mikado's court, and was supreme general in fact though not in name. Is it for the glory of our holy Mikado or for the elevation of Keiki that Mito plots the overthrow of the Shogunate?"

Stung to fury by the bare mention of the threatened disaster to his rule, Iyeyoshi bent forward, his face distorted with murderous rage, and his hand clutching at the hilt of his dirk. The Prince, still smiling under the menace of instant death, kowtowed, and waited on hands and knees, with his neck bared for the blade.

"Gladly does a loyal subject offer life in confirmation of sincerity," he murmured.

The blood curdled in my veins as the full horror of the moment burst upon me. Unsoftened by my companion's submissiveness, the Shogun thrust back his long sleeve with his left hand and tightened his grip on the dirk. His eyes narrowed to cruel slits. I knew there would be only one movement,—a flashing stroke from the scabbard that would sever the outstretched neck of the Prince. In the same instant I realized that the death of the father would mean death to the son and the ruin of what he valued far above life,—his mission. I had pledged myself to help Yoritomo, and—I loved his betrothed! What had I to live for? 190

"Your Highness!" I gasped. "I do not know all your customs. In China a condemned man may sometimes receive punishment through a substitute. Accept my life for the life of my kinsman!"

The Shogun turned his glittering eyes upon me. They were as cold and hard and malignant as the eyes of an enraged snake. Yet the same impulse that had forced my offer now impelled me to creep nearer to him, fearful that he might refuse to accept. I did not realize that my interference was in itself an outrage upon the dignity of the Shogun, punishable with death. First the Prince, then myself! The bared arm of the despot twitched—

Suddenly the distorted face relaxed and the hand on the hilt drew away. Either my offer had penetrated through the crust of ceremonialism to the wellsprings of his nature, or, at the very height of his rage, he had recalled to mind the power of the friendly Owari party and remembered that even he had no lawful right to punish a *daimio* of the first class other than by deposition with the sanctioning assent of the Mikado. 191

"*Namu Amida Butsu!*" he murmured. "Rage is an evil counsellor! Be seated. The *tojin* offends with his uncouth manners and unsmiling face. Yet he has proved his high sense of loyalty and the filial duty owing to his elder kinsman. I am appeased."

"Your Highness has spared two unworthy lives," replied the Prince. "The loyalty of my counsel is still doubted. Grant me leave to withdraw, that I may make proof of sincerity."

Again a feeling of horror seized me and brought the cold sweat to my face. The gruesome proof of sincerity was *hara-kiri*. I recalled the suicide of the wounded *ronin*, and I shuddered. No! Not even for Yoritomo's sake could I offer this sacrifice of myself for his father. I had not been trained from childhood in the stern *samurai*

code. Still on hands and knees, I stared up at the clouded face of the Shogun, in agonized suspense.

At last the clear gaze and unchanging smile of the Prince won the contest against doubt and suspicion.

"The sincerity of Owari dono is not questioned," replied the Shogun.

But the Prince was still unsatisfied. "There remains doubt regarding the wisdom of humbly offered counsel," he insisted. 192

"Permission is granted Owari dono to present the memorial of Yoritomo Sama, which will be read and considered," came the welcome response.

We kowtowed together, loudly insucking our breath to express our gratitude and delight. The Shogun rose, and we again kowtowed while he left the room. A screen in the side wall opened before him and closed again without a sound. We were once more alone.

As we settled back on our heels the Prince commended me for my part in the successful outcome of the audience with a glance of warm approval. I could not restrain an exultant exclamation: "We've won! He cannot resist Yoritomo's facts!"

The Prince touched his lips and signed to the rear. A shadow passed across my face. I had not heard even a rustle of silken folds, yet Gengo the court chamberlain was already beside me. He kowtowed, and murmured in a tone of ingratiating obsequiousness: "The august princes are implored to accept the humble services of their servant. The condescension of the great fills with joy the breast of the lowly!"

"The duties of a court chamberlain restrict his services to his lord," replied my companion.

I had taken a dislike to the man, despite my remembrance of his braveness and swordsmanship, but I thought the Prince spoke with undue harshness. Heedless of the reproof, Gengo looked up, with a fawning smile, and answered significantly: "Great men have accepted aid from foxes." 193

"A wise man trusts in the gods, and scorns the goblin power of badgers and foxes," rejoined the Prince.

"Gold opens gates that steel cannot force, my lord."

"The gates that are already open may crush those who attempt to close them."

Gengo cringed and looked up with a bland smile.

"The favor of the exalted Prince of Owari will be remembered by his servant," he murmured, and he kowtowed, laughing softly and sucking his breath.

The Prince signed me to rise. Gengo rose after us and ushered us out by the way we had come, with utmost obsequiousness. In the waiting room our caps and winged jackets were removed by our chamberlains, who slipped on our lacquered clogs at the threshold.

Gengo conducted our party out across the inner moat and through the palace gardens to the gate in the citadel rampart. There at last he turned back, while we swung out across the great moat and homeward along Kojimachi Street, to bear the good news to Yoritomo.

CHAPTER XVI—MITO STRIKES

A second period of anxious waiting followed the visit to the palace. Yoritomo soon completed his memorial which his father at once presented to the Shogun. After that we had to wait in blind uncertainty of the outcome, yet aware that the Mito party was gathering all its strength to bring about the downfall and destruction of Owari.

On the morning of July the sixth, Yoritomo came to my apartments for the first long visit he had been free to pay me since our arrival at Owari Yashiki. As soon as the attendants had served pipes and tea and had withdrawn, he sought to repeat the fervent thanks which he had already showered on me for my impulsive attempt to save his father. I could no longer bear his gratitude.

"Wait, Tomo," I interrupted. "I have a confession to make. I am ashamed to receive your praises. The least I can do is to confess the bitter truth. I love your little Princess."

"Do I not already know that?" he replied. "My brother, I grieve for you!"

"Despise me, rather! When I looked into her Madonna face, I could not resist showing her my love—to her, your betrothed!—and I thought myself a gentleman!" 195

"My betrothed only in name, Worth. How often have I told you that my life has been given?"

"Yet if you succeed?"

He touched his dirk. "You know the customary proof of sincerity. If that is not required, I have vowed to shave my head, and enter the monastery at Zozoji."

"No, no, Tomo!" I protested. "Consider your chances for a glorious future. If we win against Mito, only the life of the feeble son of the Shogun stands between you and the succession to the throne. As the husband of the Shogun's daughter and heir of Owari, with the strong friendship of Satsuma—"

"What is the saying of your great poet?" he interrupted. "'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' Neither power nor love tempt me. If now I can subdue my hatred of Mito and his clan, and fulfil my mission with self-abasement—"

"Be a Buddhist saint if you must, but when you have accomplished your mission, your gods will reward you with a happy life."

"Your souls have met and loved in some former reincarnation," he murmured. "Cast off all thought of shame, brother. I have no desire for the maiden. You belong to one another. Your souls are bound together inseparably." 196

"Tomo!" I cried, and I bowed over, between shame and intoxicating delight.

Fujimaro entered with the freedom allowed a teacher, and said in his most formal style: "Permission to enter the august presence is humbly entreated by a woman of low degree, the *geisha* Kohana."

Yoritomo nodded to me, and I answered: "Bring her in without delay."

As Fujimaro glided out, I bent towards Yoritomo with a quick question: "Another of Keiki's plots?"

"Would that be a matter of surprise?" he replied, with his placid smile. "She will soon tell us. We were talking of one to whom you have given your heart with true Occidental romanticism. I grieve for you, brother!"

"That I should have betrayed my friend?"

"No, not that. I have never stood between you and the maiden in wish, and will not in fact. I grieve because I know that your love is hopeless in this life. At the best, you have only the chance to unite yourselves in death, and even that union is no more than a remote possibility."

"Union!—death!" I repeated.

"When lovers know there is no hope of union in this life, they pledge themselves to love one another for seven existences, and—" Again he touched his dirk hilt. 197

"That?" I cried. "Ask her to sacrifice herself for me?"

"You Westerners talk of faith. We practise it. Azai will gladly end her life here for the bliss of being joined to you in the world beyond. She loves you."

"Impossible! I am a *tojin*. The very sight of me frightened her."

"At the first, yes. Now she loves you. My father saw your soul in her eyes."

"Impossible!" I repeated.

"Impossible for you to be united in this life," he repeated. "None the less, she is yours so far as love gives you the right,—and she is yours so far as the wish of your brother is to be considered."

"Tomo, you will help me?"

"I will help." He waved back my outstretched hand. "They come."

Fujimaro opened a screen for Kohana San to enter, and, at a sign from me, withdrew. The *geisha* had not paused to cast off her hood and gray street *kimono*. Panting from haste and fear, she glided across to us on her knees, her unsmiling face pallid beneath its rouge and rice powder.

"My lord," she gasped, "Mito strikes! The Council, unknown to His Highness—"

"Midzuano has ordered our arrest," stated Yoritomo. 198

"I have had no calls to Mito *yashiki*. A delayed message came from the *ronin* Yuki, who was captain of the

*hatamoto*s—Keiki sought to bribe him against us. He pretended to agree—”

Yoritomo twisted about to my *tokonoma* and opened the lacquered case in which I kept my revolvers and ammunition. He thrust one of the revolvers into his bosom, and gave me the other.

“We must stand before the judges without our swords,” he said. “That is due the dignity of the court. But we cannot tell how far Keiki and Midzuano may induce them to proceed. It is better to die quickly than under torture.”

“And take Midzuano and Keiki with us,” I added.

“If it comes to the point, and they are present.” He turned to Kohana San. “You have been followed?—seen to enter?”

“Not that I can tell, my lord.”

“Call Fujimaro.”

I clapped my hands, and the chamberlain appeared at the side of the room.

Yoritomo pointed to the kneeling girl. “Let denial be made that the *geisha* who entered Owari Yashiki was Kohana San. To-night return the girl to Shinagawa in a *norimon*, with escort, incognito, but passing out the main gate.”

“My lord! a *geisha* in a *norimon*, and carried through the state gate of Owari Yashiki!” murmured the outraged chamberlain, masking his amazement behind his suave smile, yet unable to repress the note of horror that underlaid his mildly worded protest. 199

“Will Keiki then believe the spies that report the coming of Kohana San to Owari? They will say she is still here, yet she will be in Shinagawa.”

“My lord! the life of a dancer against the dignity of Owari—”

“The dignity of Owari against the defeat of those who would ruin Owari and Nippon. The *geisha* is now worth a thousand men to Owari. Seal your lips and the lips of all others. She will leave the *norimon* in some dark by-way. You will loiter through Shinagawa, and return with one of the guard inside. Go now and request leave of my august father for us to appear before him.”

Fujimaro hastened out, and we turned to question Kohana San. Before she could tell how the message had reached her, the chamberlain reappeared, and announced that one of the Prince’s personal attendants had come to inform us our presence was desired in the audience hall.

“Mito strikes. It is for us to parry and counter,” said Yoritomo. We slipped our swords into our girdles, and rose. At the threshold he turned to Kohana San. “Pray to the war god and to your kitten.” 200

“Ten thousand felicitous years to my lord!” she murmured. “The might of Hachiman and the craft of the *geisha* cat shall aid him!”

The waiting attendant conducted us direct to the audience hall, his unsmiling face a portent of calamity. At the entrance he halted and kowtowed. We passed in alone. The Prince was seated in state before the grand *tokonoma* and close beside him on his left sat a visitor also dressed in winged jacket,—a large and swarthy man, with features of the heavy German type.

When we entered, refreshments had been served, and the only retainers present were the six counsellors. Yoritomo led me to the head of the room, where we knelt and laid our swords upon the mats at our right, and exchanged bows with the Prince and his guest. I had no need of my friend’s greeting to the stranger to divine his identity. I had already perceived from the circle cross upon his coat and his position on the left of the Prince that he was none other than Yoritomo’s friend Shimadzu Nariakira, the great Daimio of Satsuma. Accepting the precedent set by the Prince, he greeted me as his junior but peer, and proceeded to look me over with a gaze as frank and kindly as it was keen.

“Woroto Sama is far different in appearance from the hairy *tojin* that I have seen on the black ships,” he said. “The august Prince of Owari has told me the deeds of his guest. My regret is doubled.” 201

Yoritomo glanced inquiringly at his father, who explained with utmost calmness of tone and manner: “Our noble friend, the Daimio of Satsuma, has received the command of the Shogunate to bring the heir of Owari and the *tojin* lord before the High Court in netted *norimons*.”

In a flash Yoritomo drew open his robes below the girdle and placed the point of his dirk to his side, ready for the fatal cross cut. Calm and steady as if cast in bronze, he looked up at his father for the signal to strike. The Prince turned quietly to his guest. The Daimio sat mute and impassive. The Prince faced the counsellors, who consulted together for what seemed to me an age of hideous suspense. Yet throughout it all the Prince and the Daimio waited, to all appearance as apathetic as lumps of clay, while my friend crouched, no less impassive in look, the cruel knife held ready to rend his loins in dreadful self-immolation.

At last the *karo* spoke, in a voice devoid of all emotion. “The words of the august lords have been heard and considered. Humble counsel is given that Yoritomo Sama should bear the present shame and should risk appearance before the High Court. To commit *hara-kiri* now would save his personal honor. It would not be proof of sincerity should doubt be expressed as to his motive in presenting the memorial to His Highness the Shogun.” 202

The Prince nodded in assent. Yoritomo still waited.

“Does the Shogun know of this order?” he asked.

“That we have yet to learn,” answered the Prince. “The risk is great. So also is the chance of great gain.”

Yoritomo sheathed his dirk, and tendered both it and his sword to the Daimio. I offered my sword and dirk. The Daimio smiled gravely, and waved them back with his fan.

"We shall all lay aside our swords when we enter the presence of the High Court," he said.

The Prince clapped his hands, and attendants entered to take up the swords of the four lords. The Prince himself escorted his powerful guest to the state portico, Yoritomo and I following close after. At the entrance, *norimons* with Satsuma bearers and guards were stationed in waiting for us before the gold-lacquered palanquin of the Daimio. With no other display of feeling than the required smile of etiquette, we took leave of the Prince, slipped our swords into our girdles and entered our *norimons*.

The head of the cortege passed out into the great courtyard and through the massive gateway, followed by Yoritomo's *norimon* and then by my own, each surrounded by a guard of stalwart Satsuma men. The Daimio came after us, near the end of the procession. Outside the gateway the heralds began to chant a monotonous cry: "*Shi-ta-ni-iro! shi-ta-ni-iro!*—kneel down! kneel down."

As my *norimon* swung around, I peered out and saw the standard bearers carrying the insignia of their lord on tall shafts. The Daimio of Satsuma was making a state progress. The thought that we were in the charge of the most powerful of all the *daimios*, and that he was our friend, reassured my apprehensions of the coming ordeal. I drew a sigh of relief, and was about to settle back in my narrow box, when something struck lightly across the *norimon* and fell down over the windows. I peered out again, and saw the meshes of a net.

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CHAPTER XVII—IN THE PIT OF TORMENT

The ride would have been tedious at best. With that symbolic net hung over me, it was well-nigh unendurable. More than once the indignity of being paraded as a prisoner through the aristocratic section of Yedo all but overpowered my self-control. Only by the severest repression was I able to constrain myself from drawing sword and cutting my way out of my enmeshed palanquin. The saving thought was that Satsuma had left us our swords and that the net did not necessarily imply degradation.

With the heralds ever chanting their cry, "Kneel down! kneel down!" we marched in solemn state into the official quarter and slantingly across it, past the great Sakaruda Gate where we had parted from the cortege of the Princess, to a gate in the angle of the moat, half a mile beyond. Here I expected an order for us to dismount and enter afoot. But the gate led us into the Second Castle, which is the separately moated portion of the official quarter, lying along the east side of the citadel.

We now had to go only a short distance to reach the *yashiki* in which the magistrates of the Supreme or High Court held their sessions. As prisoners of high rank, we were carried in through the gateway and across the courtyard to the portico. The Daimio followed in state. When he had stepped out upon the mats laid for him by the *hatamoto* attendants of the court, the nets were removed from our *norimons*, and we were courteously assisted to alight beside the Daimio. At a sign from him, we handed over our swords and dirks to a pair of his own retainers, while he gave his sword alone into the keeping of one of the *hatamotos*. 205

With this we were ushered after the Daimio into a waiting-room and served with tea and rice cakes,—an extreme of ceremonial hospitality for which I felt more impatience than gratitude. We had good reason to believe that those who so politely entertained us were our enemies,—that we were going before a prejudiced court. I wondered how Yoritomo could preserve his tranquil bearing. For myself I found much difficulty in imitating the austere solemnity of Satsuma, whose deportment I had resolved to copy. In my perturbed state of mind, the task was by no means easy, yet I succeeded so far as visibly to impress the *hatamotos* with the dignity of the *tojin* lord.

At last we were summoned into the presence of the court. The trial chamber was an apartment of medium size, divided into a stone-paved pit, level with the ground below the mansion, and a matted platform or continuation of the house floor, three or four feet higher than the pit bottom. Upon the centre of the platform sat the magistrates in a row, with several court secretaries or reporters on their right. 206

Turning my glance from the judges, I stared down into the space before them with a thrill of horror. Along the walls of the pit were ranged grotesquely modelled instruments and machines, the very shape of which was a menace and a torment. Before them stood guards armed with hooked and forked implements used to entangle and pin down unruly prisoners. Worst of all were the three men of the *eta*, or pariah class, who knelt beside a post in the centre of the pit, grim and silent, their cotton robes tucked up into their girdles, their corded arms bared to the shoulder.

The three swordbearers knelt in a corner, while Satsuma was conducted to a cushion on the left of the magistrates. He seated himself and exchanged bows with a lean, cold-faced *daimio* who had preceded him. A *hatamoto* signed us to descend a steep flight of steps into the pit. Without a shadow of change in his serene face, Yoritomo led the way down. At the bottom, attendants slipped lacquered clogs upon our feet, that we might not soil our silk foot-mittens upon the stone flagging. 207

We halted near the steps, yet close enough to the post where the pariahs stood for me to see a splotch of fresh blood on the black-stained flagstones at its foot. Yoritomo saw me shudder, and whispered reassuringly, in English, "Remember, brother, we have the pistols, and there will be no attempt at torture if we tell the truth. Conceal nothing except our knowledge of Keiki's plot."

I drew in a deep breath, and turned my gaze away from the pit, to look at the magistrates. They were studying me with a supercilious curiosity such as a lady of fashion might exhibit while viewing a painted savage. Pride spurred me out of the black mood of horror and despair into which I had sunk. With chin uplifted, I returned the insolence of the judges in a contemptuous glance. Yet intense as was my anger, I found myself almost disconcerted when I met the gaze of the *daimio* beside Satsuma. His face was as immobile as a death-mask, and his dull eyes peered out at me through the narrow lids with a glassy stare, as cold and emotionless as the eyes of a corpse.

"Who is that beside your friend?" I muttered.

"The chief of the Elder Council," whispered Yoritomo.

I stared closer at the repellent face. This, then, was Midzuano Echizen-no-kami, the Shogun's grand vizier or premier,—our enemy and the friend of Mito. What chance had we of a fair trial before a court influenced if not overawed by the ally of those who sought our destruction? According to the ancient law of the land, we had committed deeds punishable with death. What possibility could there be for us to escape condemnation by a court acting in the interests of our enemies? 208

"Yoritomo, son of Owari dono!" called one of the secretaries, and he signed with his fan.

Yoritomo stepped forward before the judges, and bowed to them with grave dignity. Another secretary lifted a sheet of writing to his forehead, and read slowly: "Charges have been made that Yoritomo, son of Owari dono, left the shores of Nippon; that he has returned to the shores of Nippon from the lands of the *tojins*; and that he has brought with him into the country a *tojin* who belongs to the evil sect."

The reading of the brief indictment was followed by a profound hush, in which the only sound I could hear was the quick drumming of my heart. The silence was broken by one of the magistrates, who leaned forward and asked sharply: "What has Yoritomo Sama to say to the charges?"

The secretaries wetted their inkbrushes and wrote down the question with swift strokes. They did not have 209

long to wait for Yoritomo's answer. He smiled up into the faces of those who were about to condemn him, and replied without a trace of hesitancy:

"Regarding the first and second charges, no proof can be brought forward by the august court, yet I speak freely the truth. Many years have passed since word came from Nagasaki how the hairy *tojins* had humbled the pride of the arrogant Chinese and forced them with cannonballs to open their ports to *tojin* trade. That is well known to all men of *samurai* blood."

"It is well known," assented the magistrate.

Yoritomo bowed, and continued: "When I had attained to manhood I chanced upon a full account of the *tojin* victory and China's humiliation. The realization that a like humiliation might come to the sacred Empire of the Rising Sun sobered me in the midst of drunken revels. I put on pilgrim dress and journeyed to the holy shrine of Ise. There I prayed for enlightenment. The High Ones sent me a vision, in which I was directed to cross the seas and learn the secrets of *tojin* power. I waited my opportunity, and embarked in one of the black ships."

"Your accomplices?" demanded the magistrate who had spoken before.

"I had no accomplices. I boarded the black ship unknown to any person in Nippon." 210

"Was this at Nagasaki, on the Dutch ship, or on one of the Chinese junks?" asked another magistrate.

"On neither, nor was it at Nagasaki."

"Where was it?" queried the first judge.

"That is not to be told," replied my friend.

The magistrates conferred together in low murmurs. After a time one of them signed with his fan to the torturers. As the men advanced, Yoritomo folded his arms and faced them. Though I knew his hand was gripped on the revolver under the edge of his robe, there was no shade of change perceptible in his serene face. I folded my arms and reached in to grip my own revolver.

The magistrate nearest Midzuano Echizen-no-kami leaned towards him as though to catch some faintly whispered remark. The leading torturer reached out to grasp Yoritomo's shoulder. The magistrate raised his fan in a restraining gesture, and said authoritatively: "Let the point rest for the present. The prisoner has confessed to the first charge. Make note that, according to his own statement, he left the shores of Nippon. He was not driven to sea by storm, but boarded a ship of the *tojins* and sailed from Nippon of his own free will."

"Under the guidance of the gods and for the sake of the holy Mikado," added Yoritomo.

One of the judges murmured a protest, but the last speaker signed to the secretaries. "Write down the claim of the prisoner," he ordered. "Regarding the second charge, it is proved by the confession of the first. Yoritomo, son of Owari dono, left the shores of Nippon. He now stands before us. Therefore he has returned to Nippon. There remains the third charge." 211

"First, as to my return to Nippon," replied Yoritomo, "I make defence that, having learned much of the *tojin* peoples and their power, I come back, not in defiance of the edict, but as a loyal subject, to counsel the Shogunate against the mistakes of misinformation."

"Make note that the prisoner confesses his return to Nippon for the purpose of counselling the Shogunate with the forbidden knowledge of the barbarians," said the magistrate nearest Midzuano. He turned to Yoritomo and repeated: "There remains the third charge."

"The third charge is false," replied my friend. "Adamisu Woroto, my august *tojin* kinsman, is not a member of the evil sect."

"Your kinsman?"

"My kinsman," repeated Yoritomo, and he gave a terse account of Will Adams, his relations with the great Iyeyasu, and his descendants.

The magistrates listened with intense interest, but the recital, instead of softening them, seemed to quicken their suspicions. One of them signed to the torturers and commanded: "Bring the *fumie*." 212

Again I gripped my revolver, certain that the time had come. My first ball should rid the world of the corpse-eyed Chief Counsellor Midzuano; after that as many of the perjured judges as there might be time to remove from office before the need of putting a ball through my own brain—How could Yoritomo stand so serene!

One of the torturers hastened across the pit, and returned with a bronze plate, which he cast down on the stone flagging before my friend.

"Tread!" commanded a judge.

Yoritomo smiled, and struck the face of the plate with one of his clogs. A slight smile gleamed across the heavy face of Satsuma. Midzuano betrayed no sign either of relief or disappointment. The magistrates conferred. The one who had spoken at the beginning of the trial nodded to the secretaries. "Make full note that the prisoner denies the third charge and has trod upon the image. He may step aside."

As Yoritomo crossed to the far end of the pit, the judge signed to me with his fan to come forward. I advanced and stood facing the magistrates, with head high and arms folded. Little did they suspect that their fate was in my hands, not mine in theirs. Angered by the defiant stare of my blue eyes, the youngest judge commanded harshly: "Kneel down, white devil!" 213

"White lords do not kneel to the servants of a servant," I rejoined, recalling to mind that in theory if not in practice the Shogun is the servant of the Mikado.

The man recoiled before my angry gaze, fearful of my "demon" eyes, while the magistrate next to him cried out his indignation at my insolence. But an elder judge quieted his colleagues with a gesture, and addressed me with calm severity: "The barbarian speaks with intolerable insolence to the high retainer of the Shogun."

"Civility for civility; insolence for insolence," I rejoined. "He called me 'white devil'; you call me 'barbarian.' You are both foolish children, pitifully ignorant of the mighty civilization of the *tojin* peoples. I have come to Nippon with Yoritomo Sama—"

"Wait," he interrupted, "First let the charges against the prisoner be read."

A secretary raised the indictment to his forehead, and murmured: "Charges are made that the *tojin* companion of Yoritomo, son of Owari dono, is a member of the evil sect; that he has discharged a firearm within the proscribed limits about Yedo; and that he is a spy sent to Nippon by the barbarians."

"Regarding the first charge, I deny that I am a member of what you call the evil sect," I stated. 214

One of the judges pointed to the floor beside me, with a laconic command: "Tread!"

I looked down at the bronze plate upon which Yoritomo had trod so readily. On its smooth surface was incised a Latin cross. I faced my judges again, prepared for the worst. I was not a Roman Catholic,—nor for that matter a member of any Christian denomination,—but I did not propose to spurn that symbol with my foot.

"Denial of the charge has been made," I said. "The word of a *tojin daimio* is sufficient. I will not submit to a foolish ceremony."

"Make note, the prisoner denies the first charge, yet refuses to tread upon the image," called the youngest magistrate, without attempting to hide his exultance. "Bring forward the witness to the second charge.—Stand aside, barbarian!"

As I crossed to Yoritomo, one of the guards drew away a screen at the edge of the pit, and exposed to view a clumsy wooden cage. A second guard opened the cage. From within crept a half-naked man. The guards caught him on either side and guided his tottering steps across to the torturers' post. Though his face was marked with the effects of atrocious suffering, I knew him at a glance. He was Yuki, the captain of the *hatamoto* cortege, now beggared and degraded by a perverse judgment. The freshly healed gashes on his chest and shoulders confirmed his identity. 215

"Has Yuki the *ronin* thought better of his obduracy?" demanded the eldest judge. "If so, let him look upon his fellow-culprits, and speak the full truth."

Yuki gazed at us for several moments without betraying a sign of recognition.

"The truth has been spoken," he said, facing the judges. "When the cortege in my charge was attacked by the *ronins*, two swordsmen in monks' robes slew many of the evil band and put the survivors to shameful flight. There is no more to be said by me."

Instantly two of the torturers seized the heroic victim and began lashing him to the post. The sight was more than I could endure. I sprang forward, and cried out to the merciless judges: "Hold! Question me first! If your wish is to prove the second charge against me, I admit that I used a firearm—"

"The prisoner confesses to the second charge," commented the eldest judge.

"In defence of your Shogun's daughter," I added. "Write that also."

"Do not write," commanded the judge.

"I call upon the Daimio of Satsuma to bear witness," I cried. "The crime charged was committed in defence of the Shogun's daughter against the attack of evil traitors, yet the Shogun's magistrates refuse to make note of the truth." 216

"Let the claim of the prisoner be noted," ordered the judge.

I turned eagerly to the loyal martyr at the post. "Speak, Yuki!" I urged. "The truth is now known. Your testimony will work no further harm."

"There is no more to be said by me," he replied. "I saw no crime committed by the defenders of the Shogun's daughter."

The deep voice of Satsuma-no-kami brought all heads towards him: "Permission is requested of the august magistrates to ask a question."

"The august *daimio* is entreated to speak," murmured one of the judges.

"Condescend to state the charge against the *ronin* Yuki."

"The obdurate witness has refused to testify regarding the second charge against the accused *tojin*."

"The charge has now been admitted. The testimony is no longer required," remarked Satsuma.

The judges conferred. If any wished to carry on the martyrdom of their victim to the bitter end, their lust for cruelty gave way before the general eagerness to curry favor with the most powerful of all *daimios*. The eldest judge bowed to him, and responded obsequiously: "Wisdom flows from the lips of Satsuma-no-kami! The testimony of Yuki the *ronin* is no longer required. He is free to go." 217

The *daimio* drew out his sheathed dirk, and handing it to an attendant, spoke with deliberate distinctness: "Present this gift to Yuki, the brave and loyal *ronin*, from one who values heroic conduct. Ask him to await me in company with my retinue."

The torturers had already loosened their cords. When the attendant delivered the dirk and message, Yuki faced the *daimio*, and holding the gift above his head, kowtowed until his forehead touched the bloodstained stones. He rose and staggered across the pit to the steps, where attendants hastened forward to support and conduct out into the open the man favored by the great *daimio*. Even the magistrates followed the departure of their tortured victim with envious glances.

Only Midzuano the Chief Counsellor had not been diverted by this touching incident, and at a whisper from him, the nearest magistrate called to me sharply: "The *tojin* prisoner has yet to answer the third charge."

I stepped back before the centre of the platform, and replied: "Instead of coming to Nippon as a spy, I accompanied Yoritomo Sama my friend for the purpose of warning his country to prepare for the appearance of my country's fleet." 218

"Is, then, the *tojin* disloyal to his country, that he asserts friendship for Nippon?"

"The warships of my country come upon a peaceful mission. In loyalty to my country and no less in friendship to Nippon, I have come before the fleet with Yoritomo Sama, to counsel acceptance of the honorable friendship offered to the ruler of Dai Nippon by the exalted ruler of America."

"Intercourse is forbidden. The American envoy will find the ports of Nippon closed against him."

"The envoy of my country comes half around the world, with a stately escort of warships worthy his rank and his mission. He comes in peace, with offers of friendship, but he is no low tradesman, to be turned from your ports without a hearing. Of this I have come to warn Nippon. The American admiral will exact a respectful hearing."

"Does the *tojin* threaten? Nagasaki is far from Yedo. Even should the black ships venture into Yedo Bay, none but the smallest craft can come within a great distance of the Shogun's city. Can the cannon of the black ships shoot so far?"

The jeer goaded me beyond discretion. I rejoined: "There are cities on the shores of Nippon unguarded by shoals. Can the Shogunate defend them? If not, what of the prestige of the Shogunate in the eyes of those who conspire to overthrow the rule of the Tokugawas?" 219

Even Midzuano Echizen-no-kami betrayed his astonishment at so audacious a rejoinder. Perhaps he was stung by the consciousness of guilt, or rather, by the fear of exposure. He leaned across and whispered to the nearest magistrate. The latter made a signal with his fan, and commanded: "Enough. There is no need of enforced examination. The prisoners have made sufficient confession. They are remanded into the charge of Shimadzu Satsuma-no-kami, to be brought before the High Court to-morrow for sentence."

"For sentence!" I cried, too indignant and angry to feel thankful for our escape from all attempts at torture.

Yoritomo clattered across the pit pavement, and led me to the foot of the steps. Satsuma and the swordbearers had risen. We shook off our clogs, and mounted the steps, to follow the Daimio out of that chamber of judicial torment.

CHAPTER XVIII—THE SHADOW OF DEATH

When we came out into the portico Satsuma girded on his own sword and, in the face of the *hatamoto* officials, ordered our swords and dirks to be returned to us. We were in his charge and not yet under sentence. Next he called Yuki, the *ronin*, before him, and ascertained that the injuries suffered by the brave man from the torture, though fortunately not of a permanent character, disabled him from walking any distance. The Daimio demanded the use of a *kago* from the *hatamotos*, and ordered that the injured man should be carried before us. With the *kago*, the *hatamotos* fetched the sword and dirk which had been taken from Yuki upon his imprisonment.

Yoritomo and I now entered our *norimons*, across which the symbolic nets were again flung, and the procession marched slowly out on its way to the nearest Satsuma *yashiki*. I surmised that the court and the Council of Elders had thought to flatter the Daimio by entrusting him with the charge of the heir and the guest of the Prince of Owari. If so, they had proved their ignorance of his warm friendship for Yoritomo, and must have been both puzzled and chagrined at his courteous bearing towards the self-confessed breakers of the law. 221

On the other hand, I jumped to the rash conclusion that the great Daimio would interpose himself between us and our enemies, and, if necessary, even defy the court. When we entered one of the lesser Satsuma *yashikis*, within the official quarter, our gaoler-host could not have welcomed us beneath his roof with greater state and warmer hospitality had we been visiting *daimios*. Yoritomo, still in mourning, could not be present at entertainments. But I was free to witness the clumsy contests of the Daimio's huge and bloated wrestlers, with which he sought to amuse me while his cooks prepared a feast in my honor.

After a formal banquet graced by the exquisite dancing of *geishas*, I was shown to the apartment assigned to our use, much exhilarated by the merriment of the girls and the many thimblefuls of hot *sake* that they had served me. Though the hour was close upon midnight, I found my friend kneeling beside his silken bedquilts, with his palms clasped in prayerful meditation.

"*Mon Dieu!* what a long face!" I laughed. "Get up and dance a hornpipe with me, Tomo-bomo! Jig till the lamps tumble! In the words of Perry's great brother, 'We have met the enemy, and they are ours!'" 222

"You do not understand, brother," he replied, in a tone that brought my dancing feet to a sudden stand. "It would appear that we have escaped torture in our examination. You forget the many tortures inflicted with the death penalty."

"Death penalty!" I cried, clutching the revolver through the folds of my robe.

"There is only one certain way of escape open—a ball for you; for me *hara-kiri*," he murmured.

I stared in bewilderment. "Now? But Satsuma is your friend. He will stand between—"

"He cannot save us. Even he dare not venture to oppose the Shogunate in such a matter."

"But—"

"Our only chance for life is that the Shogun will take action. The sentence of the court must be confirmed by the seal of the Council of Elders."

"Midzuano has that ready, up his sleeve," I interrupted, with forced flippancy. "So we are to forestall him by the personal application of ball and blade?"

"Not now, brother,—not until the last extremity. The Shogun may interpose even after we have been led out to the execution ground."

"But they will search and bind us—we will be unable to avoid the torture and shame!" I exclaimed. 223

"I must risk all, for the chance of sealing my memorial with my blood. For you there is the hope of dying in company with your Princess."

"Of living and wedding her!" I cried. "Yet the risk of waiting till the last!—They will surely search and bind us!"

"Wait," he replied, and he sat for some moments in profound thought. At the end he clapped his hands, and called to the attendant who appeared: "The presence of Yuki the *ronin* is desired."

I seated myself beside my friend, and waited with such patience as I could command. Yoritomo returned to his prayers. Presently a screen slipped open, and Yuki entered, dressed in new silk garments and already somewhat restored to strength by the food and skilful treatment. Though just roused from the midst of sleep, he came to us smiling, and kowtowed with courtly politeness.

"Ten thousand felicitous years to Yoritomo Sama and to the *tojin* lord!" he murmured. "Humble thanks are offered to the courageous swordsmen who saved from shame the daughter of Minamoto Iyeyoshi my lord!"

"The heart of the brave *samurai* is loyal even in disgrace!" commended Yoritomo. "Has Satsuma-no-kami yet offered to receive the *ronin* among his retainers?"

"Offer has not been made, my lord." 224

"Your parents survive? You have an heir?"

Yuki bowed to each question. Yoritomo nodded and continued: "Blessed is the *samurai* who can give his life to lift his parents from beggary to honored affluence; whose heir has full cause to stand before the mortuary tablet of his father with grateful reverence! Offer is made to receive the family of Yuki the *ronin* into the service of Owari."

Yuki kowtowed. "The condescension of my lord is above the acknowledgment of empty words. Command the *ronin* to return into the hands of the torturers! His gratitude may not be expressed by the sacrifice of mere life."

"Service, not martyrdom, is required," replied Yoritomo. He drew the revolver from his bosom and handed it to the *ronin*. "Bear this in hiding with the dirk of Satsuma. To-morrow, when we come from the court, be at hand. If we are led out to execution, follow. Whatever the strength of the executioner's guard, your part is to strike when I call to you; to cut our bonds, and hold back the *hatamotos* while we make use of dirk and pistol."

"There will be no mistake. Loyal service is the joy of a *samurai*," responded Yuki.

Yoritomo crossed over to a small writing table, wrote swiftly, and marked the paper with his seal. He returned and handed the writing to the *ronin*. "At sunrise go with your family to the Superior Yashiki of Owari, and present this to my august father." 225

Yuki raised the writing to his forehead, kowtowed, and withdrew.

"What a man!" I exclaimed, in English. "Still suffering from the hellish work of the torturers, yet willing to rush to certain death at a word!"

"Filial piety is the supreme virtue," replied Yoritomo. "He will serve his parents, and assure the survival of his family."

"But why not reward him for what he has already done? He has suffered enough. Why not instead call upon one or more of your own *samurais*?"

"Their deed would be attributed to my father, and he will have enough to withstand as it is. Upon him alone will rest the burden of barring the return of Mito to power."

"Upon him! and he disheartened by the death of your brother and yourself! You see no hope for us, Tomo?"

"Not disheartened, but strengthened by the desire for vengeance. Come, we must rest."

"Rest?" I exclaimed. "When to-morrow brings us death, if not torture! I had trusted to the power and friendship of our host. But now—"

"You have sacrificed yourself for the good of an alien people, brother." 226

"Not altogether alien, Tomo. I have found myself strangely drawn to your people and customs—only this torture—But I suppose that has its place in testing men's souls. Look at this heroic Yuki! If by any chance we escape, Tomo, I want that man for my retainer!"

"If we escape—*Namu Amida Butsu!*" murmured my friend, and slipping off his outer robe, he crept under the silken coverlet of the bed.

"*Namu Amida—*" he repeated, and fell asleep in the midst of the prayer.

Between his tranquillizing example and the soporific after-effect of the *sake* I had drunk, I was soon as sound asleep as Yoritomo, and enjoyed a profound and refreshing slumber until late the following morning.

An hour before noon we were roused and waited upon by polite attendants. Having been bathed, dressed, and served with food, all with a marked observance of ceremonial leisure, we were ushered out to our waiting *norimons*. In the portico our host greeted us with utmost gravity, and stated that every effort of Yoritomo's father to reach the Shogun by message or in person had been blocked by Midzuano.

My friend smiled. "It would seem, Nariakira, that I am to go a little sooner than I had expected. Do not grieve for me. You know that I had already given my life for the cause before I came to you in your daimiate. Consider only what effort can be made to save my noble *tojin* brother." 227

"There is always hope until the sword falls," said the Daimio. "You may yet be saved together."

"I am doomed," replied Yoritomo. "They will execute me, if only as the son of my father,—as the heir of Owari. But Woroto is a stranger to the opposing clans. They should be satisfied to send him to Nagasaki for the Dutch ship to bear away, as it has borne many of the American sailors."

"Not so fast, Tomo!" I put in. "For one thing, I shipped with you for the cruise. I'm not going to desert now because we're on a lee shore. For another thing, the Mito party is not going to forgive my share in defeating Keiki's plot."

"If any way of escape could be found," said the Daimio, "Woroto Sama would be cordially welcomed at the Castle of Kagoshima. I would rejoice to receive and honor as a teacher of my *samurais* a *tojin* lord of such prowess and learning."

"My grateful thanks to the Daimio of Satsuma! But I have cast in my lot with my friend and brother Yoritomo Sama."

"The answer of a true *samurai!*" commended the Daimio.

Yoritomo flashed me a swift glance of affectionate acknowledgment, and turned to enter his *norimon*. A few minutes later we were being borne again through the official quarter as netted prisoners in the stately cortege of our host. 228

Near the *yashiki* of the court I caught sight of a *samurai* crouched in the shadow of the wall. He wore a deep-brimmed hat and was writing a poem on a long scroll. Though he did not look up, I knew that Yuki the *ronin* was at hand to perform his part.

We entered the *yashiki* and, having handed over our swords and dirks, were at once conducted before the magistrate. To my surprise and relief, the court was convened in an audience chamber, not in the horrible trial room. As before, Midzuano Echizen-no-kami, the Chief of the Council of Elders, sat at the left of the magistrates. Satsuma was ushered to a place of equal honor.

My relief was short-lived. I caught the dull cold stare of Midzuano. Guards with man-catching hooks and forks closed in behind us. We were led to the sill of the raised floor upon which sat the judges and *daimios*.

"Kneel down! Kowtow!" commanded one of the secretaries.

"To the servants of the Shogun, the servant of the Mikado!" called Yoritomo, kneeling and bowing his forehead to the floor.

I knelt, but sat erect on my heels, a still greater insult to the Shogunate than my friend's naming of the Shogun as the servant of the Mikado. There was an angry murmuring among the judges. But Midzuano sat unmoved and whispered quietly to his servile mouthpiece. He was far more desirous of our destruction than our disgrace, and Satsuma had shown sympathy for us. It was expedient to regard the feelings of the greatest of clan lords. 229

The magistrate beside Midzuano stilled the heated discussion of his colleagues, and addressed us: "The son of Owari dono has confirmed the evidence of his treason by his insolent reference to the great Tycoon. The white barbarian has proved his uncouth ignorance of etiquette. Let the sentences against the prisoners be read."

One of the secretaries lifted a scroll to his forehead, and read: "Yoritomo, son of Owari dono: Whereas, contrary to the explicit wording of the ancient edict, you voluntarily departed from the shores of Dai Nippon and returned, bearing the forbidden knowledge of the *tojin* peoples, the sentence of the Court is that, for this traitorous conduct, you shall be borne to Bell Grove in bonds, there to be bound to a cross and transfixed with spears, and after death your head shall be struck off and exposed on a pole."

In the midst of the hush that followed the reading, Yoritomo smiled, bowed, and called out in a clear voice: "The favor of the high magistrates will be remembered by Owari's heir." 230

The judges glanced furtively at Midzuano, plainly troubled by the menace beneath the suavely ironical words. The Chief Counsellor sat cold and unmoved. Another secretary raised a scroll to his forehead, and read:

"The *tojin* called Adamisu Woroto: Whereas, contrary to the explicit wording of the ancient edict, you, a *tojin*, entered the domain of the Sei-i-tai Shogun to spy upon Dai Nippon, and whereas you have confessed to discharging a firearm within the bounds of Yedo, each of which crimes is worthy of death, the sentence of the Court is that you shall be borne to Bell Grove in bonds, there to be boiled to death in oil—"

I heard no more of the hideous sentence. The sound of the reader's voice dwindled to a drone like the singing of insects. I swayed forward, dizzy and pallid. To be boiled alive!—I forgot Yuki, but I remembered the revolver in my bosom. A cold fury of despair seized upon me. I would end all, now while I had the chance first to send to hell that corpse-eyed Chief Counsellor.

My hand stole in between the folds of my robe. Not a moment too soon to stop me, I heard Yoritomo's piercing whisper: "Wait! Not now—not now!"

The magistrates were rising to leave the hall of audience. But Midzuano remained seated. I paused with my hand gripped on the butt of my revolver. They were minor officials,—mere tools in the hands of our enemies. The man who had dictated their actions still lingered. I could wait. 231

Midzuano drew from his sleeve a written scroll and a seal, and called for a brush and ink. One of the secretaries who had remained brought a tray of inks and brushes. Midzuano took up a brush, dipped it in a saucer of freshly ground ink, and unrolled the scroll.

Satsuma turned his powerful face squarely about to the Chief Counsellor. "Is Midzuano Echizen-no-kami in such haste to issue the warrant of the Council of Elders confirming the sentence against the prisoners?" he demanded.

"Too great zeal cannot be shown in ridding the land of spies and traitors," replied Midzuano, and he filled in a blank space in the warrant with swift strokes of his brush.

"A word of counsel to the Counsellor," interposed Yoritomo.

Two of the guards sprang before him. Midzuano waved them aside. He did not lack courage and courtesy. "The condemned men are free to speak," he said.

"Midzuano knows that two of the charges against the *tojin* prisoner are false," said Yoritomo. "Woroto Sama is not a spy, and no more a member of the evil sect than are the Dutch at Nagasaki, who have not been required to tread upon the cross for a long period. Regarding the third charge, the act confessed, though against the letter of the Shogun's law, was committed to save the Shogun's daughter from the shame of captivity. The warships of the prisoner's august ruler will soon appear off the coast of Nippon. Advice is given that the prisoner be honorably delivered over to the exalted commander of the American fleet!" 232

"Nagasaki is far from Yedo. The hairy barbarians will hear nothing regarding their countryman," replied Midzuano, and he signed the warrant.

"The counsellor is wise," I jeered. "He is well advised to stop the mouths of those who might tell of his share in the *ronin* plot against the Princess."

Midzuano looked down the room at me with his dead-alive stare for a full half-minute.

"A false move, brother," whispered Yoritomo. "Say no more!"

Midzuano picked up the seal. As he stamped it in the ink, the floor quivered as if before the precursor of an earthquake. An instant later the air resounded with the clangorous boom of a mighty bell. It was the alarm note of the great bell at the Temple of Zozoji. Midzuano paused with the seal suspended above our death warrant. 233

There was a scurry in the anteroom, and a voice cried shrilly: "The barbarians!—the barbarians have come! Woe to Nippon! The black ships enter Yedo Bay!"

Other bells were joining the clamor of their harsher notes to the sonorous thunder from Zozoji.

Without a trace of hesitancy or emotion, Midzuano brought the suspended seal down upon the warrant. The man was *samurai* bred. He straightened and beckoned to the captain of the *hatamoto* guard. Perry had come—and in the same hour, this cold-blooded Counsellor would drag us out to shameful execution! I began to draw

my revolver.

“Wait, brother! Not yet!” entreated Yoritomo, above the thunderous tocsin of the alarm bells.

The captain knelt to receive the warrant. I glanced about to assure myself that the guard was not approaching to seize us. Once in their grip, only Yuki would stand between me and a hideous death. The risk of his failure was too great. I could now be certain of myself and of Midzuano as well.

A *hatamoto* was approaching us from the rear. I half drew my revolver. A second glance showed me that the man was not one of the guard, but Gengo, the new court chamberlain. He walked arrogantly up the chamber to the place of highest honor, before the *tokonoma*, raised a scroll to his forehead, and kowtowed with his back to all in the room. Beams and floors were shaking and screens rattling in their slots with the boom of temple bells and the wild clang of firebells in every quarter of Yedo. The alarm was sweeping over the city like a tidal wave. Yet not a man about us stirred. Every eye was fixed upon the messenger of the Shogun. 234

Gengo rose, faced about, and displayed the great vermilion seal of his master upon the scroll. All in the room, from the humblest *samurai* among the attendants to the *daimios* of Satsuma and Echizen, kowtowed before the emblem. Gengo swelled with pride.

“Give heed to the command of His Highness the Tycoon!” he shouted above the booming of the bells, and he cried out the contents of the scroll: “All proceedings against Yoritomo, son of Owari dono, and Woroto Sama the *tojin*, are annulled. The prisoners are freed within the outermost boundaries of Yedo, upon the recognizance of Owari dono. Strict obedience is required. Minamoto Iyeyoshi.”

CHAPTER XIX—THE GARDEN OF AZAI

The draught was a bitter one for Midzuano Echizen-no kami. He thrust the death warrant into his bosom, bowed punctiliously to Gengo and Satsuma, and rose to depart, with the excuse that he must call a meeting of the Council of Elders to consider the threatened invasion of the barbarians. Gengo the chamberlain withdrew immediately afterwards, too puffed with importance to acknowledge the nod of Satsuma.

With the disappearance of the Shogun's messenger, the alarm and confusion outside the audience chamber seized upon the *hatamotos* about us. Giving way to the terror which drove in upon them with the din of the bells and wild cries from all parts of the *yashiki*, the guardsmen flung open the screens and rushed out in a panic of fear.

The Daimio rose with stately composure, and signed us to follow him. We went out, escorted only by our Satsuma swordbearers and the *hatamoto* official who, as bearer of the Daimio's sword, had been restrained by his duty from joining the flight of his fellow-retainers. 236

The harsh clang of the firebells had now ceased, and the boom of the temple bells reverberated at less frequent intervals, but the funereal solemnity of the tolling served only to intensify to highest pitch the panic effect of the first wild tocsin. To the terrified Japanese it was the knell of doom for Yedo. Excited *hatamotos* ran about at random through the rooms and corridors of the *yashiki*, their faces distorted with fury and despair, while from the women's quarters shrill voices pierced the frail walls of the palace with shrieks of terror. With fear run riot in the *yashiki* of the High Court, what must be the panic beyond the moats of the official quarter, among the million denizens of the lower city!

In the midst of the wild flurry a scowling *hatamoto* rushed at me, with furious imprecations. But as his blade flashed out Yoritomo flung me headlong away from the stroke, and my Satsuma swordbearer rushed to my defence. My assailant barely saved his head by a dexterous parry. Before he could strike in turn, the Daimio's swordbearer called out a sharp command. At the voice of his superior officer, the assassin leaped back and sheathed his sword. My defender looked to his lord.

Satsuma frowned at the *hatamoto*, and said sternly: "So great an insult cannot be endured even in the *yashiki* of the High Court." 237

"No!" I cried, springing up between the man and the blade that circled to cut him down. The Satsuma man checked his stroke in mid-air. "Sheathe your sword!" I commanded. "The *hatamoto* attacked me because of mistaken loyalty. Let the *samurais* of Nippon learn that my countrymen come in peace and friendship, not to kill or conquer."

The *hatamoto* dropped on his knees and kowtowed to me. But Satsuma shook his head doubtfully and signed to the swordbearers. "We will prepare against other efforts of mistaken loyalty."

The bearers handed over our swords, and we passed on out to the portico. The courtyard was crowded with shouting *hatamotos*. But the Satsuma men of our cortege stood as we had left them, too sternly intent upon their duty to give way to the general fear and flurry. At a word from the Daimio, the nets that had been used on the *norimons* of Yoritomo and myself were flung aside. We seated ourselves, and the procession left the *yashiki* with all its usual stateliness of parade, though at a quickened pace.

A few yards beyond the gateway Yuki was kneeling at the edge of the street-moat to watch us pass. I saw him lean forward and stare at our *norimons*, then relax and sit back on his heels. He had perceived from the strain upon our bearers that our *norimons* were occupied. Turning a corner some distance beyond, I looked back and saw the *ronin* walking after the rear of the procession, with a woman close behind him. 238

The streets of the official quarter swarmed with *hatamotos* and the *samurais* of various *daimios*, rushing about, afoot or mounted, some without aim or purpose, others racing with all possible speed and directness to fulfil the commands of their lords. In the midst of the turmoil a captain of the palace guard galloped up to the procession with an order for Satsuma to wait upon the Shogun. The Daimio immediately detached a number of his retainers to escort us to Owari Yashiki, and ordered the cortege back to the Sakaruda Gate, which had just been passed.

The sun was setting as we advanced again along the great causeway, skirting the well-remembered scarp of the citadel moat. This time, however, my attention was directed, not towards the moat and the mighty rampart on the far side, but to my left, whence sounded the wild din and turmoil of a city in panic.

We swung up a slope. From the crest, far away to the west-southwest, I caught sight of Fuji-yama's grand cone rising in purple majesty through the twilight, while to the southward the dark sky was streaked with upshooting red and blue meteors,—the signal rockets sent up from every headland along the bay shores. Not Yedo alone was panic-stricken. 239

In vain I strained my eyes to discern the glimmer of ship lights on the vast stretch of the gulf. But it was easy to imagine the majestic sight of the great steam frigates *Susquehanna* and *Mississippi* lying at anchor with their consorts, in the lower bay. I pictured the tiers of gunports triced open for action, and the grim guns lurking within, charged and shotted against treacherous attack. For a moment I felt a pang of longing, of home-sickness—but only for a moment. I had cast in my lot with Yoritomo.

A horseman dashed up the slope after us, and drew rein beside our party, with a loud command to halt. The Satsuma men came to a sudden stand. I peered out and saw that the rider was Gengo the court chamberlain. He caught sight of me between the parted curtains, and bowed low across the barbed mane of his horse.

"The presence of Woroto Sama is required at the palace," he called.

At a word from me, my bearers ranged up alongside the other *norimon*, until I was within arm's-length of my friend's out-peering face.

"You heard, Tomo," I said in English. "What does it mean?"

He fixed a keen gaze upon Gengo, and demanded: "Does the command include both Woroto Sama and myself?"

Gengo bowed low as he replied: "The honored heir of Owari is still in mourning. The presence of Woroto Sama is alone required."

"At once?"

"Woroto Sama should mount his led-horse."

"You bear a written order?"

"The matter is urgent. Time was lacking to write an order."

Yoritomo met my expectant look with an anxious frown. "It is hard to tell, brother," he answered me in English. "Had he brought a written command—Yet in all this wild alarm, even the castle must be in a turmoil. They may want your assurance that the Commodore comes in peace."

"Any risk to tell them that!" I cried, and I called to my escort: "Open! Fetch sandals and my led-horse!"

In the confusion of my quick scramble out of the *norimon* and into the high-peaked saddle, some one pressed a little square of paper into my hand. As I set my feet deep in the huge stirrups, I looked about and saw Yuki slipping out from among the Satsuma men. Gengo was wheeling around the other way. My fiery little stallion plunged free from his grooms, and to gain a better grip of the bridle I thrust Yuki's note into my bosom. A moment later and I was racing madly back along the causeway, with Gengo a length in the lead, yelling for all to clear the road. After me ran the Satsuma grooms who had charge of my horse. 241

Down the slope we tore at breakneck speed, through the midst of the swarming *samurais*. Nimbly as they leaped aside at Gengo's commands, we must inevitably have run over more than one, had the roadway been less broad or the distance greater. A scant minute brought us to the bridge of the Sakaruda Gate. A *daimio's* procession was coming down to the bridge from the east. Regardless of its standards, we cut in ahead and galloped across the bridge.

At the gateway Gengo leaped off and ran forward to speak with the gate warden. The latter entered into a dispute which, though soon settled by Gengo, gave my grooms time to come panting across the bridge after us. Gengo hastened back to me, and cried out with imperative urgency: "Woroto Sama cannot pass unless on foot, yet haste is required!"

I thought it no time for insistence upon dignity. Carried away by the possibility of persuading the Shogun to receive my countrymen with cordiality, I sprang off as the Satsuma men grasped my stallion's bridle.

"Lead on!" I cried. 242

He signed to the Satsuma men to return with the stallion. "To your *yashiki*. A *norimon* will be provided for the *tojin* lord," he explained, and as the grooms hastened away, he led his own horse forward to place him in the charge of a palace groom.

The thought flashed upon me that in the heat and excitement of the panic the sight of my *tojin* eyes might cause the blades of other assassins to leap from their scabbards, or at best cause serious delays in our advance. I squinted my eyes, and followed Gengo with my chin on my breast. Though the gate watch had been doubled, neither my height nor the whiteness of my forehead was noticed by the crowd of chattering *hatamotos* through which we forced our way under the great gateway, across the court, and below the inner gateway on the right.

As we issued into a broad plaza within, Gengo turned on his heel. For a moment I fancied I saw chagrin and bitter disappointment in his narrow eyes. But then his face shone with the blandest of smiles, and I told myself I had been deceived by the gathering twilight.

"Woroto Sama is wise to walk humbly," he whispered. "Let him continue so, and he will be conducted safely past all these."

I followed the gesture that took in the hundreds of palace retainers before us, and replied: "Lead on." 243

He turned again and walked swiftly along the edge of an inner moat of the citadel. I followed through the midst of the guards and other palace attendants, still unchallenged and unheeded. Presently Gengo led me across a bridge to a gateway whose guards seemed to have deserted their post. After pausing to peer about in an odd manner, my guide hurried me through the gateway with feverish haste. I found myself in one of the palace gardens. We advanced quickly along a narrow clean-swept path, between coppices tenanted only by birds, and our course was so full of irregular twists and turns that I soon lost our bearings.

After a few minutes we came to a small pagoda-roofed kiosk, or summer-house, in the midst of a grove of gnarled old cherry trees. It was the first building I had seen in the garden, though more than once I had heard voices, which led me to believe that we had passed other houses. Gengo stopped at the edge of the kiosk veranda, and kowtowed.

"Woroto Sama will be pleased to wait here," he said.

Before I could reply, he hurried on along the path. Within the toss of a biscuit, he turned a bend and disappeared. I seated myself on the edge of the veranda, and waited. About me was the peaceful hush of the woods with its twittering birds. The turmoil of the terrified city barely reached me over the treetops. But my mood jarred with this sylvan quietude. I was burning with impatience to reach the Shogun and protest the absurdity of the wild panic that had seized upon his people. 244

I sprang up and paced half way to the next turn and back again, observing with surprise that objects were still distinctly visible even in the shadow of the coppice. We had come so quickly from where I had parted with Yoritomo that a full quarter-hour of twilight yet remained. Gengo could not miss his way for lack of light. Again I paced towards the turn and back. As I rounded the kiosk I glanced down the path by which we had come. At the last bend stood an armored *hatamoto* with drawn sword.

My first thought was that the man must be a foreguard of the Shogun. I waved my hand to him. In the same instant he whirled up his sword, and called fiercely: "The *tojin!* the *tojin!*—At the kiosk! Upon him!"

"Kill the barbarian! kill! kill!" yelled voices behind him, and as the leader rushed towards me, other swordsmen charged around the bend after him, half a score or more in the first bunch.

Between revolver and sword I might possibly have checked and stood off that number, but still others yelled in the path behind them,—and there was utmost need to avoid a clash with the Shogun's retainers. I turned and ran up the path, hoping to overtake Gengo. The *hatamotos* redoubled their yells, and dashed after me. I twisted around the turn, and saw before me, less than a hundred yards away, a number of lancemen charging to cut off my retreat. 245

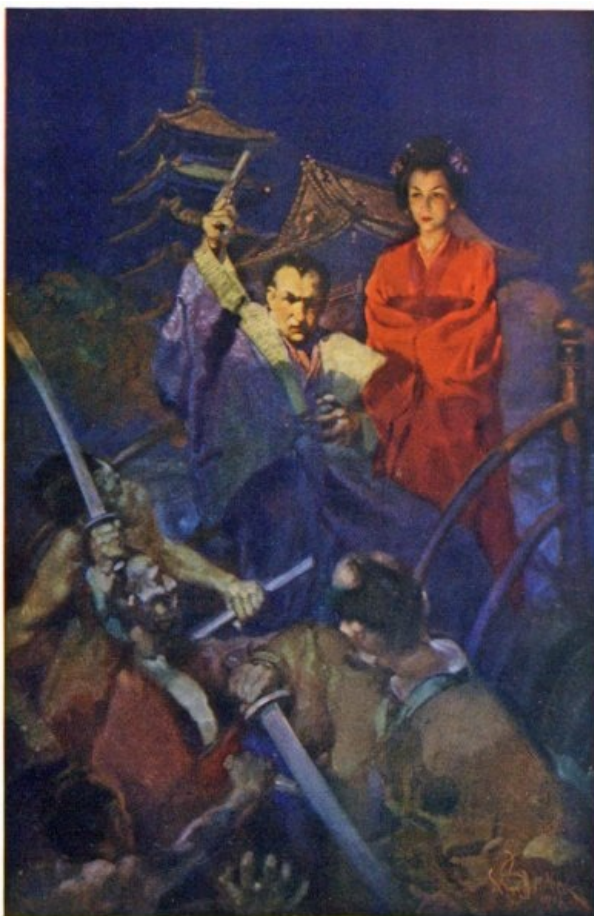
The silent stealth of this rear attack was more appalling than the open charge of the other party. Had these lancemen come a few seconds sooner I would have been taken by surprise and pierced by their long shafts without warning. Even as it was, I had no time for second thought. At the view-cry of the lancemen, I leaped the hedge of clipped privet on my right, and plunged straight into the coppice beyond.

Fortunately my sandals were bound on firmly, and the coppice, while dense enough to screen me after a dozen yards, was of willowy shrubs that did not catch my loose garments or bar my advance. A louder outburst of yells told me that the two parties of pursuers had met, and from the crashing that followed, I knew that they were beating through the coppice after me in quickly scattering formation. Had I doubled, they would have run me down in the first minute.

I kept straight on, trusting to the gathering gloom to hide the traces of my flight, and to the noise of the pursuit to drown the thud of my iron-shod sandals on the turf. Had the coppice continued I might have gained enough to slip around one of their flanks and make my way back by the path, out of the enclosure. 246

But within fifty yards I burst out of the thicket into an open garden that lay about a large lotus pond. Upon an island in the centre of the pond stood a kiosk, approached from the left end of the pond over a narrow high-arched bridge of bamboo. Beyond, towering high among the treetops, rose the white roof-crest of a large edifice. Beneath that crest there was a possibility that I might find a palace official able and willing to check my pursuers and conduct me to the Shogun.

Without a pause, I dashed across the garden, veering to pass around the left end of the pond. My pursuers were closer upon me than I had thought. The leaders, who had been running silently through the coppice, burst out almost on my heels. The exultant note of their view-cry sent me clumping down towards the shore of the pond at redoubled speed.



"IS THIS LOYAL SERVICE?" SHE ASKED

For a while I gained rapidly on the *hatamotos*, the mass of whom broke cover soon after their leaders. Their exultant cries changed to furious imprecations as they perceived that I was outrunning them. But as I plunged down to the pond bank, a little short of the bridge, I was dismayed to find that one of the thongs of my right sandal had burst. A few steps more would find the sandal loose. I could not stop to refasten it, nor was there time to slash the thongs of both sandals and run on in stockinged feet. 247

The high arch of the bridge caught my despairing glance. I swung around the shore-post and clattered up the sharp ascent to the round of the arch. The bridge was very narrow. They could approach me no more than two abreast. I would pick them off at the foot so long as my cartridges lasted and then do what I might with my sword to sell my life dearly.

As I gained the top of the bridge I saw a woman dart from the far end into the kiosk. But the foremost of my pursuers were already at the pond bank, and I whirled about, with drawn revolver, to face them. For all their fierce eagerness, the sight of the threatening muzzle brought them to a halt. They had heard of the defeat of the *ronins*. The leaders checked those who followed, and all gathered at the foot of the bridge, yelling imprecations at the *tojin*.

"Murderers," I shouted, "set foot on this bridge, and you die! Your master the Shogun sent for me. He waits for me now. Go, fetch Gengo the chamberlain."

"Liar!—Fetch bowmen instead!" cried one of the leaders of the mob. 248

"Bowmen and musketeers!" cried another.

"Down with the bridge!" yelled a third leader.

The response was instant. A dozen men caught up the cry and sprang into the pond to hack at the frail supports of the bridge with their swords. I sighted my revolver at the foremost. But before I could fire, several pointed up and cried to their fellows: "Hold! hold!"

A moment later all were kneeling, even those in the shallow water of the pond. Something brushed softly against my sleeve. I turned half about. Beside me stood the Princess Azai. Her hands were folded within the long sleeves of her scarlet *kimono*, and she was gazing down upon the mob as tranquilly as if contemplating the irises in the pool.

When she spoke her voice was barely audible above the labored breathing of the *hatamotos*. "Is this loyal service?" she asked. "Let explanation be made why you seek to murder the honored friend of your lord."

"The august lady errs," ventured one of the leaders. "We seek to rid the august lady's garden from a defiling beast,—that *tojin* devil!"

"Is it error to speak highly of the august lord who saved your master's daughter from the shame of *ronin* capture? The presence of Woroto Sama honors the garden."

"The black ships of the barbarians glide up the bay against wind and tide, propelled by evil magic!" cried another *hatamoto*. "In the morning they will destroy all Yedo with their cannon. This *tojin* is their spy, august lady. Give him to us!" 249

"That is a double lie," I rejoined, "a lie born of cowardice. Every man among you knows that the black ships cannot approach near enough to Yedo to throw a cannon ball into the city."

"Spy!" hissed the mob. "The court found you guilty!"

"And the Shogun annulled the sentence! Find Gengo, and learn the truth."

"There is no need, my lord," said Azai, and she bowed low to the kneeling *hatamotos*. "Permission is given to withdraw."

The men upon the bank kowtowed. Those in the water waded ashore. All set off across the garden, without so much as a murmur.

CHAPTER XX—LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS

The Princess turned slowly about to face me, with no change in the quiet composure of her bearing. But as her soft eyes met mine their long lashes drooped and the delicate rose tint of her cheeks deepened to scarlet. She sank to her knees and bowed with exquisite grace.

"The august lord is implored to pardon the rudeness of the *hatamotos!*" she murmured.

"The *tojin* implores pardon for intruding upon the privacy of the august lady!" I replied.

She bent forward. "The thong of my lord's sandal is loose. Permit me to fasten it."

I stepped back hastily and knelt on one knee to tie the thong myself.

"The request cannot be granted," I said. "In my land it is etiquette for lords to fasten the sandals of ladies; not the reverse."

"How contrary to all reason and propriety!" she exclaimed, and she gazed up at me with a look of timid wonderment.

I rose and offered her my hand, momentarily forgetful of etiquette. She sprang up, with a repellent gesture and a sharp little cry: "No! Setsu!" 251

"He sought to touch my august lady!" hissed a voice behind me.

I wheeled and confronted the younger of Azai's *samurai* women, standing very near me, with her hand on the hilt of her dirk. I looked steadily into her angry eyes, and smiled at her through the gloom.

"O Setsu San will believe that no rudeness was intended by the ignorant *tojin*" I said. "In his land courtesy requires a lord to offer his hand and assist a lady to rise."

O Setsu San bowed to hide her amazement, and murmured to her mistress: "Grant permission for me to conduct the *tojin* lord from the enclosure. The presence of a stranger is not permissible."

"Gengo the chamberlain brought me into this garden and left me at the summer-house yonder," I explained, pointing towards the coppice. "My understanding was that he went to fetch the Shogun or some high official. Hardly had he gone when the *hatamotos* appeared and charged upon me without provocation."

"They are the guard from the nearest gate," said Azai. "Such rudeness may not be disregarded. Command will be sent them to commit *hara-kiri*."

"No!" I protested. "They erred through overzealous loyalty, misled, I suspect, by the same plotters who set the *ronins* upon your cortege." 252

"Keiki!" murmured O Setsu San, with subtle intuition.

"Keiki—and others. But I intrude upon the privacy of the Princess. Tell me which way I should go to leave the enclosure."

"Had Gengo orders to bring you into the presence of my august father?" inquired Azai.

"He stated that my presence was required at the palace. Was I wrong in believing that the Shogun had sent for me?"

Azai looked earnestly at her lady-in-waiting.

"Should Woroto Sama attempt to pass out alone, he would be slain!"

"Grant permission for me to lead him across into the palace," said O Setsu San.

"Would your presence serve to shield the august lord from the *hatamotos*?" replied the Princess. "I myself will conduct him."

"Impossible!" gasped Setsu, in open dismay. "Even for the daughter of the Shogun to have come between the angry *hatamotos* and the *tojin sama* is unbelievable!"

"O Setsu San will be so kind as to bring my clogs," murmured the Princess with gentle courtesy.

For the first time I noticed that the little silk-clad foot peeping from under the edge of her *kimono* was without clog or sandal. When Setsu ran in to tell of the chase of the *tojin*, her mistress had darted out and up the bridge to my rescue without stopping for footwear. 253

"Princess," I said, "O Setsu San is right. I cannot accept the offer."

"My lord will not refuse me the favor," she murmured, with a smile irresistibly sweet and naive. "The kind O Setsu San hastens to fetch my clogs."

Perceiving the inflexible will beneath the soft accents of her mistress, the *samurai* lady turned to patter down the bridge. I was alone with the Princess,—probably the first man to be alone with an unwedded daughter of the Shogun for more than two centuries! I dropped on one knee to look into her modestly lowered eyes. Through the gathering darkness I saw a deep blush mantle her pale cheeks as with girlish bashfulness she raised one of her sleeves to hide her face.

"Azai!" I murmured. "Is the *tojin* so frightful an object to you?"

She dropped her sleeve and gazed at me wide-eyed, in instant forgetfulness of self. "Pardon the rudeness!" she exclaimed. "The august lord should not humble himself by kneeling to a girl!"

"Azai, forgive me for the great rudeness, but in my country men love and honor pure maidens as they love and honor their mothers, and it is the custom to speak of that love even before marriage. Little Princess, I have been told that your august father and the Prince of Owari arranged for you to wed my friend Yoritomo Sama. But my friend has vowed to become a monk at Zozoji, and he has told me that my soul shone in your eyes. Azai, 254

I love you with a love higher and deeper than any man of Nippon bears towards his wife and mother!"

She knelt and bowed low to me. "My lord," she whispered, "it is unbelievable that so great a love could be given a mere girl!"

"Your soul is in my eyes, Azai! Say that you love me!"

"My lord, I should rejoice to be accepted as the humblest serving-maid in all your *yashikis*!"

"You love me!" I cried, and drawing her up by one of her tiny plump hands, I bent close. "In my land, august lady, it is required to seal the confession of love in this manner."

At the touch of my lips to her rosebud mouth she drew back with a startled sob. But I resisted her gentle efforts to withdraw her hand.

"Do you not trust me, Azai?" I asked, bending to watch her downcast face in the dim light.

"Shame has overcome me!" she sobbed. "Nowhere is it written that man and woman should hold one another's hands or touch lips together."

"If that is hateful to the Princess—"

"Not hateful! but blissful—blissful beyond words. That is the shame. I do what is very, very wrong, yet am glad. I am a most wicked and depraved girl! Shame overcomes me!" 255

"Forgive me, Azai! Through my selfish fault I have brought grief upon the maiden whom I love more than life. I will go now, and never trouble you again."

I freed her hand and rose, but in the same instant she was erect before me, her little hands clutching the bosom of my robes.

"Thou! thou!" she whispered. "Do not go in anger, else I shall die!"

I crushed her to me and rained kisses upon her upturned face, in a passion of adoration. For a few brief moments of ecstasy I held her, and she made no attempt to free herself, but lay upon my breast like a captive dove, quivering and bewildered. Then, all too soon for my blissful intoxication, her cheeks paled from scarlet to ivory white and her fluttering little heart beat against mine with sudden steadiness.

"My lord," she said, "there is no time to be lost. Setsu comes with a lantern. We must act at once. Here below the centre of the bridge the pond is deeper. We will leap in together and grasp the lotus roots at the bottom."

"Leap off?—grasp the lotus roots?" I repeated.

"My lord lover is of noble blood! A thousand pardons! But Setsu comes quickly. Make haste to strike me through the neck with your dirk. You will still have time to commit *hara-kiri*." 256

The word was a flash of clear light through the fog of my bewilderment.

"No!" I cried. "We will live, to be united in this life!"

"That cannot be, my lord!"

"I will win and wed you, in the teeth of all Nippon!"

"My lord, I—" Her whisper thrilled with quick alarm. "Free me—Setsu—she'll kill you!—disgrace—a girl's dirk!"

I released her, and turned to the upward hastening Setsu as the light of her paper lantern glowed upon us through the darkness.

"Pardon, august ones!" she called. "The charcoal had burnt out and the tinder was misplaced. I could come no sooner."

"You have done well to come so soon," murmured Azai.

O Setsu raised her lantern and peered at me under it as she bowed. Her utter devotion to the Princess could not be doubted. I felt a sudden impulse to risk all in her keeping.

"Does O Setsu San desire the death of her Princess?" I asked.

The girl grasped at her dirk, and cast a swift glance from me to Azai. "Does the *tojin sama* threaten?" she demanded. 257

"Only you do that," I replied. "Strike me, and your dirk will pierce through my heart to hers."

The girl stepped nearer to her mistress and stared at her dismayed.

"The truth is now known to you," whispered Azai. "We love."

Again Setsu grasped her dirk. "Only an evil *tojin* would dare speak of such a matter to the Shogun's daughter!"

Death was nearer to me than when the *hatamoto* struck at me in the *yashiki* of the High Court.

"Through my heart, to her heart!" I repeated.

The girl glanced doubtfully to Azai. I forced a smile. "The Princess has proposed that she and I should unite ourselves by passing through the gate of death. I have answered that I will wed her in this life."

"The *tojin* is unwilling to give proof as to the trueness of his love," she jeered.

To this there was only one answer that could convince her. I knelt and placed the point of my dirk to my heart.

"The *tojin* belief is that sincerity comes from the heart," I said. "Say the word, and I will prove my love □

without asking the maiden to sacrifice herself to join me. I trust her soul to find mine when the time comes for her to leave this life." 258

There was no pretence in my words. I had lived too close to Yoritomo to escape the influence of his Buddhist philosophy and his *samurai* contempt for death. My love for my little Madonna Princess was greater than my love of life, and I knew that only a love equal to my own could have enabled her to overcome the extreme modesty and reserve of her breeding. I believed that death would unite us in the next life, if not in many future lives; while, if Setsu opposed me, I could not hope to win my darling in this life.

"Say the word, girl!" I repeated.

"Wait! wait, my lord!" cried Azai, and she knelt beside me. "First free me, that I may go with you."

"You will follow when your time comes," I said. "A *tojin* may kill the woman he loves only to save her from a fate worse than death."

"Life without you, my lord!—what harsher fate?"

A steel blade flashed in her upraising hand. I caught her wrist, as she drew back and stabbed the point at her throat.

"Take her away, Setsu!" I begged. "She must live and be happy. She is very young."

"The men of Nippon do not love as my lord loves!" murmured the *samurai* girl. "We will go before with the light. Let him follow at a little distance. The darkness deepens. He will not be seen until we come to the gate." 259

Azai rose and slipped on the tiny high clogs of gold lacquer that were held for her by the kneeling girl. She bowed to me from the miniature height with entrancing grace.

"I beg my lord to rise and sheathe his dirk until it is needed. We now go to my father."

She turned and pattered quickly down the bridge to the pond bank, while Setsu, following half a step behind, held the lantern in such a manner as to shed no light to the rear. I slipped my dirk into its sheath and descended after them, my thoughts in a whirl of conflicting emotions.

From the edge of the pond the little Princess led the way through a shrubbery, along a winding path, towards the edifice I had seen in my flight before the *hatamotos*. We soon came in sight of the lanterns strung along the deep verandas of the building. But Azai turned off to the right, and tripped away down a side path that skirted around her palace.

A short walk brought us into a broad avenue that ran up to a high bridge across one of the inner moats of the citadel. Setsu hastened on towards the gateway of the bridge. Azai paused for me to overtake her. In the garden path there had been no one to meet or pass; now, however, there rose the question of facing the guard at the gate. When I came up close beside the Princess I perceived the outline of her little hands before her bosom, clasped palm to palm in prayer. 260

"We stop here, my lord," she whispered. "Setsu goes ahead to see who is on guard."

"Azai," I replied, "for you to appear with me is too great a sacrifice of your dignity. Press your lips to mine, and say farewell. I will go on alone."

She caught at my sleeve. "Wait, my lord! I will go with you. There is only this little time left us. When my father learns, I fear he will forbid me even to dream of you. They have told me that I shall be required to wed Keiki if Midzuano's counsel prevails."

"You would not wed the man who set the *ronins* upon you!"

"A good daughter should obey with docility when her father chooses her husband. Yet I have never before heard of a lady meeting a lord and loving before marriage, as I love my lord!"

"Little maiden!" I exclaimed, "you again confess that you love me! How can you speak of wedding another?"

"My lord wonders? Yet he knows that the supreme duty of a woman is willing obedience,—first to her father, then to her husband, and last of all to her eldest son. I know that my august father holds me in higher regard than is deserved by so worthless and contemptible a creature as a young girl, and because of his gracious condescension I owe him the utmost of gratitude and obedience." 261

"You will wed Keiki if your father commands?" I asked.

Her voice quavered. "I pray to Kwannon to aid me! If so great a trial comes upon me, I fear I must fail in the one great virtue; I must oppose the will of my father!"

"You will refuse Keiki, and wait for me, Azai?"

"I will wait for you in the life beyond—"

"Not that!" I exclaimed in dismay, "not that, Azai! Wait for me here, in this life!"

"I will try, my lord. Look! Setsu waves her lantern. We can pass in safety. But first—if my lord desires to press his lips upon mine, I—I will not seek to escape."

Half a minute later she sought to release my embrace with her gentle fingers.

"My lord," she whispered tremulously, "I never knew that it was so delightful to love! It is very wicked to speak so foolishly, yet I wish that I might stand forever with my lord as we stand now. But Setsu turns back. We must go."

Setsu met us midway, but turned again the moment the glow of her lantern fell upon her advancing mistress. Azai joined her, while I fell back into the darkness. When the maidens came within the narrow circle of light shed by the gateway lanterns, Setsu signed me to stop. They went on a few steps, and entered the gate lodge. After a short wait, Setsu reappeared and beckoned to me.

As I advanced she stepped back through an opening in the wooden night shutters of the veranda. I hastened forward, but paused at the edge of the veranda, hesitating whether I should loosen my sandals. Across from me the shadows of a man and a woman were silhouetted on the white paper of the wall screens by the lamplight. The shadow of the woman bowed and glided off to the right.

The man's shadow moved a little to the left, and the screen on which it was cast slid aside. Before me stood a white-bearded *hatamoto* in helmet and cuirass. Half unconscious of the act, I put my hand on my swordhilt. The *hatamoto* kowtowed.

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"Command has been given that my lord is to be conducted into the presence of the Shogun," he murmured.

I signed him to rise. He slipped back into the lodge, and came out again to kneel and offer me a deep-brimmed hat of plaited rattan. I set it on my head, while he stepped into a pair of clogs and turned to lead me out through the gateway. I looked for a last vision of my little Princess, but she failed to reappear, and I had sufficient discretion to refrain from asking questions.

We advanced under the gate roof, our presence loudly announced by the scuffle of my sandals and the clang of my escort's iron-shod clogs on the stone flagging. A number of helmeted guards started out at us from either side. But they fell back on the instant, and their ready salutes told me that my companion was the captain of the gate. Without a pause, we passed on through and out across the high bridge that spanned the moat. From the centre of the arch I could look over at the lantern-hung verandas of the palace.

At the far side of the bridge we came to a second gateway, the heavy doors of which were closed and barred. My escort spoke to one of the guards who peered out at us from the projecting porter's window, and after a short delay a small side wicket was unbarred for us. We crept through, and passed between two groups of silent guards, and up a short avenue of cryptomerias to the nearest wing of the palace.

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After leaving the gate we met no one until we had reached the palace veranda and removed our footwear to enter. As we crossed the polished planks one of the screens of the unlighted room within slid open before an out-hurrying official. At sight of me the man halted abruptly where the glow of the porch lanterns shone full upon his face. It was Gengo the chamberlain. Never had I seen a man more startled. He stood with jaw dropped and eyes distended, glaring as if I were a ghost or demon.

Politely ignoring the strange conduct of his superior officer, the gate captain saluted and smilingly stated his errand: "Command has been given that my lord is to be conducted into the presence of the Shogun."

Gengo sank down and kowtowed at my feet. "Pardon is implored for the inexcusable carelessness of my lord's humble servant!" he mumbled. "It was necessary to leave my lord alone in the garden. I returned with utmost haste, but my lord had vanished, and I could not find him. I was returning even now to make search. The Shogun has summoned my lord."

He rose and bowed me to follow him. I signed to the old gate captain, who appeared to consider the final words of the chamberlain as a dismissal.

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"Come with me to the threshold of the audience chamber," I said.

Gengo nodded to the guardsman and smiled blandly. "The commands of my lord are the pleasure of his servants," he murmured.

The readiness of his assent lessened my suspicion of the fellow. But as we entered the dark interior I took the precaution of keeping near the captain. I could not tell for certain whether the chamberlain had knowingly led me into an ambush in the garden. Yet if innocent, why had he been so startled at my appearance? At first thought his terror seemed an unmistakable confession of guilt. Then I remembered his fear in the presence of the Shogun, and coupled it with his present haste and his no less feverish eagerness in fetching me to the citadel. Was it not probable that he had blundered his orders in the confusion of the panic, and now feared that I would make complaint?

One thing alone was certain: This time he was intent on avoiding all mistakes, voluntary or involuntary. Straight as the lay of the rooms and corridors would permit, he led the way through the wing of the palace, and around the end of an inner garden court. A few steps more and we came into a dimly lighted anteroom, where guards and chamberlains crouched in waiting, flushed and bright-eyed with excitement, but silent as death. Beyond sounded a murmuring of low voices.

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Gengo pointed to my sword and dirk. I drew them from my girdle with their scabbards and handed them to the old gate captain. The chamberlain whispered to a fellow-official who was kneeling close beside the wall at the upper end of the room. The latter at once drew open one of the screens, and Gengo entered on hands and knees.

I stepped forward to follow him. The doorkeeper whispered a startled command for me to kneel. But rather than crawl into the presence of their ruler in the posture of a dog, I preferred that the Japanese should consider me ignorant or even insolent. To the horror of the doorkeeper, I strode into the audience chamber proudly erect.

The large room before me was flooded with the soft rays of many lamps and lanterns. In the centre of the apartment the Shogun sat upon a low dais, close before which, to right and left, were grouped the few persons in attendance. I saw the long aristocratic face of the Prince of Owari and Satsuma's heavy German visage on the left of the throne. Across from them knelt Midzuano the Chief Counsellor and three others, whose faces were

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turned from me. I gathered that the Shogun had called together an informal council of the leaders of both factions, in the hope of uniting them in the face of the supposed peril to all.

Unable to wait for the slow crawl of Gengo, I stepped past him up the room, and, heedless of Midzuano's imperative gesture to fall upon hands and knees, crossed swiftly over the intervening mats to the dais. As I knelt to kowtow, the man beside Midzuano turned, and I saw the beautiful vindictive face of young Keiki.

I rose and slipped aside towards Satsuma. Keiki and Midzuano were glancing up at the Shogun with eager expectancy beneath their court smiles. The outrageous conduct of the barbarian had laid him open to severe punishment. The two other men, who were unknown to me, regarded me in a neutral manner. I deepened my smile, and looked up into the gloomy face of Iyeyoshi.

"The *tojin* lord comes quickly in response to our summons," he said in a colorless tone, and he signed to Gengo to withdraw.

"Your Highness would have found me in attendance much sooner, had I not been led astray in the palace gardens," I replied, keeping a side glance on Midzuano and Keiki. The latter flushed with a momentary outflashing of chagrin; the Chief Counsellor stared at me with his dull unblinking gaze, and gave no sign. 268

"Led astray in the gardens?" questioned the Shogun.

"At sunset, Your Highness, on my way to Owari Yashiki from the High Court, Gengo overtook me, with word that my presence was required at the palace."

"At sunset?—Command was not sent until after the arrival of Owari dono."

"Your Highness," murmured Midzuano, "foreseeing the need for the presence of the *tojin*, command was sent by your humble counsellor. The *tojin* owes the credit of his quick appearance before Your Highness to the forethought of one whom he unjustly considers an enemy. I venture to speak because my sole desire is the safety and honor of the Shogunate. All friends of Nippon must forget past differences and unite in the face of the invading barbarians."

The man's adroitness astonished me. In a few words he had claimed credit for foresight, moderation, and patriotism, had accused me of cherishing undeserved enmity against him, and had diverted the attention of all to the burning question of the American expedition in such manner as to rouse suspicion against me and increase their fear and hatred of the supposed invaders. He need have had no apprehension that I would complain of the treacherous attack in the garden. Keiki's vindictive look had quickened my suspicions to moral certainty; but this was not the time to speak of a matter that involved Azai. 269

"Your Highness," I said, deepening my smile, "the wise Chief Counsellor has spoken well according to his limited information. He should not be blamed if, at such a time of panic and confusion, he permits inquietude to so disturb his sound judgment that he states what is not true. It is a false rumor that says the Americans have come to invade Nippon."

"False?" cried Keiki, "false?—when the black ships have entered Yedo Bay in defiance of the edict!"

"They come in peace. The Dutch told the Shogunate to expect the expedition."

"The Dutch did not say that the American ships would come to Yedo Bay," said the older of the two strange *daimios* who sat between me and Keiki.

"How should the Dutch know?" interposed Satsuma in a voice resonant with depth and power. "The Dutch are a little people. Can they foresee the actions of a great people? The Americans have shown boldness and wisdom in coming direct to Yedo Bay. Nagasaki is a long way from Nippon."

"Does the Daimio of Satsuma favor the mission of the barbarians?" demanded Keiki.

"I favor calmness and reasonable consideration of the purposes of the *tojin* visitors. I do not shriek for the destruction of envoys who, according to my friend Woroto Sama, come in peace and friendship." 270

"Is it friendly for them to force their way into the Bay of Yedo?" insisted Keiki.

"Nagasaki is a gate half open, but far away from the ear of His Highness," said Owari. "The *tojin* peoples know that the ancient laws forbid all communication whatever. If the Shogunate sets aside the edict of non-intercourse, it may as well set aside the edict forbidding the entrance of *tojin* ships into other ports than Nagasaki."

"The ancient laws are immutable. They may not be set aside," murmured Midzuano.

"Have I heard that the Council of Elders has punished those who study the Dutch learning or those who teach the history of Nippon?" demanded Satsuma. "Both are crimes forbidden under penalty of death. Yet a Prince of Mito caused the history to be printed."

"Let the *tojin* lord speak," interposed Iyeyoshi. "I have commanded your attendance before me to advise on the coming of the black ships.—Answer truthfully, *tojin*! Rumor says that the fleet of your people is greater than the fleet of Kublai Khan."

"Your Highness," I answered, "messengers will soon bring you the exact count of the ships in the fleet of the American envoy. Others may have joined those which I saw assembled in China, yet I can state with certainty that, all told, they will number less than ten. I place the count at five or six." 271

"Less than ten!" repeated Keiki. "Give command, Your Highness! The clans of Mito and Hitotsubashi will unaided board the black ships and destroy the hairy barbarians with our swords!"

The vaunt was too absurd for me to contain my amusement. I chuckled openly.

"The *tojin sama* mocks," protested the *daimio* beside me. "Has he not heard how the swordsmen of Nippon destroyed the vast fleet of Kublai Khan?"

"Abe Ise-no-kami speaks to the point," commented Midzuano. "Can Woroto Sama refute him?"

"Without aspersing in the slightest degree the prowess of Nippon's brave *samurai*," I answered, "it is well to give the gods credit for their share in the destruction of the Mongol fleet. I have heard that the larger number of the war junks were wrecked or foundered in a great typhoon."

"We will implore the gods to send another such typhoon," retorted Keiki.

"The warships of my people are not clumsy junks," I replied. "They drive into the teeth of the storm with no sails set upon their masts. I have myself twice outridden typhoons in the black ships." 272

"Grant leave, Your Highness, for Mito to destroy the insolent barbarians!" cried Keiki.

"If my countrymen might know beforehand that the Mito clan were seeking battle on their own quarrel and not as representing Nippon, Your Highness could do no better than to let them attack," I said. "The result would provide a valuable lesson for the other frogs in the well. My countrymen come in peace, desirous of honorable friendship with the people of Dai Nippon. But they are not swordless tradesmen."

"Nor are the barbarians *samurai* bred," retorted Keiki. "Only five years have passed since two American warships ventured to approach Yedo Bay. The report cannot be doubted that their great *tojin* lord was flung back into his boat by a common sailor of Nippon when he sought to come aboard the ship of the Japanese commander."

"The shame of that insult is upon Nippon," I said, keeping to my court smile, though my face burned with hot anger at the jibe. "The august ruler of America had given strict command that the people of Nippon should be shown utmost courtesy and friendliness. The American commander was urgently asked to come aboard the junk to receive the letter of His Highness. As a token of honor to His Highness, he came alongside the junk and was boarding the vessel when the outrage occurred. Believing that the insult was the act of the sailor alone, Commodore Biddle restrained his just resentment, and left the punishment of the sailor to the laws of Nippon. We have a saying that only savages and persons of low intellect mistake moderation for fear." 273

"Woroto speaks wisely," said the Shogun. "All have now spoken except Ii Kamon-no-kami. What has Naosuke to say?"

The *daimio* between Abe and Keiki bowed forward to respond. Though a man still under forty, the intellect and power in his smooth face was quite sufficient to explain to me the respectful attention with which all awaited his words.

"Your Highness," he said, "advice is humbly offered that too little is now known for final decision. The counsel of Owari dono and Satsuma to inquire the purpose of the American envoy is thought wise,—no less the counsel of Midzuano and Keiki to assemble a force of *samurai* and artillery against attack. The course of wisdom is for all parties to unite their strength under Your Highness."

"The time has come for all loyal subjects to join together, forgetful of past enmities," purred Midzuano. "It is the time to bind up old wounds and cover old scars. For the sake of common preservation, humble request is made that Owari dono join in petitioning for the freedom of one who would prove a tower of strength to Nippon,—the wise and brave Reikko Prince of Mito." 274

The Prince of Owari bowed, with a smile as suave as the subtle counsellor's. "It is certain that Midzuano has at heart only the honor and glory of His Highness," he murmured. "Owari claims a still higher degree of loyalty, if such be possible. The present moment is one of confusion and uncertainty. All men respect the counsel of Ii Kamon-no-kami. He has said that too little is now known for final decision."

I saw Keiki blink his narrow lids to hide the fierce flash of his eyes. Midzuano turned with an indifferent bearing to look down the chamber. The Shogun made a slight sign. I glanced about and saw Gengo creeping forward on his knees, with a scroll upraised before him on a tray. He kowtowed and murmured almost inaudibly: "Report to the Council of Elders from Yezaimon, Governor of Uruga."

Ieyoshi signed him towards Midzuano, who took the scroll, and at a nod from the Shogun, read the message aloud.

"To the august Council of Elders: Report is hereby humbly submitted that shortly after midday four warships of the hairy barbarians, two being of vast size, entered the mouth of the inner bay and, without sail, proceeded against wind and tide to an anchorage within close view of Uruga. Being boarded by the second in command at Uruga, his request that the black ships proceed to Nagasaki was peremptorily denied. Demand was made that all guard-boats be withdrawn. The barbarian commander is said to be of such exalted rank that only *daimios* may be admitted into his presence. He comes as an envoy from the *tojin* country called the United States of America. He bears a letter from the ruler of America to His Highness the Shogun, alleged to contain requests for friendship and intercourse. Statement is made that if such letter is not honorably received at Uruga, the black ships will proceed up the bay and deliver the letter at Yedo. The American warships are very powerful and are armed with many cannon of immense size." 275

"YEZAIMON, Governor of Uruga.

"NAKASHIMA, Vice-governor of Uruga."

As the reader settled back on his heels and rolled up the scroll, all turned to the Shogun. He spoke with quick decision: "The counsel of Ii Kamon-no-kami is accepted. Let *samurais* be assembled by the *daimios* in command along the bay, to guard against surprise. To receive the communication of the ruler of America is against the ancient edict. So grave a matter as setting aside the edict requires deliberate consideration. Let the officials at Uruga negotiate with the *tojin* envoy until a decision may be reached by my counsellors. Permission is given to withdraw." 276

We kowtowed and glided from the audience chamber past an increeping group of chamberlains. In the anteroom, when I received back my sword and dirk from the old gate captain, Keiki eyed him sharply, but was called away by Midzuano. Ii Kamon-no-kami and Abe Ise-no-kami followed the Prince, Satsuma, and myself through another exit, and asked me many politely worded questions as we clattered along on our high clogs.

Leaving the palace enclosure by one of the lesser bridges, we crossed the outer enclosure of the citadel to the Sakaruda Gate through a small army of grotesquely armored *hatamotos*. It was the first time that I had seen Japanese in full war-harness, and bizarre as was the effect of their dish helmets, wing-like shoulder brassards, and the padded robes under their plate and chain mail, I must confess that they presented a most formidable appearance even to one acquainted with modern firearms.

Outside the Sakaruda Gate I was relieved to find Yoritomo waiting for us with a guard of half a thousand Owari retainers, all clad in armor as complete as that of the *hatamotos*. He himself wore a wondrous suit of gilded armor that glittered resplendent in the light of the swaying lanterns. He rode an armored stallion, but had brought a *norimon* for me. 277

The need of this escort became clear when we marched away through the official quarter. I had left the broad streets swarming with a silk-clad panic-stricken mob. I came back to find them all but jammed with mailed and helmetted *samurais* whose wild fear had given place to the fury of despair. Many among them,—for the most part Mito retainers,—wore their armor shrouded with white mourning robes, in token of devotion to death in battle.

Ii and Abe had turned aside to their *yashikis*, which were near at hand, eastward from the gate. We moved in the opposite direction, and having escorted Satsuma and his cortege to his *yashiki*, finally won our way through the crowded streets to the outer moat and across into Owari Yashiki.

A few minutes later I was alone in my apartments with Yoritomo, relating all that had befallen me since our parting at sunset. Throughout the account my friend listened with intense interest, but with no comment except an exclamation of profound astonishment that the Princess should have confessed her love to me.

When I had quite finished, he shook his head in a puzzled manner, and said: "In all the temples and at thousands of *samurai* garden shrines, prayers are being made for the gods to send a great wind against the *tojins*. If all the *tojins* are as favored by the gods as one I know, there will be no typhoon." 278

"I have won the favor of Azai. How can I fail to possess the favor of the gods?" I replied, not altogether in jest.

He clanked his golden armor in an impatient gesture. "*Namida!* We speak of women and love, when the fate of Nippon hangs in the balance! There is one thing you have not told me. What was the message Yuki handed to you when you were mounting your horse? He says that a *geisha* gave it to him for me. He did not presume to read it, but as he could not reach my *norimon* through the midst of the Satsuma men, he gave the note to you, not knowing that you cannot read Japanese."

I searched in my bosom, and drew out a crumpled bit of paper. As Yoritomo smoothed it on the palm of his steel gauntlet, he nodded. "The writing of Kohana. You are right in suspecting that the attack in the garden enclosure of the Princess was not due to chance. It was an ambush laid by Keiki and Midzuano. They hoped you would be cut down by the *hatamotos* as you entered the citadel. That failing, Gengo deliberately misled you into the forbidden enclosure of the women, that Midzuano might set the guards of the inner gate upon you. The guards did not know it was a plot. They were loyally seeking to avenge the outrage committed by one of the hairy barbarians who had violated the sacred enclosure of the palace women. None other than Azai or the Shoguness could have saved you." 279

"Kohana's note!" I exclaimed. "Does it tell all that?"

"Between the lines, as you say," he answered; and he read the writing, "'Gengo has taken pay of Keiki.'"

CHAPTER XXII—TEA WITH THE TYCOON

There followed four days of anxious waiting. Though the Prince went daily to the palace, my presence was not commanded, and in the continued state of public stress and turmoil, it was thought best that Yoritomo and I should keep close within the *yashiki*. The Mito faction had given wide publication to a garbled account of our trial, which libelled us with the stigma of confessed spies. Had we appeared in the streets of the official quarter before excess of fury had exhausted the rancor and excitement of the *samurais*, we should have been hacked to pieces by our enemies and their dupes.

Throughout the vast extent of the lower city the panic continued without cessation. Day and night the bay-front populace streamed inland by thousands, bearing upon back and shoulder their household goods, young children, and aged mothers. Skirting along the outer moat of the official quarter, the bulk of the refugees from the southern half of Yedo poured past Owari Yashiki in an endless mob, all alike possessed by the one frantic desire to place themselves beyond reach of the magic *tojin* cannon. 281

Yet vast as was the multitude of townsfolk that poured out of Yedo, fully a third were replaced by the *hatamotos* and *samurais* that rushed in to the defence of the Shogun's capitol, while reports were received that the *daimios* down the bay had assembled ten thousand armor-clad men within the first two days. The clans were responding to the call of the Shogunate by lining up to present a solid front to the barbarians.

Had there been confirmation of the first wild rumor that the black ships numbered sixty and their guns six hundred, or had Commodore Perry attempted a forceful landing, the heat of patriotic loyalty would have fused even the icy venom of the hatred between Owari and Mito. But the Commodore, though firm to arrogance, took utmost care to avoid all acts of violence, and his squadron was not large enough to awe the Mito faction into forgetfulness of their desire to overthrow the Shogunate.

At last, after much debate and intrigue, the Prince and Satsuma, backed by Ii Kamon-no-kami, won a denial of the demand of Keiki and Midzuano for immediate hostilities. The American envoy having resolutely refused to go to Nagasaki and having again threatened to ascend the bay, Iyeyoshi reluctantly appointed two of the lesser *daimios* as commissioners to receive the letter of the President of the United States. 282

Together with the news of this victory, the Prince brought from the palace the Shogun's command for Yoritomo to break the seclusion of his mourning and proceed to Uraga. The duty assigned him was secretly to check the interpreters, and make a full report of all that occurred during the ceremony of receiving the *tojin* letter. He was forbidden, on pain of death, to enter into any communication with the barbarians.

This was during the afternoon of July the eleventh. Yoritomo and I sat up late that night discussing the situation. He pointed out the extreme precariousness of my standing as a supposed *tojin* spy in the opinion of all who favored Mito. I replied that with the risk doubled, and only half my present slender chance of winning my little Princess, I should still prefer Yedo to the safety of the warships. He then offered to smuggle a message from me to the Commodore, so that the Shogunate might be warned to protect me from harm. I objected that I did not wish to be delivered over to my countrymen and taken out of Japan; that the discovery of such an attempt to communicate would mean ruin, alike to us and to his plans; and that I was willing to face the risk I had brought upon myself by coming to Japan with him.

So it was that my friend set off down the bay the next morning in one of the swift government guard-boats, pledged to silence regarding my presence in Yedo. Had he not given me his word, all the watchfulness of the dozen *hatamoto* attendants and spies who accompanied him would have failed to prevent his communicating with Commodore Perry. 283

His departure, I must confess, left me more than lonely. The Prince continued to spend his days at the palace, either opposing Midzuano and Keiki in private audience, or planning with the Household to checkmate the intrigues of the Council and its supporters to bring about an attack on the black ships.

At last, about noon of the fifteenth, Fujimaro, my chamberlain, informed me that I was commanded to appear before the Shogun. An armed escort was provided for me, with Yuki, now my swordbearer, in command, and I was borne to the citadel at a speed that in less strenuous times would have disgraced the House of Owari. Had the identity of the *norimon's* occupant been suspected by the war-accoutred *samurais* who still thronged the streets of the official quarter, I doubt whether we should have reached our destination without a bloody fight.

To avoid such an untimely conflict among the clans, instructions had been given to admit me in my *norimon*, as on my first visit, through the Heanzo Gate, at the head of Kojimachi Street. My guards, with the exception of Yuki and Fujimaro, were required to wait outside the gate. Within the bastion my bearers halted and set down the *norimon*. I peered out to ask Yuki the reason for the halt. He had stepped aside, and in his place I saw Gengo bowing and smiling with irreproachable suavity. 284

"Proceed across the garden," I commanded.

"Pardon, my lord," murmured the fellow. "It is required that my lord should descend and come with me unattended."

"I have been commanded to appear before His Highness," I said. "How can I trust to the guidance of one who once lost me in a certain other garden?"

He faced me squarely with no other look than contrition in his eyes. "My lord covers me with well-merited shame," he replied. "Many others than myself were dazed by the great fear that fell upon all Yedo that day; yet my lord does well to reproach me for my stupid blunder."

"To save you the shame of repeating the error, I will ride through the garden, as on my first visit."

"The gods forbid!" he exclaimed, dropping on his knees. His voice sank to a faint whisper. "My lord, it is not permissible—my lord must give over his sword and dirk, and come with me unattended." 285

I smiled. "The pleasure of waiting at deserted kiosks is not always appreciated."

"This time there will be no need to wait," he whispered. "His Highness is in the garden. If my lord doubts, let him demand the escort of the gate captain. But he must leave his *norimon*, as I have explained."

I felt the brace of pistol-butts within my bosom. This time I had come fully prepared. "Open," I called.

Yuki and Fujimaro sprang to assist me from the *norimon*. I thrust my feet into the clogs held by them, and handed over my sword and dirk to Yuki.

"I am ready," I said.

The chamberlain started off with a look that told me he was puzzling to surmise whether I was a blind fool or a very brave man. Either I had been too obtuse to suspect his part in the ambush, or else, knowing his treachery, I was, he supposed, following him unarmed into another secluded garden. His open display of perplexity convinced me that he now had no treachery in mind, else he would have kept closer control of his expression.

Without a second backward glance, he led the way at a rapid pace up an avenue of umbrella pines. Somewhat over a quarter of a mile brought us to a narrow path that crossed the avenue at right angles. Gengo turned to the left, up the new way. I felt of my revolvers, and clattered after him. He came to a rockery bordered with dense groves, an ideal place for an ambush. I stopped short. He went on a few steps, and pointed around the far side of a huge rock. I gripped my revolvers and advanced. 286

Beyond the boulder the rockery opened out around a little artificial cliff, upon the crest of which was perched a small summer-house. Through the latticed end of the building I perceived a figure in black and yellow robes. I waved Gengo to lead on. We skirted around to the right, and came upon half a hundred *hatamoto* guards in full war-harness. For a moment the sight of their flashing lance blades, horned helmets, and steel mail gave me a lively fright.

I half halted, only to advance again as I saw that they were making way for me, with respectful smiles and bows. Gengo passed on through their midst, and ascended a narrow wooden stairway that led up the rear of the cliff. Following close upon his heels, I swung up after him and around the enclosed end of the building. Through a small window, a yard or so short of the second corner, I caught a glimpse of a lady's coiffure.

The sight thrilled me with the thought of rapturous possibilities. I hastened around into the low veranda of the kiosk's front, dropping my clogs at the edge in imitation of Gengo. A few steps more brought us into the presence of the Shogun. His Highness was seated upon a low divan, with Owari dono before him on his left, and Satsuma on his right. As we rose from our salute, Gengo placed a cushion for me beside the Prince, and silently withdrew. 287

The Shogun favored me with a slight relaxation of his austere frown. "Woroto Sama has displayed commendable diligence in responding to our command," he said.

"The will of Minamoto Iyeyoshi is the pleasure of those who desire to serve him," I responded.

Owari and Satsuma exchanged glances approving the politeness of my phrasing. Iyeyoshi nodded, and made a sign to the Prince, who drew forward a small rosewood case richly ornamented with gold. I saw at a glance that the designs were not Japanese—I thrilled at sight of the well-remembered eagles! From the box the Prince handed to me an official document written in English and sealed in gold with the great seal of the United States of America. I raised the document to my forehead and kowtowed.

"The letter of the President!" I murmured.

"Translate," commanded the Shogun, taking up a paper written in classical Chinese ideographs.

The Prince unrolled a similar paper, while Satsuma opened a Dutch writing. I perceived that I had been summoned for the purpose of cross-checking the translations of Yoritomo and the official interpreters. I rose to my knees and began reading the document in my best Japanese: 288

"Millard Fillmore, President of the United States of America, to his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan. Great and good friend—"

Iyeyoshi checked me with a gesture. "A difference! It is here rendered, 'His Exalted Highness the Tycoon.' You say, 'His Highness the Shogun.'"

"The error is mine, Your Highness," I explained. "The terms may not be translated literally. Their intent is to express supreme rulership."

"In such case," said Satsuma, "Mito may be expected to claim that the message is addressed to the Mikado."

"I regularly received investiture as Shogun from the Mikado," replied Iyeyoshi, frowning. "The rulership of Nippon is in my hands, according to law and custom. I am not the first Shogun to be addressed as 'Tycoon' and 'O-gimi.'"

"The letter is properly received by Your Highness," observed the Prince. "The Mikados have chosen to maintain their sacred seclusion for generation after generation. It is for Your Highness to defend the domains of the present descendant of the Sun Goddess and inaugurate a glorious cycle for Dai Nippon by opening the land to enlightenment." 289

"The bonds of ancient laws are not to be broken without deliberate consideration," replied the Shogun, and he signed to me to proceed.

I read on slowly through the letter's courteous expression of friendship and of desire for commercial intercourse, the arguments regarding the mutual advantages of trade, and the need of protection to the shipwrecked sailors of our whalers and other ships. At almost every line I was questioned and cross-questioned, above all when I came to the suggestion that the laws might be suspended and intercourse tested as an experiment for a limited period. This proposal received the hearty approval of both the Prince and Satsuma, and

they urged its acceptance upon the Shogun. He asked me numerous questions about treaties between the Western nations, and then, without replying to his advisers, commanded me to proceed.

As I finished the reading and returned the letter to its case, the Shogun turned upon Satsuma with a deepening of his frown. "You speak as counsellor for the barbarians. You have yet to refute the ten reasons for war set forth in the memorial of Reikko, Prince of Mito."

The Daimio took a scroll from his sleeve, opened it, and ran a finger down the vertical lines of writing as he spoke his comments: "Your Highness, it is true that in the past the armies of Nippon have been victorious in foreign lands, but the *tojin*s do not come as invaders. It is no disgrace to enter into honorable treaty with peaceful envoys." 290

"And, possessed of *tojin* cannon and ships, Nippon may again win glorious victories in Korea and China," added the Prince.

"Regarding the second statement," went on Satsuma, "the *tojin* letter declares that religion is a matter apart from the policy of the American Government. There is no intent to force the doctrines of the evil sect upon us. As to the question of trading precious goods and metals for those we do not want, the *tojin* nations buy only what they desire and sell what they please. We can do the same. Mito speaks of the Chinese Opium War. If we accept the offer of friendly intercourse, we can learn the ways of the *tojin* and acquire skill in their methods of warfare."

"In one breath Mito says that we are not as brave and strong as our ancestors, and in the next urges us to plunge into war with these friendly envoys," said Owari. "He defames the brave *samurais* who have rushed to the defence of our shores, and then asks if it is wise to disappoint their ignorant desire for attack."

"The interests of Dai Nippon are of greater moment than the interests of the clans in control at Nagasaki," added Satsuma. 291

"The haughty demeanor of the American admiral proves that the American Government has honored Nippon by sending an envoy of exalted rank," argued the Prince. "Only the frogs in the well consider the presence of the black ships an insult. It is the Mito faction that seeks to undermine the fear and respect due the Government of Your Highness. Should such disloyalty continue, 'chance to rouse the case-dulled spirit of our men' will soon be presented by the need to chastise the defamers of the Shogunate."

"Enough," said Iyeyoshi, relaxing his frown. "You have replied to the memorial and in part refuted its statements. Nevertheless, the Daimio of Kaga and many other powerful clan leaders support Mito. The black ships soon sail. They will not return for a long period. We have ample time to deliberate over our answer to the *tojin* ruler. Letters will be sent to all the *daimios* and noted officials and counsellors in Dai Nippon, commanding their advice."

Satsuma bowed, more pleased, I fancied, than the Prince. "The proceeding is without precedent, Your Highness, yet none may doubt that it is the course of wisdom."

The Shogun touched a small gong. A screen at the inner corner of the veranda slid open, and O Setsu San kowtowed on the sill-beam. The Shogun made a sign. The girl withdrew. 292

"Your Highness," murmured the Prince. "Woroto Sama came to Nippon sincerely desirous of rendering a service of friendship and good will. Your Highness condescends to favor him, but Mito seeks his destruction. There is yet time to send him aboard one of the black ships, if Your Highness considers his presence in Yedo unpropitious."

"Does Woroto wish to join his countrymen?" demanded the Shogun.

"The Land of the Gods is very pleasant to me, Your Highness," I answered. "I do not wish to go. I desire to remain until death."

The Shogun gazed at me between doubt and friendliness. "The prayer of Woroto is granted. He may remain in Yedo, at least until the return of the black ships,—provided he is willing to risk the consequences should the counsel of Mito prevail."

I saw a slender figure bowing forward through the opening in the screens, and a flood of color leaped into my face.

"Your Highness," I cried, "I will gladly risk all! I thank you for your gracious permission to remain!"

The Shogun stared piercingly into my flushed face; then turned with the Prince and Satsuma to watch Azai, his face, like theirs, grave almost to solemnity. With slow and graceful movements that followed one upon the other with the precision of a formal ritual, my little Princess entered with a brazier upon which the charcoal glowed in a tiny crater of rock crystal. Setting this before us, she returned to fetch, one at a time, tongs, kettle, dipper, tea canister, bowls, and various other tiny utensils. 293

Throughout the bringing and arranging of this equipment the profound silence was broken only by the occasional murmuring of set phrases. Azai proceeded with utmost grace and delicacy, too intent upon the correct performance of the tea ceremony to venture a glance at me. The tea, crushed into a fine powder, was mixed in a bowl with boiling water and beaten with a bamboo whisk that my darling rolled deftly between her fingers.

The first bowlful of the tea porridge was served to the Shogun upon a tray of unvarnished cypress wood, which was then set aside. But the bowl was rinsed and filled with a second mixture, which was served to the Prince on a gold-lacquered tray. Again the bowl was rinsed and used to serve the soup-like tea to Satsuma on the same tray. Last of all Azai rinsed the bowl and prepared my tea with the same delicate precision and grace.

When she approached to serve me, I looked to see her blush or tremble. I was yet to learn the full measure of a Japanese lady's self-control. Holding the tray on a level with her adorable little chin, she knelt before me without the slightest trace of a quiver beneath her gracious smile. The exquisitely delicate rose tint of her 294

cheeks neither paled nor deepened. Only once, as I set the emptied bowl back upon the tray, her lowered lashes lifted for an instant, to disclose to me a glimpse of the unfathomable tenderness and love in the depths of her lustrous eyes.

With the same slowness and solemnity she drew back and proceeded to carry out the brazier and service in set order, while her father, the Prince, and the Daimio noted the last stages of the ritual with their formal phrases. I sat in the meek attitude of a neophyte, but I fear I gave little heed to the solemn ritual. All too soon Azai kowtowed and disappeared. The quaint rite was at an end.

That she should have come and gone with only that one glance and never a word for me, went far to lessen the joy of seeing her. My face was grave when the Shogun looked down upon me. He nodded approvingly. "Woroto Sama seems versed in the pleasant mystery of the tea ceremony. It is known in his country?"

"I seek to learn, Your Highness. The ceremony is undeveloped in my country. As yet the drinking of tea is for the most part confined to our women."

The word set loose upon me a flood of questions with regard to *tojin* women and marriage. I answered as best I could. As I anticipated, Satsuma and the Prince were no less shocked than the Shogun at the freedom allowed Occidental women. But I perceived that the severity of His Highness's look softened when I dwelt upon the honor and respect which we accord our wives. I recalled that statement of Kohana San that Minamoto Iyeyoshi regarded his daughter with the fondness due a son.

"It is certain that the *tojin* peoples reverse many of the rightful rules of society and morals. Yet what has been said is of grave interest," he observed. "Woroto Sama is doubtless aware that in Nippon a teacher is held in high honor as the temporary father of his pupils. The children of the Sei-i-tai Shogun should not remain in ignorance of the *tojin* world."

I kowtowed to hide my eager delight, and waited in keen suspense.

"After the American envoy has sailed, your presence will be required. Until then—" He dismissed me with a gesture.

I withdrew to rejoin Gengo, who was waiting at the corner of the kiosk. As we passed the window a face appeared within, and I again met the loving glance of my little Princess.

CHAPTER XXIII—LESSONS AND LOVE

My impatience over the delay of the expedition to sail at once may well be imagined.

At last, on the morning of the eighteenth, Yoritomo returned home with the welcome news that the squadron had weighed anchor and put out to sea the previous day. He had much to say of the display on either side when Commodore Perry landed at Goriama, below Uruga, and delivered over the President's letter to Toda Idzu-no-kami and Ido Iwami-no-kami. On the following day the black ships had excited much apprehension by sailing up the bay almost to within sight of Yedo.

I listened to the account of my countrymen's proceedings with an indifference that astonished me. Thanks to my long intimacy with my friend, the few weeks of my stay in his country had sufficed to initiate me into the life and customs of his people. I was fascinated by the *samurai* spirit. Yet for all that, I might well have been overcome with longing at the news of the departure of the expedition, had it not been for my love for the little Princess. Yoritomo had made me a friend to the Japanese; Azai made me a Japanese. 297

True to the Shogun's word, the official report of the sailing of the American squadron brought a prompt command for me to attend upon Iyesada Sama and Azai Sama as instructor in *tojin* learning. The time appointed was early the following morning.

Half the night was spent listening to the advice of Yoritomo, who feared that I might lose all by betraying my love in the presence of others. In return for my promise to be as discreet as circumstances would permit, he agreed to lay the matter before his father and seek to interest him in my preposterous attempt to win the Princess.

Armed with the Shogun's order, I set out at dawn, travelling incognito but with the full retinue allowed me by the Prince. On the one side of my *norimon* walked Fujimaro, and on the other Yuki. The latter, now fully recovered from his wounds and torture, carried himself with the dignified assurance of the finest swordsman in Yedo.

Through my palanquin window I gazed out at the splendid fellow with pride. He was my own personal retainer and not one of the servants of the House of Owari loaned to me for the occasion. Legally he was no more a member of the clan than myself. His family had been enrolled among the Owari retainers, but he himself had expressed a preference to be received into my service. The Prince had readily agreed to this arrangement, though not because of any reluctance to accept among his retainers a *ronin* who had been expelled from the service of the Shogun. 298

Yoritomo had said that it was ill-advised for me to take the former *hatamoto* to the palace. But I felt certain that the Shogun would not consider the act an affront. Should he so regard it, I relied upon the excuse of my *tojin* ignorance and my need for a personal retainer.

The morning was still fresh when we entered the citadel by the Sakaruda Gate. Having the Shogun's order for passport, I rode through and did not descend from my *norimon* until on the point of crossing one of the inner moats into the palace grounds. Here I was met by Gengo the chamberlain, as ever suave to obsequiousness. He did not relish the entry of his former captain into the palace, and suggested that Yuki should remain with the rest of my escort. But with due regard to my dignity as teacher of the Shogun's children, I insisted upon the attendance of both Yuki and Fujimaro.

My determination won the day. Gengo started off submissively, and led us through the gardens of the O Shiro, to the enclosure of the secondary palace set apart for the use of the Shogun's heir. The edifice, though small, was exquisitely finished in several woods, inlaid in designs of odd beauty. I would have been quite willing, however, to forego the pleasure of viewing the artistic decorations of the waiting room as well as the enjoyment of the customary refreshment that was served me. Yet one must needs cultivate patience if he would dwell among an Oriental people. 299

Mid-morning found me still cooling my heels in the waiting room. At last I suppose the Prince's curiosity overcame his inertia. Gengo reappeared, to conduct me into the presence of the heir apparent. Yuki and Fujimaro followed me to the threshold of the audience chamber, where I signed to Gengo to take my sword and bear it in for me. He demurred, with the statement that to carry the sword of a *tojin* into the presence of Iyesada Sama was not permissible.

"Very well," I replied. "Yuki will be my bearer."

"Impossible. None other than my lord may enter."

"Then I shall carry it in myself. I am here as the teacher of Iyesada Sama. I demand the deference due a teacher."

At this he took the sword from me, and knelt to enter the chamber of audience. I walked after him erect. The slowness of our progress up the long apartment gave me ample time to observe the place and its occupants. All one side of the chamber was open upon a fantastic garden of sand and rocks representing a volcanic seashore. Its bare, verdureless stretch contrasted strongly with the richness and ultra-delicacy of the apartment's decorations. 300

My attention quickly centred upon the two persons seated before the gorgeous *tokonoma*. One I recognized as Abe Ise-no-kami, the elder of the two strange *daimios* at the Shogun's conference. He sat on the left of a young man whose amiable but weak face answered to Yoritomo's descriptions of the epileptic heir apparent.

As I stalked up the room behind the creeping chamberlain, the Prince and his companion regarded me with looks of surprise that quickly deepened to resentment. The *tojin* was presuming to swagger into the presence of the Shogun's son! But I had planned my course and was sure of my ground. When within a short distance of the angry sitters, I paused and gazed at the Prince in stern reproof.

"Is this the proper manner for a pupil to receive his teacher?" I demanded. "Can it be that Iyesada has been

misinformed as to the purpose of my visit?"

The Prince turned to Abe with a look of bewilderment, as if seeking aid and instruction. The Daimio rose and signed him to do the same. 301

"Woroto Sama is implored to pardon the rudeness," he said. "Excuse is offered that he was not distinctly announced as a teacher."

I glanced down at the stooped figure of Gengo.

"The offence is forgotten. Mistakes occur even with the best of intentions. I have come at the command of the Shogun to instruct his son in *tojin* learning."

Abe whispered a few words to the Prince, who promptly stepped away from his seat, and waved me to it with a graceful bow.

"My honorable teacher is entreated to repose himself," he murmured, in a voice so like his sister's as to startle me.

I contrived to maintain my dignity, and seated myself in the place of honor, with my sword at my right hand. As Gengo withdrew, the Prince seated himself on my left, between me and Abe. After an exchange of bows and formal greetings, I at once entered upon my duties by inquiring the Prince's knowledge of the outside world. It proved to be scant and vague, yet gave me a basis upon which to build.

As a beginning, I gave a brief explanation of the earth's relation to the solar system. This, though quickly grasped by Abe, seemed beyond the comprehension of the Prince, who complained that so strange a statement could not be reconciled to the facts that Ama-terasu the Sun Goddess had come down to Dai Nippon, and that Dai Nippon, the centre of the universe, rested upon the back of the great fish. 302

When I sought to argue the matter, the Prince became excited and insisted upon the truth of his myths with childish petulance. Abe intervened, with tactful diplomacy, and I, perceiving the weakness of the Prince's mind, waived the dispute, and sought to divert the attention of my pupil with descriptions of *tojin* costume and architecture.

This proved to be as successful as my first attempt had been unfortunate. Iyesada at once grew tranquil and exhibited the utmost curiosity over the absurdities of the hairy barbarians. I illustrated my descriptions with sketches, which the Prince copied with remarkable facility and precision.

Had I given way to the desire of my pupil, I should have continued with him all day. But I had not come to the palace to waste all my time on this unfortunate epileptic. At the end of two hours I informed him that it was time to close the lesson. When he demurred, with a quick return of petulance, I stated that it was inadvisable to teach him more at this time, since I wished him to reduce to writing all the information he had received.

Abe gravely commended my plan of instruction, and the Prince at once deferred to his companion. I withdrew, having taught my pupil a few valuable facts along with a mass of inconsequential chaff, and having learned in turn that he was a capricious weakling, very much under the influence of the quiet Abe Ise-no-kami. 303

With Gengo again for guide, we left the Prince's enclosure and crossed over into another walled subdivision of the citadel. Though I did not recognize it as the garden in which I had met the Princess, the failure may have been due to an approach from an opposite direction. Enough for me that I was being conducted to my adorable little darling.

This time there was no delay. Yuki and Fujimaro were left in an anteroom, and I was conducted to the seat of honor in the adjoining reception chamber. The room, which was decorated with elegant simplicity, overlooked a miniature landscape garden of rocks and ferns and dwarfed trees.

Hardly had Gengo withdrawn to the anteroom when a side screen drew aside to admit a dozen or more demure and graceful *samurai* ladies. They ranged themselves along the side of the room, midway down, and kowtowed to me. As I nodded with the austerity becoming a *daimio* in the presence of women, O Setsu San entered and knelt. Close after appeared my little Princess, smiling yet demure, composed yet graciously eager to welcome her august teacher. 304

Softly she glided out past her ladies-in-waiting and sank down before me with her white forehead upon the mat. "Ten thousand felicitous years to my Lord Woroto!" she murmured.

"The good wish of Azai Sama is acknowledged," I replied. "The august lady is requested to seat herself at the left hand of her teacher."

"Pardon, my lord, but it is not permissible for a woman to sit in the presence of one so vastly above her."

"Let two boxes of this height be brought," I ordered, holding my hand at the height of a chair.

O Setsu San glided out, and returned in a few moments with a pair of lacquered cases about the size of tea chests. I signed her to set them down near the side of the room that faced the garden.

"As teacher of the *tojin* learning and customs," I explained, "I will begin by showing the Princess the *tojin* etiquette practised between a gentleman and a lady. The Princess will be pleased to act as directed."

I rose and offered her my hand. "May I have the pleasure of assisting you to rise?"

Azai glanced up at me with a startled look. I smiled. "The august lady is to take my hand, and say, 'You are very kind.'" 305

"You are very kind, my lord!" she whispered, and half averting her head, she entrusted one of her tiny hands to me.

I drew her up, stepped back, and swept her a bow in Occidental style. "Permit me to conduct you to a seat."

She looked at me in a puzzled manner, and I explained with utmost gravity: "You will bow—no, not to the floor, only a little more than I. In this fashion—so! that is better. Now place the fingers of one hand upon my

arm.”

The tips of her fingers touched the silk sleeve of my proffered arm with the lightness of a perching butterfly. I escorted her to the nearest chest, bowed, and turned back for a cushion. Placing it upon the chest, I took her hand and assisted her to seat herself, facing the garden. But when I drew the other chest nearer and was about to sit, she stopped me with a quick little cry, and fluttered back to fetch me my cushion from before the *tokonoma*. As she knelt to place it on my chest I looked down at her with well-feigned severity.

“The august lady forgets that she is receiving a lesson.”

“Pardon, my lord! But could I permit my august teacher to seat himself without his cushion?”

“The august lady will remember that she is receiving a lesson in *tojin* etiquette. Among my people the gentleman always attends upon the lady.” 306

So preposterous a reversal of all the rules of propriety compelled the bevy of ladies across the room from us to murmur in astonishment. But Azai meekly permitted me to assist her again to her seat. Before seating myself I assumed my austere manner and sought to forestall criticism by another explanation: “The august lady is now to converse freely, as to an equal, on music and art and flower arrangements and the amusements permitted young ladies.”

I glanced across at the ladies-in-waiting. Quickly as they lowered their eyes, I caught their stare of mingled curiosity, wonder, and merriment. Only Setsu was regarding me with a frown. She was not pleased with the game I was playing in the face of all present and perhaps of some not present. It is easy to make a peep-hole through a paper screen.

But I had gone too far to withdraw. I seated myself, and, with a wave of my hand towards the garden, murmured ardently: “Azai! we must make gestures and pretend to be talking of flowers and art, but you know what my heart burns to say to you!”

“My lord! Love is surely a gift of the gods! All these days I have been wrapped about as it were in a dream of wonder and delight! How is it possible that so low and mean a creature as I can be loved by my lord?” 307

“Is an angel a low or mean creature? Little Princess, because you are in the world, the sun is bright, the moon silvery. The stars twinkle with joy when you smile up into the gloomy sky. I have no need to see the cherry blossoms of Nippon—I have seen you! When you speak I fancy the nightingale is singing!”

“My lord,” she whispered, “such praise is as far above my worthlessness as the sun above the abyss. May Kwannon grant me the joy of serving my lord for the space of seven existences!”

“For all time, Azai—we shall be linked together in mutual love and service! We are fated to be united throughout eternity.”

“My lord!” she murmured, and she turned to bend to me, her dark eyes beaming with unutterable love and devotion.

“Look to the front!” I warned her, and again I pointed to the garden as if remarking upon one of the dwarfed trees. She recovered her composure on the instant. Yet I perceived that the situation was more difficult than I had the right to require of her. I turned to the rear and remarked: “Among my people it is customary for ladies to entertain visitors with music.”

Azai turned about also, and made a sign to Setsu. The girl went out with a companion and brought in a *koto*, an instrument resembling a large horizontal harp or zithern. This was an agreeable surprise to me. So far I had heard only the *samisens* of the *geisha*, and their notes are particularly discordant to Occidental ears. 308

Now I was to hear the instrument of the *samurai* ladies, played by none other than Azai herself. She adjusted the ivory plectrums upon her plump little fingers and, kneeling beside the *koto*, began to play. Though mostly in the minor key and full of quick transitions that were often discordant to me, her music had many passages of plaintive sweetness. My enjoyment may have been due in part to the personality of the player, for the Occidental ear is not attuned to Oriental music. Yet the *koto* is certainly far more harmonious than the twanging *samisen*.

When the Princess finished playing, I called for writing materials, and attempted by means of words and drawings to describe the harpsichord and pianoforte. I used one of the chests as a table for drawing my figures, and it was necessary for Azai to kneel across from me that she might bend near enough to follow the lines I drew to illustrate my explanations. It was natural that our glances should meet. I saw my soul in her sweet eyes.

In the midst, one of the wall screens at the foot of the room was flung open, and Gengo the chamberlain entered, insolently erect. 309

“His Highness the Tycoon commands the presence of the *tojin*,” he announced.

“Kwannon!” gasped Azai, and she sprang up to interpose her slender figure between me and the chamberlain. “My lord—I fear! Should it mean—the worst—I will rejoin my lord!”

“Not that—not that!” I protested.

“Without my lord I could not live! If my lord goes from this life, I will follow!”

Her eyes glowed up into mine with that light of utter devotion. If I died, she also would die. There was no hope of dissuading her. I bowed in formal leave. She kowtowed with her ladies. I advanced to Gengo and passed out without a backward glance.

In the anteroom my austerity subdued Gengo to his usual obsequiousness. He bowed low before my glance, and ushered me out with the utmost deference. But as we recrossed into the enclosure of the main palace he halted and signed to Yuki and Fujimaro to turn aside.

"Rejoin your fellow-retainers," he commanded.

"No. Follow me," I interposed.

"It is not permissible," stated the chamberlain.

"It was permissible when I came with the Prince of Owari."

"The *tojin sama* is not Owari dono."

"The Shogun has summoned me. My attendants accompany me to the waiting room. Lead on."

Again my stern composure overcame his servile nature. He led us through the garden to one of the side entrances of the palace. In the first room three other officials appeared and called upon my attendants to halt. Fujimaro and Yuki stopped and kowtowed. I gave over my sword and dirk to Yuki, and proceeded with Gengo and one of the other officials.

Hastening along a broad corridor, we soon came to a room full of armed guards, who crouched in a peculiar posture, with hands on their swordhilts, as though about to leap up. The room was without screens along the hall, but was closed on the side adjoining the Shogun's audience chamber, into which the corridor opened a few paces farther on. At the threshold the second official halted. Gengo kowtowed and began to crawl up the mats of the audience hall.

311

The Shogun was seated on a low dais, behind which a group of guards crouched in the same posture as those in the anteroom. Before the Shogun, on the right, knelt five officials. Of these, the nearest one to the dais was Midzuano Echizen-no-kami, from which I inferred that the four others were his fellow-members of the Council of Elders. All turned and stared at me as I stalked up the chamber after Gengo. But the Shogun sat with eyes downcast, contemplating the fan which he held unopened upon his lap.

Several mats short of the dais Gengo kowtowed and drew aside. I advanced much nearer, kowtowed, and rose to my knees to face the Shogun. My heart sank. His gloomy eyes were fixed upon me in a menacing stare. It was evident that he was greatly angered at me, and Midzuano was present to spur him on to extremes. I contrived to smile and utter a courtier's phrase: "Your Highness has commanded. The *tojin* hastens to render service."

312

"The *tojin* is ill advised to use the word 'service,'" rejoined the Shogun harshly. "It is said that Woroto has taken into his service Yuki the *ronin*. Such an act cannot be regarded other than as a reflection upon my justice."

"Your Highness," I replied, "it is the glory of Japanese justice that deeds are considered in the light of motives and circumstances. Doubtless the members of the august Elder Council have sought to persuade Your Highness that I made Yuki my swordbearer with the deliberate intent to affront the Sei-i-tai Shogun. In such matters, Your Highness, certain classes of the *tojin* peoples are very plain-spoken. On my honor as a man of highest birth among my people, I say that if such an allegation has been made, it is a malicious lie and slander."

"The *tojin* speaks with an excess of heat," murmured the Chief Counsellor. "Let him give proof that he is slandered."

"First let my defamer give proof of the charge against me," I retorted.

"You do not deny having taken the *ronin* into your service," said the Shogun.

"In the midst of my trial before the High Court, Your Highness, the Daimio of Satsuma interposed to save Yuki from further torture, and honored him with a priceless gift. Does Midzuano charge the Daimio with affronting Your Highness?"

313

"The Lord of Satsuma did not take the *ronin* into his service."

"For the reason, Your Highness, that I spoke first. Ask the Daimio if he does not regret his delay. Yet any thought of aspersion upon the justice of Your Highness was as far from my mind as from the Daimio's. And in justice to a most loyal subject, I must declare that among all the *hatamotos* there is none truer than Yuki. In the hour of humiliation the brave man bowed to the justice of his lord without a murmur. So devoted was his loyalty that he endured torture rather than testify against those who had saved the daughter of Your Highness from *ronin* capture."

The Shogun bent towards me with sudden deepening of his frown. "Insolent barbarian! do you dare speak of your artifice?"

"My artifice, Your Highness?"

"Can you deny that the attack of the *ronins* was a prearranged plot by which you and Yoritomo profited?" demanded Midzuano.

The subtle intriguer was actually charging us with the villainy of his own party. The sudden springing of the snare caused me to hesitate.

"Answer!" cried the Shogun. "You and your accomplices knew beforehand of the plot."

"We knew beforehand that Keiki had plotted the attack—"

314

"Keiki?"

"He set the Mito *ronins* upon the cortege of the Princess, expecting to rescue her at the last moment, and so

gain the favor of Your Highness.”

“Did I not foretell to Your Highness that they would seek to divert the charge of guilt from themselves by some such incredible tale?” murmured the Chief Counsellor. “Keiki Sama did not appear until after the massacre. But this *tojin* and his fellow-spy followed the cortege in disguise from beyond the outer moat. If they knew beforehand of the intended attack and were innocent of complicity, why did they not warn the cortege?”

To refute such subtleness was beyond me. The best I could do was to assume a bold front.

“As a kinsman of Owari, I do not choose to answer the queries of the partisan of Mito,” I declared.

“Not even to explain why you held off until the *ronins* had slaughtered the *hatamotos*, and why the *ronins* fled before two men when they had slain a score?” interrogated Midzuano.

“Give me a sword and confront me with a Mito partisan in full armor,” I rejoined. “One reason for the fleeing of the *ronins* will shortly be made apparent.”

“Enough of the *ronin* attack and of Yuki the *ronin*,” said the Shogun. “There remains a matter that more nearly concerns my honor. Gengo will repeat his account of the outrageous conduct of the *tojin* in the palace of the Princess.” 315

I flushed crimson with rage. The treacherous chamberlain had stolen out during my instruction of Azai, to aid Midzuano in setting this snare for my destruction. I met the gaze of the Shogun with a look as angry as his own, and said with deliberate reproof: “In my land men of noble blood do not publicly discuss matters concerning ladies.”

He made a sign with his fan, and commanded: “All others than Midzuano will withdraw beyond earshot.”

“The matter is between Your Highness and myself,” I said. “My life is in the hand of Minamoto Iyeyoshi. Rather than speak in the presence of a third person, I am prepared to die without benefit of medicine.”

The Shogun again signed with his fan. Midzuano rose to his knees and shuffled away after the others. I was left alone in front of the dais, still too angry to flinch before the Shogun’s frown and the menace of his eyes.

“Your Highness has condemned me without a hearing,” I charged. “Is that the boasted justice of Dai Nippon?”

“Such insolence is of itself worthy of death!” he exclaimed. 316

“Your Highness,” I replied, “I come of a family so proud that it is a degradation for me to kowtow even before the exalted ruler of Nippon, yet my desire to serve has caused me to humble myself.”

“The rudeness of the *tojin* might be forgiven on the plea of his ignorance. Not so an insult to the Princess my daughter.”

“Your Highness has listened to the lying tales of my enemies. I would sooner strike off my right hand than insult the Princess Azai. Your Highness does ill to heed the malicious slanders of those who condemned me on false charges and who, when baffled by the command of Your Highness, laid an ambush for me in the garden of the Princess.”

“In the garden of the Princess!—ambush!” he repeated.

“Upon the first day of the panic,” I said, and I gave him a concise account of all that had occurred from the interruption of my passage to Owari Yashiki by Gengo to my rescue by the Princess on the bridge.

“*Namida!*” he muttered, when I came to a pause. “I cannot put to torture a man whom she saved.”

“Your Highness,” I replied, hastening to take advantage of this betrayal of tenderness, “the happiness of a child is one of the fondest wishes of a parent. I ask permission to speak openly, after the manner of my people.” 317

He studied me for some moments, between curiosity and rankling anger. Curiosity won. “Speak according to the manner of your people,” he commanded.

I bowed. “Let Your Highness bear in mind that whatever I say, though contrary to Japanese etiquette, is spoken with utmost deference and respect for yourself and the Princess Azai.”

“Speak,” he repeated, masking his anger behind an inscrutable calm.

“In the first place,” I began, “Your Highness should know that Yoritomo Sama, my friend and brother in spirit, has vowed to enter the monastery of Zozoji. Your Highness may recall the statement of Azai Sama, made upon the occasion of my first audience with Your Highness. In the chief temple of Shiba, below the image of the Goddess of Mercy, was where the Princess and I first gazed into each other’s eyes.”

The Shogun started, and a threatening flash shot from his sombre eyes. But again he masked all feeling behind a look of inquisitorial coldness.

I continued: “Is it an error to believe that my meetings with the august lady have been guided by a higher cause than human will or blind chance? As I have said, we first saw one another before Kwannon, in the sanctuary of the temple. Our second meeting was in the midst of battle and slaughter; the third in the presence of Your Highness, when I was received as the kinsman of Owari dono and as a *daimio* of the first class; the fourth in her garden, when she saved me from the treacherous plot of my enemies—” 318

“Proof is yet to be made that either Keiki or Midzuano knew of the attack. You have yourself stated Gengo’s claim that he was confused by reason of the great terror which lay upon all. The gate watch had only to discover your presence in the forbidden enclosure, to charge upon you.”

“I have presented the facts so far as I know them, Your Highness. What I now wish to make clear is how Fate has brought together myself and the august lady. Twice Your Highness called upon your daughter to serve the *tojin* guest. It cannot be that Your Highness failed to perceive that her soul shone in my eyes—”

“*Namida!*” he broke in. “For far less presumption men have been sawn asunder—crucified!—burned!”

"Is the presumption so great when consideration is taken of the honor accorded me by Your Highness? As the acknowledged peer of the Prince of Owari and the Daimio of Satsuma—"

"Hairy barbarian!" he flung at me.

"Your Highness has read the memorial of Yoritomo Sama," I replied. "My people are as vastly above your people in some respects as your people are above mine in others. Another matter—who may say whence our souls come and whither they go? My friend Yoritomo contends that the august lady and I must have loved one another in a previous incarnation. This I do not know, but I do know that I have seen my soul in the eyes of the Princess." 319

His face darkened with a sudden return of anger, but his voice was constrained to a false calmness: "It is now perceived that the *tojin* is a madman. Permission is granted him to withdraw."

"Your Highness!" I protested. "The happiness of the Princess—"

"Her happiness and honor will be safe in the keeping of her husband. She shall wed Keiki, the son of Mito."

"Keiki?" I cried. "The man who sought to disgrace her?"

"Does the *tojin* still hold to that lie? Enough! His punishment will be considered, and command sent in due time.—Go!"

There was no hope for me in the cold menace of his look. Yet I did not give way to any outward display of the fear and despair that was within me. Sustained by the pride of race and blood, I forced a smile, and kowtowed and withdrew, complying with the most punctilious requirements of court etiquette.

CHAPTER XXV—HARA-KIRI

Not until I stood in my own apartments in Owari Yashiki, alone with Yoritomo, did I give way to the tempest within my soul. Even then the frailness of the walls compelled me to speak with lowered voice, but my pent-up rage and despair vented themselves in a flood of bitter complaint. Never had I seen my friend so concerned. Yet it was the outcome he had predicted, and he could give me no hope.

"I grieve for you, Worth," he said. "You have learned the truth. The remotest suggestion of your desire would seem madness to Iyeyoshi."

"But she loves me—"

"The daughters of *daimios* and shoguns are presumed not to love until after marriage. Your statement to him that she loved you was most unfortunate. Even a *samurai* of the lowest rank would consider such a declaration an aspersion upon his family honor. Had it not been for that—"

"Forgive me, Tomo! I have played into the hands of your enemies—I have endangered all your plans! The tyrant will not stop at punishing me. He will wreak his anger upon those who have harbored the hated *tojin*. I shall leave Owari Yashiki at once and turn *ronin*, taking with me Yuki. Neither of us shall continue to bring danger upon the House of Owari." 321

For some moments he sat silent, regarding me with a smile of womanly tenderness. When he replied he spoke as if quoting from the Chinese classics: "Far better is death in the consciousness of honor than a grovelling prosperity. The laws of hospitality are sacred: they may not be violated. A house that cannot stand upright should fall."

"The House of Owari bears the weight of the contest against Mito," I argued. "The enemies of Owari seek to use the harboring of the *tojin* as a lever to overthrow the real friends of Nippon."

"It is of no avail, Worth," he said. "Your sacrifice would result in no good. If we are not strong enough to shelter you, we are not strong enough to resist Mito. The matter is in my hands, not yours. Let writing materials be brought."

"What would you do?" I demanded, seized with a premonition of his purpose.

He smiled almost gayly. "The time has come for me to give myself for the success of my mission."

"Tomo," I cried, "not that! not that!"

"What is death?" he argued. "A passing from blind form to unhampered spirit; a freeing of the bonds of earthly desire. Other and higher incarnations await him who has sought to overcome self." 322

"Tomo, I have brought you to this fearful thought—I can never forgive myself!"

"You have nothing to forgive, Worth. You are in no manner responsible for what I am about to do. That was determined upon by me before I so much as saw your ship in Kagoshima Bay. How often have I told you that my life has been vowed?"

"Yet it might not have been required! It is my selfishness that is forcing you to this dreadful decision. At the best I am a condemned man. It is my right to do what little I can to free the House of Owari from blame."

"The House of Owari stands or falls in honor. To thrust you out as a *ronin* would stain that honor, and it would rightfully be considered as evidence of weakness. No, brother! There is one chance, and only one, to check the intrigues of Mito."

I shuddered. "So dreadful a death, Tomo! Could I but take your place!"

"I am *samurai* bred. It is a privilege to offer one's life in a great cause. You, I fear, will have the harder task. I shall ask you to perform for me the service of best friend."

"You mean—?"

"You will act as my chief second in the ceremony."

"No! no!" I cried, quivering with horror. "If you cannot be turned from your dreadful sacrifice, let Yuki—but I—the very thought—my God!" 323

"Yuki is your retainer. I will accept him as my inferior second. You are my friend and equal. I ask you to perform the highest office of friendship."

"No!" I protested. "The very thought is too terrible! I cannot endure it."

"The chief second is not always required to act," he said. "I may have the fortitude to dispense with assistance. Will you not render me this great service of friendship? It is the custom. You will win the gratitude of my father, the grateful respect of the Owari clansmen. Promise me the favor."

"Tomo! you know how abhorrent to all my Western ideas—"

"It is the highest office of friendship. My brother, you admire the *samurai* spirit because it is in your blood. No *samurai* will flinch when duty demands. You are my friend, my kinsman. You will serve me, Worth! With my sword in your hands, I will undertake the ceremony certain of an honorable outcome. Remember, you are now a son of Dai Nippon."

"You insist?—Good God!"

"In honor to your dearest friend—"

"I am only a *tojin*. They will call my service a dishonor." 324

"You have been received by Iyeyoshi as the equal of Satsuma. I have no other friend. Will you fail me in my need?"

"My God!" I cried. "How can I?"

"I speak only of friendship. I will not urge your assent on the ground of consideration for my father. For the sake of Dai Nippon, I went out into your *tojin* world and returned to die. You chose to return with me, brother. Will you now forsake me in my need?"

Suddenly the veil of horror parted before me, and I saw the intended sacrifice with the eyes of my friend. Iyeyoshi had been duped by the wiles of the reactionaries. The Mito party, if not quickly checkmated, would turn the Shogunate against all progress and greet the American expedition upon its return with an attack no less vicious than futile. After that, war and reprisals; bombardments by the black ships, rebellion, internecine war, and a weakened Government; harsh demands by the domineering *tojin* powers—possibly a conquest!

What more inspiring than the thought that all might be averted by the giving of one life? My friend was about to offer himself as a willing sacrifice for the good of his country. It was my privilege to ease the ordeal for him and to lend an added dignity to the ceremony. What did it matter if my Occidental prejudices were shocked and horrified at the part required of me? To the Japanese it was an almost sacred duty. He had well said that it was the highest service a man could render a friend. 325

"I—will serve—you, Tomo!" I gasped.

He sprang up, beaming. "There is no time to lose. Send Yuki to Shinagawa for Kohana. I must see my father and prepare a declaratory testament to be presented to the Shogun. Fujimaro will make all the necessary arrangements. Until the time comes, brother—"

He turned to go, but I sprang before him to grasp his hand. "Tomo! must it really be? Is there no other way?"

"Your sorrow is my sole regret," he replied. "All others whom I love will rejoice with me in my deed."

To this I had no reply. He gave my hand a responsive grip, and hastened out. I sank down, overcome with a wave of returning grief and horror. But he had said there was need for haste. I sat up and clapped sharply for Fujimaro and Yuki. They entered and bowed to receive my urgent commands. Yuki rushed out to ride posthaste to Shinagawa, Fujimaro to make arrangements for the ceremony of *hara-kiri*. I was left alone with my anguish.

Twilight approached. My attendants came with lamps and the evening meal. I could not eat, and I dared not refresh myself with *sake*. There was need for me to retain perfect control of mind and body. I could do nothing but suffer and wait for the terrible moment, hiding my pain as best I could behind a mask of austerity. 326

At last Yuki came to announce his return with Kohana San. I ordered the *geisha* brought in and Yoritomo notified. As the girl kowtowed before me I saw by her pallor that she had been told. Yet she had the fortitude to smile and murmur the usual complimentary greetings. Only once I caught her gaze and read in her agonized eyes the grief and despair which etiquette compelled her to conceal.

Soon Yoritomo entered, gravely serene, yet radiant with the solemn joy of self-sacrifice. His final testament was in the hands of his father. All was now in readiness for him to undergo the ultimate test of sincerity. When he seated himself beside me Kohana prostrated herself at his feet. He regarded her with the tender compassion of a saint for a suffering child.

"Kohana is of *samurai* blood," he said. "She knows that death is a small matter."

"The servant implores the honorable joy of following her lord!" she murmured.

"Greater service is asked," he replied. "Those whom I leave behind may still profit by the craft of Kohana." 327

"Must I then linger?" she sobbed. The weakness was only of a moment's duration. She looked up, her face bright with the same glory of self-sacrifice that shone in the serene countenance of my friend. "The will of my lord is the joy of his servant!"

Yuki kowtowed to me and whispered: "My lord, now is our time for purification."

I rose and followed him to the bath, leaving Yoritomo and his beloved to say their farewells alone. When we returned, purified by the water and attired in ceremonial costume of *hakama* trousers and hempen winged jackets, I found my visitors gone. In their place Fujimaro waited to hand me my friend's sword. The time had almost come.

To make certain of my part, I asked a number of questions and agreed upon a signal from Yuki. Fujimaro then led us to the wing of the palace in which a chamber had been set apart for the ceremony. In the centre of the room the mats were covered with a spread of white silk, upon which in turn were laid two red quilts. At each corner of the quilts stood a single whitewood candlestick with its hollow-wick taper. The only other lights in the room were two candles beside a pair of bench-like seats, five or six paces distant from the quilts. 328

Chancing to glance behind a set of white folding screens that stood across from the seats, I saw my friend's dirk lying upon a tray of unvarnished cypress wood. There were other objects beside the tray. I looked hastily away. Having assured ourselves that all was in readiness, Yuki and I went out into a side room, and waited.

We heard soft footsteps in the chamber. After a few minutes Yoritomo came down a corridor, accompanied by several chamberlains. He had already taken leave of his father and mother, and was dressed in the prescribed ceremonial costume of white linen. Kohana had gone, and the Prince did not appear. Fujimaro entered and together with the other chamberlains kowtowed while Yuki and I conducted our principal into the chamber.

We found the witnesses to the ceremony seated upon the benches. Great as was my anguish, I thrilled with momentary pleasure when I recognized Ii Kamon-no-kami and the great Daimio of Satsuma. Not even Mito might doubt the testimony of such witnesses.

Yuki kowtowed. Yoritomo and I bowed low, and the *daimios* rose to return the salute. The *daimios* resumed their seats. Yoritomo seated himself on knees and heels in the centre of the quilts, facing so that the witnesses 329

were before him on his left. I took up my position behind him and drew his sword as Fujimaro had directed me. Yuki brought the tray with the dirk from behind the screen, and knelt to present it.

Yoritomo bowed to the *daimios*, loosened his robes, and took the dirk from the tray. Yuki kowtowed in a position that enabled him to watch the fatal stroke and give me the signal. Yoritomo tucked the ends of his sleeves under his knees, that his body might not fall backward.

I stood in my place, rigid with horror. Fortunately I could not see his face or the frightful stroke. That at least I was spared. All I saw was the dear form of my friend bending over under the agony—to fail him now would mean a prolongation of his atrocious pain, possibly the fearful disgrace of an outcry—Yuki signed to me. I struck. Never had I aimed a truer blow!

The next I knew I was holding my sleeve before my eyes, and some one was leading me from the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XXVI—HOVERING HAWKS

All night I lay tossing in the anguish of my grief, unable to sleep and forget. Morning found me distraught and fast losing my senses in the delirium of fever.

When I reawakened to consciousness I found myself in a large room that opened upon an entrancing view of the *yashiki* gardens. There had been a heavy rain, and a flood of morning sun rays were streaming through the gray clouds to scintillate among the foliage with iridescent splendors. This, I believe, was what had roused me. I turned my head for a better look, and discovered that I was strangely weak. Then I remembered, and I no longer saw the magic glory of the gem-flashing garden. I groaned and sank back upon my silken quilts.

Gentle fingers stroked my forehead. I opened my eyes and gazed up into the soft eyes of the quaintly beautiful little lady Tokiwa—his mother! How could she endure the sight of him who had held the sword!—Again I groaned and closed my eyes.

A man's voice murmured a prayer for me to give heed. I looked up and saw a benevolent old man with huge grotesque eyes. He bent forward tremulously, and I perceived that the supposed eyes were Chinese goggles. He kowtowed and, quivering and sweating with fear, offered me a bowl of medicine. I took a sip of the nauseating draught, and thrust the bowl from me in violent loathing. The physician drew back before my angry gesture, gray with fear.

"It is required that the august lord should receive treatment," he murmured.

"It is my mind, not my body, that is sick," I rejoined. "Go!"

He crept away in trembling obedience. The Princess Tokiwa bent over me to stroke my forehead with her soothing fingers. I shrank from her touch and threw my arm across my eyes.

"August lady," I cried, "how can you bear to come near the *tojin*?—Forgive me!"

"Forgive?" she asked, in evident wonderment. "Not forgiveness but gratitude is due the august lord. The House of Owari is the debtor of Woroto Sama."

I stared at her incredulously. Was it possible that even she could feel gratitude towards the man who had held the sword? She was his mother!—Yet I could not mistake the expression of her gentle face. It is not alone the men of Nippon's nobility who are *samurai* bred. There was profound grief in the depths of her dark eyes, but it was a grief crowned with the glory of her son's heroic martyrdom, and in her sight I was illumined by the reflection of his glory. In the realization of that fact my conscience was appeased. The terrible feeling of blood-guilt passed from me and I was healed.

"August lady," I whispered, "the customs of the *tojin* world are far different from the customs of Dai Nippon. I served my friend according to his wish. It has made me a Japanese."

She beamed upon me with a radiant smile, utterly unconscious of my real meaning.

"Is not Woroto Sama a kinsman of Owari?" she murmured. "Though he came from beyond the seas, he has proved that he is *samurai* bred. No longer will the clan of Owari think of him as a man of *tojin* birth."

"It is true, august lady. I am now Japanese. The country of my brother Yoritomo is now my country, and his mission is my mission." I sat up. "See! My strength returns at the very thought. Let Yuki be sent to me. He and I have alike incurred the displeasure of the Shogun. We will become *ronins*."

"Is the august lord angered that he would shame the hospitality of Owari?" she protested.

"I have brought danger upon the family of my friend and kinsman!" was my answer.

She rose and glided from the room. I turned to creep to a rack upon which my clothes were hanging, but when I began dressing myself I found that I could hardly stand. Trailing my girdle behind me, I tottered back to my bed and sank down upon it. Before I could recover sufficient energy to finish my dressing, the Prince entered and seated himself close beside me.

When we had exchanged salutes, he regarded me gravely and asked: "Has my guest been affronted that he should wish to leave my roof?"

"The presence of the *tojin* threatens the House of Owari with disaster."

"Should Iyeyoshi command the punishment of my guest, I must submit. Otherwise I would sooner cast out my grandson than permit my guest to go from my gate a *ronin*."

"What is my life against the winning of that for which a far more precious life has been given?"

"The honor of Owari forbids," he replied, in a tone of finality that checked all further protest. His manner softened to the familiarity of a father addressing a son. "Woroto may not be aware of the time that has elapsed since he fell sick. The last writing of one who has gone from us has been presented to the Shogun, and the witnesses have given their evidence of the proof of sincerity. The welfare of his friend and kinsman was not forgotten by the testator."

"He mentioned me in so solemn a document?" I exclaimed.

"Your fate and the fate of Nippon together await the decision of Iyeyoshi. To-morrow is the funeral. After that I go to the palace."

"To-morrow?" I murmured. "Have I lain here so long?"

"There have been no delays," he answered. "You will wish to accompany the cortege to Uyeno. You must now eat and sleep, that your strength may return."

He withdrew, and presently Tokiwa Sama entered bearing a tray of nourishing food prepared by her own hands. I ate, and sank into a refreshing sleep. At nightfall she roused me for a second meal, and after a time I

again fell asleep. At dawn I wakened hungry and much restored in strength.

Fujimaro appeared to conduct me to my bath, from which I returned to find a dainty breakfast that had been sent by Tokiwa Sama. While I was eating Yuki came in from a night trip to Shinagawa. He had made it on the pretence of a carousal, but in reality to spy upon the Mito *samurais* and to ascertain whether all was well with Kohana. The girl had returned home the night of Yoritomo's death.

Yuki learned that her visit had been made without detection by our enemies. Not only was she safe,—she had gained some information. Yuki brought from her a message of warning, which Fujimaro read for me: "The way of the departed winds past the eyrie of falcons. The seabird should keep to his nest." 335

"The Superior Mito Yashiki lies on the road to Uyeno," explained Yuki.

"They would not dare to desecrate the funeral cortege by an attack?" I exclaimed.

"What Mito does not dare is yet to be seen. My lord and his escort will wear steel within their linen robes," said Yuki, and he hastened out to fetch me a mail cuirass and a cap-like helmet, while Fujimaro brought me a mourning costume of white linen.

Leaving me to the chamberlain, Yuki withdrew to prepare himself and my retinue against treacherous attack. I was dressed and conducted by Fujimaro to a room in which I had often honored the ancestors of Owari by bowing to the Shinto god-shelf. But the shelf and its tablets were now hidden by a curtain of white paper.

We passed on into the chamber where the dead lay before the lighted candles of the Buddhist family shrine. Neither the Prince nor the Princess were present. I was received by the chief mourner, a grave and decorous-mannered boy of twelve, the son of Yoritomo's elder brother. I had expected to see the square coffin or great red urn in which, as a rule, persons of noble rank are buried. But my friend was recumbent in a long lacquered case, the head of which was placed to the north. 336

A napkin lay across his neck. The serene smile on the face was so characteristic that I could have fancied he was asleep had it not been for the vermilion with which the coffin was in great part filled. The chamber was crowded with friends and relatives of the family, but I saw none of them. I looked at my dearest friend, and drew back to kneel among the other mourners, my eyes dim with the starting tears.

My arrival had been late. A Buddhist priest with a little bell entered. After a brief ceremony *etas* came in to bear out the corpse. None other than a pariah might touch the dead. All passed out into the open and formed the funeral cortege, led by the priest with his bell and next a boy carrying the *ihai*, or memorial tablet, of the deceased. All the men followed with the chief mourner, bearing flowers and symbolic banners. The coffin was borne after us on the shoulders of the *etas* in the reversed position of a *norimon*. Last of all came the women mourners.

The procession was very long. Before the rear left Owari Yashiki, the van was far outstretched on the causeway that led along the bank of the outer moat towards Mito Yashiki. Slowly and solemnly we paced along the deserted roadway, beside the still waters in which marvellous lotus blossoms reared aloft their great blue-green pads. A mile brought us to the bridge across the Yodogawa where it flows into the moat. 337

The causeway now turned with the moat from northeast to east and skirted the long walls of Mito Yashiki. Yuki and his men pressed up close beside me, and grasped their swords within the white robes. But the *yashiki* seemed as deserted as was the street before the funeral cortege of the son of Owari. Not a face appeared at one of all the long row of grated windows. The great gates were closed, and no warder peered from the porter's window.

We passed by in a solemn silence broken only by the tinkle of the priest's bell and the scuffle of heavy sandals. The Mito men had respected the dead, not, I surmised, through any desire to honor Owari, but because an attack on the cortege would have been considered little less than sacrilegious by the other clans.

With no thought of danger to divert me from grief, the long march on to Uyeno seemed to drag out to dreary infinity. Yet at last we passed up the wide Hirokoji Street and through the Black Gate of Uyeno. Park and mortuary chapels and monasteries were not unlike those of Shiba, and the great temple of To-yei-zan hardly less grand than Zojoji. But I had no heart for such wonders as the vast stone lantern and vaster bronze Buddha, the myriad-handed image of Kwannon, and the beautiful paintings, arabesques, and sculptures of gates and ceilings. The tombs and temples of shoguns were nothing to me. I was looking upon the coffin of my friend. 338

When the gorgeously robed priests had ended their chanted ritual, I rose in turn with the other mourners, to bow before the coffin and lay incense upon the smoking censer and withdraw to my place. When all had taken the last farewell, the *etas* bore him into the tomb.

"My lord," murmured Yuki, "it is ill advised for us to linger. We should return without delay to the outer moat, and cross over through the official quarter. To repass Mito Yashiki would be to incur great risk."

"What!" I demanded. "Are we to skulk from our enemies on our return from *his* funeral? Let others do as they choose. We return as we came."

His eyes flashed with martial fire. "My lord speaks as a true *samura!* His attendants will go with him gladly."

"The hawks poise. Do not go, my lord," whispered a voice behind me.

"Kohana!" I exclaimed, and I turned about swiftly. I saw her slender figure gliding in amongst a group of the women mourners. In a moment I had lost sight of her. Yuki sprang to overtake her, but I stopped him with a gesture. 339

"Come," I said. "Let the hawks swoop. They will find heron beaks awaiting them."

Fifty men, all mail-clad under their white robes, followed me out through the Black Gate and down Hirokoji Street. Our sandals were bound on tight, and we swung along at a brisk road pace that promised to carry us past Mito Yashiki a good half-hour before sundown. We had no wish either to slip by unseen or to be ambushed

in the dark.

The quickness of our return did not take the Mito men by surprise. They had watchmen in a tower at the corner of the *yashiki*, who signalled our approach. When we came opposite the great gate it was open, and Keiki stood in the entrance with a band of Mito and Hitotsubashi retainers, all in full armor. Keiki shone resplendent in a grotesque harness of green and red and gold that gave him the appearance of an iridescent-scaled insect. His helmet closed across his face in a hideous mask.

Keiki's swordbearer clanked out into the roadway to intercept us, his mail apron lending to his gait a ludicrous appearance of waddling. But there was nothing ludicrous in his purpose. Yuki sprang before me and exchanged a formal bow with the challenger. A moment later their swords flashed out. Yuki was the first swordsman of Yedo, but his opponent was a close second. 340

For a long two minutes their swords clashed in terrific blows, stroke upon stroke, with lightning swiftness. One of the shoulder-brassards of the challenger fell clanging on the hard ground, shorn off by Yuki's blade. In turn Yuki's mail barely saved him from a half-parried blow. Had he worn no armor he must have been killed by that master cut. Twice they wounded one another with frightful slashes that shore through brass and steel and silk wadding to the flesh, yet each time failed to maim or kill.

The crest of the challenger's helmet was a pear-shaped ornament. At the height of the combat the man stooped forward with the force of a supreme stroke. Yuki glanced the whistling blade, and struck back a tremendous downward blow that split the pear in half and cleft down through the helmet. The challenger fell as if struck by a thunderbolt.

My men raised a jeering shout, but Keiki advanced alone, and they fell silent again. The young lord strutted out within a few paces of me, and called tauntingly: "Does the barbarian consider the day ill-omened for Hitotsubashi? If so, let him take the place of his *ronin* dog."

"There is a *tojin* saying that meets the situation," I replied. "It is to the effect that any cur may be expected to yap before his own kennel. Mito Yashiki swarms with retainers ready to pour out and overwhelm my small band. Keiki and his followers are in full armor. I refuse to be tricked. If I draw sword, it means death to me, whether or not Keiki dies first. Such being the scheme, I will even the odds in this manner"—I drew both my revolvers—"the life of Keiki is in my hand. He will do well to let the mourners of Yoritomo Sama pass in peace." 341

The uplifting muzzles of my heavy pistols were arguments to convince the most sceptical. He drew back three or four paces. I signed to my men to march on, but Yuki waited beside me. When the rear had passed, we turned our backs upon Keiki and swung away after the others. Keiki and his men watched us go, without uttering a word or attempting a single hostile movement, though the champion of Mito lay outstretched in the public highway and his blood called for vengeance upon Owari.

"The hawks have darted upon the heron beaks—and swooped back to their eyrie!" I exclaimed. "You are not seriously hurt, Yuki?"

"Not yet, my lord."

"Not yet?"

He glanced up at the high, barred windows of the *yashiki*, from which helmeted heads were peering down upon us. I looked back at the gate. Keiki and his men were withdrawing into the *yashiki*. There was something ominous in their quick retreat and in the silence of the out-peering retainers at the windows. I called upon the men to hasten. They swung into a half trot. 342

A barbed arrow whistled past my cheek and across Yuki's shoulder. Another struck my breast and fell blunted from my mail. Yuki sprang to my right side with upraised sword.

"Run!" he shouted. "The long hawks swoop!"

He clipped a whirring shaft in mid-air with a dexterous stroke, and dragged me forward into the midst of the men. A storm of arrows burst upon us, streaming down through the barred windows. We broke into headlong flight. Beyond the farther corner of the *yashiki* was safety, and the distance was not great. But the barbed shafts flew thick and fast. Had it not been for our armor I doubt if a single one of us would have won through.

A man beside me plunged backward, struck through the throat. I would have paused, but Yuki dragged me onward. The man was dead. We, too, would be slain if we lingered. More than once Yuki clipped in the air arrows that might have pierced between my steel collar and helmet. Other arrows bruised my flesh through steel and padding. I was the central object of the cowardly attack. The tempered steel of my *daimio* armor alone saved me from death. Another of my men fell dead, and several were wounded by shafts, many of which were intended for myself. We rushed on up the road, each wounded man between two of his fellows. 343

We passed the corner of the *yashiki*. The deadly shower was slackening. A bolt-headed arrow pierced my upper left arm from the rear. Yuki sprang behind to shield me with his body. But it was the last shot.

As, a little farther on, we checked our flight, Yuki said with grim humor: "My lord now knows what hawks were meant by Kohana. They have made us pay two men for one. It was well the Mito men did not think sooner of the armor-piercing arrows, else my lord would have been riddled."

Without pausing in his stride, he snapped the arrow that had passed half through my arm, and drew the end from the wound, and a minute later it was tightly bandaged. The other wounded men received the same rough, efficient surgery, but one died in the very gateway of Owari Yashiki.

Dawn of the following day found the Prince of Owari at the palace, to make complaint against the dastardly attack of the Mito men. He returned shortly after noon, and within the hour sent word that he would come to see me in my apartments. Fujimaro, who brought the message, knew nothing as to the result of the visit to the Shogun.

The mingled dread and half-hearted hope with which I awaited the Prince may well be imagined. Was I to be sentenced to a horrible death, or merely sent out of the country? Had Yoritomo's sacrifice won against suspicion and reaction, or were Owari and the cause of progress to go down to ruin and destruction with myself? Since I had lost my little Princess, I could think of my own fate with a degree of indifference. But that the cause for which my dear friend had given his life should fail—what bitterness!

The Prince entered with austere stateliness, only to drop from the formal to the familiar at the first view of my bandaged arm. He waved all our attendants to leave, and sank down beside me, with a look of kindly concern. "You are in pain! Your arm—did Yuki say whether the arrow had a poisoned head?" 345

"No, no, my lord. The wound is already healing. I feel no pain from that. The Shogun! Tell me!—Does the House of Owari still stand unshaken?"

"As firmly as Fuji-yama."

"And the schemes of Mito?"

He smiled and stroked his slender white beard. "Rekko continues to dwell in his Inferior Yashiki. Keiki has paid a heavy price for the pierced arm of my guest. An attack with deadly weapons within the bounds of Yedo is an outrage upon the dignity of the Shogun."

"His Highness once more inclines to your counsel?"

"The offering of him who has gone from us has not been without avail, and Keiki's false move has forced the last bar of the gate for us. Your offence is pardoned."

"That is small matter. Has there been an acceptance of policies memorialized by the departed?"

"Many *daimios* have yet to present their answers to the letters of inquiry sent out by the Shogunate. The majority may be against intercourse with the *tojin* peoples, yet Satsuma and Ii have joined me in urging a temporary treaty for the opening of a few ports. When all answers have been received, His Highness will command the Council of Elders to announce the acceptance of our policy." 346

"*Banzai!*" I cried. "Let intercourse be established for a time, and even the frogs in the well will be compelled to see light."

"The talk of a temporary treaty is a compromise to bring over those who waver between the two camps. I have talked too much with you and with him who has gone to doubt now that ports once opened will ever be closed." He looked at me with a quizzical smile. "Once a *tojin* enters, it is difficult to be rid of him."

"You say I am forgiven?"

"One way has been suggested to rid the land from the *tojin*. That is to make him not a *tojin*."

"Not a *tojin*? You mean death!"

"Death to *tojin* kin and country. I recalled to the Shogun the precedent of the wise *tojin* Anjin Sama."

"That! Can I also become a Japanese?"

"If you wed a Japanese wife."

"Wed?—I cannot do that! You know there is only one maiden in all Japan—in all the world!"

"It is true that the maiden to whom you refer cannot be given to any other than one of exalted rank."

"And I can wed none other." 347

"The heart of Iyeyoshi has been troubled. He questioned the maiden, and found that the words of the *tojin* were true. Yet how could the Sei-i-tai Shogun give his daughter to a *tojin*?"

I stared at the Prince, aflame with an ardent hope that overpowered me. "He—you say that he—Speak!"

"The heir of Owari is a fitting husband for the daughter of the Shogun. You know the arrangement regarding him who has gone from us. There now remains only the son of his elder brother. I have long since reached the age when it is customary to lay aside the burden of the title and of the clan administration. The boy is too young. In such cases it is not unusual to adopt an elder son to bear the burden of the title until such time as it is thought best for him to retire in favor of the younger heir."

"My lord!" I gasped, "you cannot mean—?"

"Iyeyoshi's heart is touched by the grief of his daughter. He is willing to do so much to assure her happiness. My kinsman guest has a true heart—he is to be trusted. When an heir succeeds during the lifetime of his father, he bends to the guidance of the retired *daimio*. There is no more to be said. The decision is now with Woroto."

I kowtowed to him. For several moments I could not speak, for I was utterly overcome with the great joy and unable to believe that such good fortune could be mine. The serene face of Yoritomo appeared before my mental vision. It was as if he had returned to serve me as guardian spirit. 348

"Father of my brother!—my father!" I murmured. I could say no more.

"Woroto—my son!"

I looked up and saw his haughty eyes glistening with tears. We gazed deep into one another's souls. My

brother had gone from me, but I had found a father.

He rose and left me.

Soon, however, the screens parted to admit that sweetest and quaintest and dearest of dames, Tokiwa Sama. She glided across to kowtow to me, demurely radiant. I had found not only a father, but a mother—and such a mother! Could I but have gathered her up in my arms and poured out my heart to her!

Instead we talked with decorous restraint of various little details of home life,—matters trifling and altogether inconsequential in themselves yet charged with a world of meaning to me. I was received into the intimacy of the home life; I had become a member of the family.

Never had I chafed more at the convention that forbade all reference to romantic love. Freed from that taboo, pronounced by an over-rigid etiquette, I knew my dainty little adopted mother would have been an ideal confidante. Her dear face glowed with sympathy and love, which, being unable to express in words or caresses, she could convey to me only by looks and the exquisite courtesy of her manner. 349

So it was, I was accepted as the son and heir of Owari in the hearts of my second parents, before my adoption according to the forms of the law. The legal adoption was not a simple affair of routine, as I had fancied. Though proposed by the Shogun himself, it was blocked for some weeks by the intrigues of the Mito party and the opposition of the Elder Council. Unaware of the motive behind the Shogun's supposed caprice,—a motive that made resistance futile,—our enemies worked zealously to prevent the acceptance of the barbarian as heir of one of the August Three Families.

In the end our opponents even went so far as to appeal to that mysterious superlord the Mikado. For this act custom would have justified Iyeyoshi in punishing them with utmost severity. But he was not averse to showing them that the power of the Shogun, their master, over the Kyoto court was unbroken, and so the matter was delayed for some weeks. In ordinary circumstances, the dense ignorance and bigotry of the imperial court regarding the *tojin* world would have insured a certain verdict against me. But the Shogun brought heavy pressure to bear. It was a difficult matter to deny the express desire of one who had the power to enforce compliance. Also I suspect that the difficulty was glossed over by a flat denial of my *tojin* blood and a strong insistence upon my kinship to the House of Owari. 350

Pending the sanction of the Mikado, I was required to remain within the bounds of the *yashiki*. But it was a confinement far from irksome in view of the extreme sultriness of the midsummer weather and the charm of the *yashiki* gardens.

Yuki, however, roved at will about the city in the disguise of a *ronin*, spying upon the Mito men. Soon after the funeral I had sent him to Shinagawa with a message for Kohana San. But the *geisha* had not been seen since my glimpse of her at Uyeno. She had not returned to her home, and was not to be found. Our first thought was that she might have killed herself for love of Yoritomo. Yet this seemed improbable when we recalled to mind his command for her to live and serve those whom he left behind.

At last, during the solemn Festival of the Dead, which was celebrated in mid August, Yuki learned that the girl was a prisoner in Hitotsubashi Yashiki. Keiki had lured her into his palace, and had either induced or forced her to become one of the many concubines allowed a high noble by custom and law. From this last, Yuki reasoned that Keiki could not possibly have discovered her devotion to our cause, else she would surely have been tortured, instead of being honored with the rank of concubine. When I expressed my surprise that her love for Yoritomo had not caused her to commit *hara-kiri*, Yuki was no less surprised that I had failed to grasp her motive. For love of her dead lord, she had submitted to a fate that to her was worse than death. 351

“With the permission of my lord,” he added, “I will continue to haunt the vicinity of Keiki's *yashiki*. None is more crafty than a *geisha*. She will be watching for an opportunity to send us word of the schemes and intrigues of the Mito party.”

CHAPTER XXVIII—HIGH TREASON

The day after Yuki's discovery, word at last came from Kyoto, sanctioning the Prince of Owari's adoption of his kinsman as son and heir. After that, little time was required to comply with law and custom. The opposition of the Mito faction was paralyzed by the sanction of the Mikado. It was a striking instance of the paradoxical nature of the government of this strange land.

In theory, the Mikado was the sacred and absolute Emperor, and the Shogun only the first among his secondary class of nobles. In fact, he was little more than a figurehead in the hands of the Shogunate, and his sanction of government measures was usually given as a matter of course. A strong Shogun, such as Iyeyoshi, could even enforce compliance against the wishes of so powerful an opposition as the Mito party backed by the reluctance of the *kuge*, or Kyoto nobles. Yet without the Mikado's sanction, however obtained, the Shogun would have become a rebel, with no other means than sheer military force to hold in subjection the great non-Tokugawa *daimios*.

One may well imagine the chagrin of the Mito faction over their failure to block my official adoption as the heir of Owari, and their fury when they learned of the Prince's retirement in my favor. Last of all, the discovery that the Shogun was about to announce his decision in favor of a temporary treaty with the hairy barbarians must have goaded them to madness. 353

The final ceremony of my accession to the title and position of Prince of Owari was an audience by the Shogun. Before this, in the presence of the counsellors and other high officials of the clan,—many of whom had journeyed from the Province of Owari for the occasion,—my adopted father had abdicated his office of clan chief, and I had received the homage of the *samurais*. The day appointed for my formal audience was August the twenty-fifth.

Though surfeited with the irksome etiquette and honors of my exalted rank, I looked forward to the audience with keenest impatience. The Prince—as I shall continue to call him—had assured me that it was the last step in my elevation, and vastly more important than my marriage. To me it was important only because it must precede my marriage.

As a necessary result of the ascent that brought me within reach of my silvery moon,—my all but unattainable Princess,—I could endure and even welcome the austere state of my exalted position. Of itself, however, there was no relish to me in the homage of my clan, and far less in the thought of rendering homage to my lord the Shogun. My princely rank was a ceremonial strait-jacket which bound me about with countless rules of etiquette and restricted my every act and word to certain prescribed forms. To a man who was not to the manner born, the result was little short of torture. 354

Yet I would gladly have endured even greater discomfort for the sake of winning Azai. The vision of her pure and lovely face was before my eyes night and day. It sustained me throughout the dreary hours of ceremonies, and appeared beside the serene face of Yoritomo when I made the required offerings and prayers before the memorial tablets of the family shrines.

At last the day appointed for my audience arrived. I was roused long before dawn, and my little lady mother herself came to overlook every detail of my costume. By dawn my lantern-illuminated cortege, marching with all the solemn parade of a state progress, had crossed the official quarter to the Sakaruda Gate.

With me were the clan counsellors and a powerful guard of retainers in full armor. Yuki had reported too fully upon the virulent wrath of the Mito men for us to chance an attack unprepared. But Yuki was not with me, though I had chosen him to lead my escort. I was concerned for his safety, for he had gone out on another of his spying ventures, and had not returned when expected. 355

At the Sakaruda Gate those of my escort who wore armor remained outside the citadel. I was carried through in my *norimon*, accompanied by my counsellors and chamberlains, my standard bearers, and other ceremonial attendants with led-horses and paraphernalia. But when we arrived before the Gejo Gate, the state entrance to the Inner Castle, I was required to leave my *norimon* and cross the bridge of the inner moat afoot, escorted only by a few of my highest retainers. The Abbot of Zozoji, who was a prince of the Mikado's family, alone could ride in through the Gejo Gate. That honor was denied even the heads of the August Three Families, the highest of all the *daimios*.

Within the gate I crossed a court to the grand portico of the palace, where I was met by Gengo and another of the court chamberlains. Even my counsellors kowtowed to these servants of the Shogun, who in turn kowtowed to me. Trailing their court trousers behind them, they conducted me to a waiting-room, where I was served with powdered tea gruel, and attired in court hat, gauze-winged jacket, and seven-foot court trousers of yellow silk.

After the refreshment, I left my attendants and was conducted by Gengo and his fellow chamberlain along a hall lined with kowtowing retainers, and past an anteroom in which five or six score *daimios* of the lower rank knelt in profound silence. Shortly beyond we came to the raised threshold of the audience hall. My ushers kowtowed and crept in on hands and knees. I followed in the same abject posture. It was the custom of the country and the price I must pay for Azai. 356

The throne was a square lacquered stool, placed upon a dais two feet high. Though the Shogun was dressed with no more richness than on the occasions of my informal audiences, the stateliness of his appearance was vastly increased by this simple throne and the mat curtain that hung down before him to the level of his bell-shaped hat. On his left, three or four yards down the room, kowtowed Midzuano and the other members of the Elder Council. Behind the dais a number of *hatamotos* knelt with their hands upon their swordhilts as if in the act of springing up to attack me.

At the prescribed distance from the throne my ushers parted for me to creep forward between them and kowtow in homage to my lord. The hush was oppressive. I waited, prostrate, until a faint sibilation from the □

courtiers told me that the Shogun had given the signal for my withdrawal. My audience was at an end. Without raising my head, I crept around and out the way I had come, in the wake of my abject ushers. 357

Upon my return to the waiting-room I was served a banquet of nearly a hundred dishes. I could do no more than taste my favorite dish of each course, after which all were set aside by the attendants, to be taken to Owari Yashiki. An hour passed, and my solitary feast was fairly under way, when Gengo entered and bowed before me, with a flask of *sake* held above his forehead.

"From the Tycoon to the Prince of Owari," he murmured.

I kowtowed. "Humble thanks are offered for the gift of the august ruler!—Let the wine be heated."

"It is the wish of His Highness that the Prince test the flavor of the *sake* both cold and hot," replied the chamberlain, as he handed the flask to an attendant.

I bowed assent. "The will of His Highness is the pleasure—"

"Stay, my lord!" called a voice in the entrance. "Cold *sake* is not always wholesome."

At the first word I had glanced down the room and perceived Yuki standing erect on the threshold. The attendants stared about at him, no less astonished than myself. His dress was disarranged, and his look so strange that at first I thought he had been over-drinking. Fujimaro spoke to him warningly, and he sank down to kowtow. No drunken man could have saluted in such manner. The truth flashed upon me. 358

"Approach," I commanded. "You bring a message?"

He sprang up, with a sharp exclamation: "Look! The fox has gone!"

I looked about, and saw that Gengo had disappeared. In the moment's pause when all eyes were fixed upon the kneeling Yuki, the chamberlain had glided to the side wall and slipped out. Yuki came swiftly up the room through the midst of the palace attendants, and pointed to the man with the flask of *sake*.

"Do not open the flask!" he commanded, and he knelt to offer me a tattered, crumpled scroll. "The *geisha*, my lord—To the Shogun! Demand that Gengo drink this *sake*!"

I bent forward to whisper a question: "You suspect poison?"

"Not alone for my lord! Hasten! I fear the worst! Keiki and Midzuano—Gengo the tool—"

But I was already up and crossing the room.

"Bring the *sake* flask!" I commanded. "Conduct me to the Shogun. I must see the Shogun at once!"

Some of the attendants murmured protests. But their superior had caught the alarm. He signed to the man with the *sake* flask, and led us swiftly out into the corridor and up it past the audience hall. The Shogun had retired to more private apartments. We hastened on through a suite of rooms. Suddenly a palace guard blocked our way. My escort whispered to him excitedly. The guard stepped aside. 359

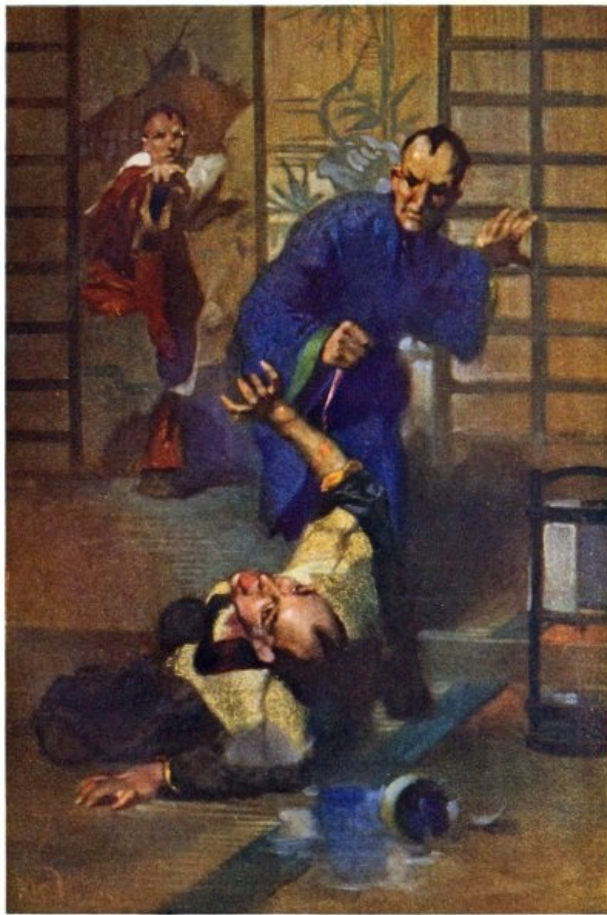
We entered an anteroom and glided hastily across through the midst of the waiting attendants. At the upper wall we were again halted, while my request for an immediate audience was sent in to the Shogun. I waited in an agony of suspense. One moment after another dragged past. Unable to endure the uncertainty, I thrust my finger through the screen, and peered in. The official to whom my request had been whispered still crouched on the opposite side of the screen, waiting for the Shogun's signal to advance.

I stared up the room to where Iyeyoshi sat at ease between Midzuano and the Daimio of Satsuma. As I looked, Gengo glided in with a tea bowl upon a tray, and knelt to present the drink to his lord. The suspicion of his hideous purpose struck me dumb with horror. The Shogun reached out and lifted the bowl from the tray. At that my hands spoke for my stricken tongue. I flung aside the screen that was before me and threw out my arm in a warning gesture.

Iyeyoshi paused with the bowl at his lips, and stared at me in frowning resentment. I pointed downward. The Shogun glanced from me to the cringing figure of Gengo. Instantly he dashed the bowl and its contents into the face of the chamberlain. 360

No man of *samurai* blood might endure such an insult even from the Sei-i-tai Shogun. The poisoner flared out in mad fury. With amazing swiftness he drew a dirk and bounded upon Iyeyoshi. The Shogun flung himself to one side. But Gengo struck with deadly aim. His dirk plunged down through the base of the Shogun's neck the full twelve inches of the blade.

With a roar of fury, Satsuma leaped up to catch the dying man and interpose his own body for the second stroke. But Gengo was already springing back, well aware that the one blow had done the awful deed. We were already rushing in, my companions shrieking for the guards. Midzuano sat as if turned to stone. Gengo dropped down almost beside the Counsellor, to make an end of himself. The murderer was *samurai* bred. Swiftly as I rushed forward, I could not seize him in time to stay his dirk from the fatal cross stroke. He sank prostrate on his face, groaning.



GENGO STRUCK WITH DEADLY AIM

From all sides *hatamotos* with bared swords rushed in, drawn by the shrieks for help. As I knelt with Satsuma beside our dead lord, Midzuano leaped up and pointed to us, with a terrible cry: "Strike! The Shogun is slain! Kill the traitors!" 361

An instant's hesitancy and we should have been hacked in pieces by the upraised swords. Satsuma sprang to his feet, his great form swelling with wrath, his heavy face dark with menace. Without a word, he pointed one hand at the dying assassin and the other at Midzuano.

"Strike!" commanded the Chief Counsellor, and his dull eyes lighted with cold malevolence.

"Strike!" echoed Satsuma, still pointing.

The *hatamotos* glared at us in deadly rage, yet stood motionless, checked by the power of the great Daimio. I rose beside him, and signed to the attendant with the *sake* flask. He pointed to the dying chamberlain, and called loudly: "Midzuano lies! Gengo is the traitor. He first brought this flask to the Prince of Owari; then came to serve the Shogun. His Highness had cause to suspect poison. He flung the bowl into the face of the traitor, who drew and struck."

"The Counsellor is challenged to drink from the flask brought to me by Gengo," I added.

"They are all traitors.—Kill them together!" cried Midzuano.

I held out Kohana's scroll to the nearest *hatamoto*, with a laconic command: "Read!"

The man took the blotched writing and began to read, while all in the room bent to listen.

"Kwannon direct this safely into the hands of a loyal *samura!* Evil traitors plot to poison the Shogun and the Prince of Owari, on the day that the Prince goes to the palace. They cannot endure that His Highness should favor a treaty with the barbarians. Gengo is their tool. All the *daimios* in the conspiracy are not known to the writer, but the names of the leaders are, first—" 362

With a sudden clutch, Midzuano plucked the scroll out of the hand of the *hatamoto* and thrust it into his bosom.

"The Chief of the Elder Council commands at such a crisis," he proclaimed with astounding effrontery. "It is not expedient to publish the names of the criminals until they have been apprehended. Let the Council be summoned to meet me at my *yashiki*."

Even Satsuma was disconcerted by such consummate assurance and audacity. Before either of us could recover wit enough to utter a protest, the Counsellor passed through the midst of the *hatamotos* and out of the hall. But though he went unopposed, his going was none the less in effect a retreat. Freed from his malign influence, the *hatamotos* at once yielded to the spell of Satsuma's magnetism and power. The great Daimio pointed to the body of Gengo, which no longer writhed on the mats.

"Tokugawa men," he called in his deep and sonorous voice, "you have heard. There lies the tool of the traitors who seek the overthrow of the Shogunate. I charge the Chief Counsellor with complicity. Minamoto Iyeyoshi has gone from us without benefit of medicine. Let Minamoto Iyesada the Shogun be notified of his 363

accession to the rulership. All men have faith in the loyalty and wisdom of Abe Ise-no-kami and Ii Kamon-no-kami. Send for them, that they may advise His Highness."

"The loyalty of Satsuma is undoubted," called one of the court officials. "He also should advise Iyesada Sama."

"That is for Abe and Ii. My task is to check the plot of the traitors. Obey no orders from Midzuano and the Council of Elders unless approved by Iyesada Sama. Let all gates of the citadel and the inner moat be doubly guarded. Announce only that Iyeyoshi Sama has been wounded by a traitor. I go to watch the *yashiki* of the Chief Counsellor. Until I have received the commands of the Shogun, no man shall enter or leave the gate of Midzuano. There is need for utmost haste!" He turned to fling out his hand over the bloody corpse of Iyeyoshi—"Vengeance upon the traitors!"

"Vengeance!" shouted the *hatamotos*, and they rushed from the room in fierce eagerness to obey the Daimio's directions.

Satsuma signed for me to accompany him, and as we hastened out, unattended, he gave me my orders with courteous indirectness: "Ii is with us; Abe at least neutral. Keiki and Midzuano are the hands of old Mito. Without them he cannot strike. I will seek to hold Midzuano." 364

"Owari will hold Keiki if the Mito men do not overwhelm us!" I responded.

"Old Mito will either strike at once, or draw in his claws and wait for another opening. Announce that Iyeyoshi has been wounded by a Mito man. That will rally to us the greater number of the three hundred thousand *samurais* who have flocked to Yedo."

"Wounded?—And slain?" I said.

"Only wounded. The city must be kept in doubt until sanction of Iyesada's accession has been received from the Mikado. It will be well for your august father to join his counsel to that of Abe and Ii.—Here is your waiting-room."

I nodded farewell, and darted into the banquet room, where my retainers sat in decorous quiet, keenly alert to the stir and commotion that desecrated the solemn hush of the palace, yet all unaware of its terrible cause. I told them that, instigated by the Mito faction, my would-be poisoner had wounded the Shogun, a deed worthy of the days of the Ashikaga Shoguns.

Silencing their horrified outcries with a gesture, I gave my seal to Yuki, and commanded him to ride at full speed to Owari Yashiki and bring a force to assist me in the blockade of Keiki's residence. He rushed out without an instant's delay, while I followed with the utmost haste that my princely dignity would permit. 365

CHAPTER XXIX—INTRIGUE

Within the hour Satsuma had Midzuano trapped in his *yashiki*, and I was closing in upon Keiki. The Mito men gathered rapidly, with the evident purpose of driving us off or cutting their way through to their Hitotsubashi allies. But the timely arrival of Yuki with a thousand Owari retainers compelled the enemy to draw back for reinforcements. Before these could come up, the rumor of the attack upon the Shogun had spread throughout the official quarter, and so vast a number of loyal *samurais* swarmed to my support that the Mito men barely averted destruction by a quick retreat across the outer moat to their Superior Yashiki.

A word from me would have precipitated an attack that must have resulted in the certain destruction of Keiki. But Yuki and my counsellors alike advised me against a course of action that would undoubtedly result in a conflagration not alone of fire. The death of Keiki by the sword would be the signal for civil war. Even the Prince of Owari had no right to punish the Shogunate's enemies without the command of the Shogun.

The most I could do was to lay siege to the fortified dwelling of the plotter, that no message might pass between him and the old Prince, his father. All through the day we waited, lined up about the *yashiki*, and backed by the dense throngs of *hatamotos* and loyal *samurais*, that came and went, yet were always too numerous to be driven back by a sortie of the Hitotsubashi men or scattered before an attack by Mito. Keiki's retainers wisely kept close and made no display of weapons at the *yashiki* windows. My men were held by my command, but there were times when an arrow or even a gibe would have stung our allies to an instant storming of the traitor's stronghold. 367

Late in the afternoon my adopted father sent a message commending my actions, and asking me to hold my position until notified by Iyesada, with whom he was advising. At nightfall we lighted bamboo torches and vast numbers of lanterns, that neither Keiki nor any messenger might escape past us in the darkness.

A violent storm, accompanied by a deluge of rain and a display of lightning most unusual in Japan, swept over the city during the night, the wind at one time blowing a full gale. But though we were in the midst of the typhoon season, the storm failed to augment to hurricane force. The ardor of more than half of our volunteer allies was quenched by the downpour and the turmoil of the elements. Appalled by the seeming anger of the gods, they deserted us in great numbers. Yet enough remained for the watch to be maintained with utmost vigilance throughout storm and night. 368

Dawn brought us a clearing sky and lulling wind. At sunrise a rumor reached us that Midzuano had committed *hara-kiri*. An hour later an order from the palace, signed by Iyesada and countersigned by Abe Ise-no-kami, commanded me to withdraw my forces. Uncertain whether to obey, I despatched a messenger to Satsuma for instructions. Before the man could return, my adopted father came to me in his *norimon* and directed me to comply with Iyesada's command.

Once again old Mito and his accomplices had escaped the penalty of treason. Midzuano had destroyed Kohana's message, and with a false fidelity in the very face of death, had left a testament to the effect that he committed *hara-kiri* in proof of his own innocence and the loyalty of his friends. With consummate adroitness he had converted what would have been taken as a confession of guilt into a shield to hide his shame and a mask for the crime of his fellow-conspirators.

Without proof positive, Abe Ise-no-kami, who had already been appointed to the office of the dead Counsellor, was of too cautious a temperament to proceed to extremes. To assure himself a majority, he had favored a reorganization of the Council of Elders. Otherwise the regime of Iyesada promised better opportunity for the success of Mito than had the iron rule of Iyeyoshi. The father had been a strong man, who could command the fear and respect of all the great *daimios*; the son was an amiable, capricious weakling. Abe, though astute, was over-cautious and lacked the force and magnetism of a leader. His would be a policy of expediency. 369

Such were the bitter comments of my father as we sat in Owari Yashiki, breaking our fast on the dainty dishes served us by my quaint little mother. Divining with subtle intuition the great fear that troubled her son, Tokiwa Sama ventured to inquire what effect the murder of Iyeyoshi would have on my marriage. The Prince confessed his inability to foresee, but assured me that he would make every effort to obtain from Abe and Iyesada a confirmation of the agreement.

With this he left us and returned to the palace,—to find Keiki already in conference with the new Chief Counsellor. It was the beginning of a ceaseless contest of influence and intrigue between Owari and Mito.

Sobered by the fate of his fellow-conspirator and guided no doubt by the crafty counsel of his imprisoned father, Keiki restrained his fiery temper and proved himself a master of subtlety. With every move he expressed a heartfelt desire for an amicable adjustment of differences and for the coalescence of all parties under the banner of the Shogunate. This was his protestation even while his agents were intriguing with the Kyoto court nobles to prevent the formal investiture of Iyesada with the title and office of Sei-i-tai Shogun. 370

Meantime he had the audacity to demand the immediate release of his father, my degradation and deportation as a *tojin*, and the marriage of Azai to himself. Our only positive proposition was that the ports should be opened for temporary intercourse. Against us the Mito faction stirred up all the prejudices, fears, and passions of the proud *samurai* class.

Abe assumed a judicial attitude, and did all that lay in his power to conciliate the contending factions. To please Mito, he authorized the building of war junks, the drilling of an army, and the casting of cannon. Plans for forts upon the shoals opposite Shinagawa were rushed to completion and work begun.

To please Owari, he refused to take action against me, caused the abrogation of the law that required persons suspected of Christianity to tread upon the cross, held the question of releasing old Mito in abeyance, and intimated that with regard to Azai he rather favored me above Keiki, but would make no decision until the regular investiture of Iyesada gave the new Shogun the prestige of the Mikadoic sanction. 371

The last of the answers of the *daimios* to the letters of inquiry sent out by Iyeyoshi were now coming in, and Abe compared them with the others, with a politic inclination towards the weightier scale. Yet decision was difficult. The vast majority of the counsellors were uncertain and confused in their advice. Against a seeming weight of opinion in favor of the ancient laws, the perplexed premier had to consider the demands of the Russian admiral, Pontiatine, just received from Nagasaki, the not improbable event of a visit from the powerful Asiatic fleet of the British, and the future but certain return of Commodore Perry.

The inevitable result was a continuance of the policy of compromise. The Mito intrigues at Kyoto were delaying the investiture of Iyesada. To secure the Mikadoic sanction the weak Chief Counsellor promised Keiki the release of his father. To appease our party for this concession to the enemy, Abe pledged his personal influence in favor of a temporary treaty and engaged to secure the assent of the Mikado. Keiki obtained an additional concession that old Reikko should be placed in command of the defences of Yedo.

When the Prince heard of this last victory of Mito, he went to the palace in a rage. Abe was most apologetic, but insisted that the concession had been pledged under the seal of Iyesada, and could not be withdrawn. As a peace offering he agreed to obtain Iyesada's assent to my marriage with Azai. 372

CHAPTER XXX—MY WEDDING EVE

When the Prince returned with this last news, I found that at heart I was still very much a *tojin*. All thought of state affairs, the interests of my new country and of my old country, were alike forgotten in the selfish joy of my love. I was to wed my little Princess!

Blissful elation gave way to doubt and anxiety. The death of Iyeyoshi had not yet been announced. Abe was waiting for the Mikado's envoys. When Iyesada had been duly confirmed in his rule, Iyeyoshi would be officially declared dead and would be buried with all due pomp amongst his forefathers either at Shiba or Uyeno. My fear was that, once the period of mourning had begun, Azai might not be permitted to marry me until the termination of the prescribed months of sorrow.

Though puzzled by my feverish impatience at the bare possibility of delay, the Prince urged the matter upon Satsuma. The Daimio, no less willing to please me than to disappoint Keiki, enlisted the assistance of his adopted daughter, Iyesada's wife. The lady was, I suspect, delighted with the opportunity to remove from the palace one whose influence was far greater than her own. 374

Abe found Iyesada not only willing but urgent to bind the House of Owari to his interests by means of the marriage. Satsuma offered himself as intermediary between the two families. Arrangements were made under a mutual agreement that, in view of the circumstances, the wedding should be conducted without display. An act accomplished escapes opposition and a large share of the criticism otherwise uttered in the hope of prevention.

The wishes of Azai were not consulted. She was told that she would be wedded to me the following night. Presents were exchanged, and the trousseau of my bride was brought at once to Owari Yashiki, in the charge of Azai's ladies-in-waiting. Even Tokiwa Sama was impressed by the display of silk costumes and ornaments and artistic articles of personal and household use arranged in the bridal apartments by the ladies of the Princess. My own wardrobe was arranged by my mother and her maids.

Propriety required that I should not view the trousseau of my bride before the ceremony. But chance gave me one glimpse that stirred my heart to deepest tenderness. While passing one of the inner garden courts, I chanced to gaze across, and caught sight of a girl within the opposite veranda. It was O Setsu San bearing in the favorite dolls of her mistress. 375

I sought the seclusion of a grape arbor in the largest of the *yashiki* gardens, and mused for hours upon the sweet innocence of my little Princess bride. The thought of her childlike purity filled me with adoration. I had won the love and trust of this young maiden who yet played with her dolls. I must be very gentle with her.

Death had deprived her of a father's fond care, marriage was to cut her off from home and mother. By entering the family of Owari she was to become as one dead to her own family. She had been the petted daughter of an indulgent father; she was to become the wife and servant of a husband and the humble subordinate of a mother-in-law, whose commands must be obeyed.

Yet hers was a fate far better than the fate of most Japanese brides. She loved me and knew that she was loved: others went to husbands unknown to them, many without so much as the preliminary meeting common among the lower classes. Tokiwa Sama I knew would be a mild tyrant to the gentle daughter-in-law. As a concession to my *tojin* prejudices, if not because of the winsomeness of my bride, she would not deal harshly with my wife.

This I knew because she had already made the amazing concession of supporting me in a contest against custom. It was my earnest desire that my bride should come to the wedding without the customary shaving of eyebrows and blackening of teeth. I had laid great stress upon this strange proposal. The matter had been carried up to Iyesada, and precedent found for a postponement of the senseless blemishings until after the marriage. 376

Though much astonishment was expressed over the betrayal of such absurd prejudices by the Prince of Owari, Satsuma won over his daughter, and Iyesada bent to the wish of his Shoguness. The Princess Azai was ordered to comply with the whim of her future husband. For the time, at least, I had saved the beauty of my darling.

The good news of this concession was brought to me by Satsuma on the morning of my wedding day, and it added no little to my rapturous anticipations. Overcome with joy, I went out into the gardens and wandered about, neglectful of my duties, lost in a maze of blissful visions. But presently the old Prince sought me out and sobered me with his paternal reproof.

"Is it so that Woroto prepares himself for matrimony?" he asked. "On the day of all days when a man should think reverently of the family, my son has neglected to stand before the shrines of his forefathers."

I kowtowed to the ground. "The rebuke of my august parent is just. I will go at once." 377

He restrained me with a gesture as I rose to hasten in. "Stay, my son. It is well for you to realize that what you have set your heart upon with such strange ardor is not certain of attainment even now."

"Not certain!" I cried. "You bring ill news from the palace?"

"I have not been to the palace. From all I know, your day's fortunes are as bright as is this sky after the rain."

"Yet you say—?"

"Have you then failed to grasp the characteristics of your new people, Woroto? Do you forget that the times when we should most expect our enemy to strike are the hours of our greatest joys and triumphs? Your audience as Prince of Owari brought you the flask of poisoned *sake*."

"*Namida!*" I murmured, seized with vague dread. "You have heard of another plot! Keiki plans to rob me of

my bride! Yuki has brought word again from Kohana!"

"Nothing has been heard of any plot. Yuki brings no word from the *geisha*. He committed the grave error of leaving in the street the hollow arrow in which she shot out to him the message of the poison plot. If it was picked up by the Mito men, we have the explanation why no more arrows have dropped beside the *ronin*. The girl will render no further service to Owari." 378

"But the Shogun's daughter—my bride?" I exclaimed, selfishly heedless of whatever fate the *geisha* may have suffered. "You think it possible that Keiki will again attack her cortege?"

"Look for all evil from your foe when fortune seems fairest. Go now. The gods await your prayers."

I bowed, and with unfeigned gravity went in to set the daily offerings before the Buddhist family shrine and murmur the daily invocation before the Shinto tablets: "Ye forefathers of the generations, and of our families, and of our kindred,—unto you, the founders of our homes, we utter the gladness of our thanks."

My duty as acting head of the household was fulfilled, but my disquiet continued. I returned to the garden and roved about for hours, unable to overcome the dread of impending disaster. As evening approached, my alarm increased, though I knew that Fujimaro and Yuki had been sent with a powerful escort to accompany the bride. When I was required to go in to prepare for the ceremony, Tokiwa Sama sought to smile away my dread. But I was in a fever of apprehension until announcement was made that the bridal cortege was entering the great gate of the *yashiki*.

At this my dread gave way to joy no less unreasoning. I hastened in my ceremonial costume to the position within the entrance where I was to receive my bride. Outside, to right and left, two fires had been lighted, and beside each an aged couple stood waiting with a rice mortar. Near me was stationed one of the ladies-in-waiting with a lantern, and other ladies stood behind her. 379

The armed escort had halted in the courtyard, and the bridal party was already entering the inner enclosure. In the light of the gay lanterns I saw the *norimon* of the Princess, which had been turned about end for end to symbolize her death to her family. It was borne forward in the midst of the high officials of the palace household. My chief retainers gathered before the entrance to meet and exchange congratulations with the *hatamotos*. The old couples beside the fires began to pound rice in their mortars and to call out felicitations: "A thousand years!—Ten thousand years!"

The *norimon*, which had been placed upon the mats, was again raised and borne in before me. The lady-in-waiting held her lantern for me. I parted the curtain and looked in upon the lovely face of my bride. Her pure young eyes met mine, aglow with the soft radiance of perfect love and trust. For either to have spoken would have been most improper. But we gazed deep into one another's eyes.

The lady-in-waiting uttered a faint murmur. Azai blushed scarlet and raised one of her sleeves before her face. With her free hand she held out to me the bag of brocaded silk that contained her amulet or talisman. As I took it from her, the *norimon* was carried in past me, led by the lady with the lantern. I handed the amulet bag to another lady-in-waiting, and withdrew to my private rooms. 380

Even to my impatience the interval did not seem unduly prolonged before I was requested to enter the ceremonial chamber. My attendants stopped in the anteroom. I entered alone.

Azai sat in the place of honor, before the *tokonoma*, dressed in robes of pure white silk, which had been sent to her in my name. Over her head was draped a veil of white crepe. To all others the costume was symbolic of death and mourning, to myself it was the emblem of bridal purity.

According to immemorial custom, no relatives were present. Satsuma, as our mediator, took the place of priest and magistrate, although he now had nothing to say and nothing else to do than to sit with his wife. Aside from this friendly couple, O Setsu San and others of the ladies-in-waiting attended upon their mistress.

Food and *sake* had been laid out in the *tokonoma*, which was decorated with branches of pine and bamboo and cherry. When I had taken my seat below and to one side of Azai, two of the ladies served us with chestnuts, edible seaweed, and dried fish, bowing and murmuring gracious words of compliment. 381

The *sake* was in two wine flasks to which had been attached a pair of butterflies, symbolic of our souls. These flasks and two heating kettles were taken from the *tokonoma* to the lower part of the room, and the amber wine poured ceremoniously into one and then the other kettle.

Three cups, placed one within the other on a tray, were brought to me with the *sake*. I drank twice from the upper cup, poured a little *sake* from the full kettle into the empty one, and drank again from the same cup. The service was now carried before Azai, who drank and poured as I had done. The wine was returned to the *tokonoma* and food served to us.

Again the *sake* was brought out, and we drank as before, except that Azai was served first and used the second cup. For the second time the *sake* was returned to the *tokonoma* and food served. Last of all, the *sake* was brought to us once more and I led, as at first, by drinking from the third cup.

Throughout this mute yet solemn ceremony I was compelled to sit with face half averted from my sweet bride. To look at her would have been rude and unmannerly. I had to content myself with stolen side-glances at her dainty head under its soft white veil. She held her eyes modestly downcast. 382

I now rose and withdrew to one room, and Azai retired to another, while our attendants were served with refreshments. I returned to take the seat of honor. Immediately my little bride entered, no longer attired in white, but in a kimono of soft dark silk. The veil had been removed, and I saw that her hair was dressed after the fashion of married women. She was now my wife.

As she nestled down in the place which had been mine, my parents and the wedding guests entered to congratulate us and to join in the feast that was served. For the time being austerity was laid aside, and joy reigned supreme. Owari was providing for the perpetuation of the family. It was proper for all relatives and friends to feast and rejoice. Course followed course, and wit and poetry flowed as freely as the amber rice-wine.

At last, close upon midnight, the feast drew to a close, and the guests prepared to leave. I sat with my bride, receiving the final congratulations and farewells. The more wearied of the guests hurried off; the others prepared to follow. Soon the last would withdraw, and we should be left alone with Satsuma and his wife, who were to conduct us to the bridal chamber.

Suddenly I heard Yuki's voice in the anteroom, raised in loud protest. The Prince hastened out through the midst of the departing guests, enraged at the unseemly disturbance. All followed his going with startled looks. In the hush that fell upon us I heard voices murmuring punctilious salutations. 383

The Prince reappeared, his face no longer flushed, but hard and cold. He waved his fan towards Azai, and commanded in a harsh voice: "Lead her out."

But my darling had sensed the danger with quick intuition. She threw herself before me and grasped at the edge of my robe. Over her bowed head I caught sight of a grotesque, glittering figure on the threshold. It was Keiki, in full armor.

My first thought was that the occasion had enabled the Mito men to enter the *yashiki* by stealth and overwhelm our retainers in their quarters. Yet an attack, however sudden and stealthy, must have meant some uproar of yells and clashing blades. We could not have failed to hear the struggle, even had there been no other sounds than the shrieks of the women.

As I rose, I perceived that the sword of our unwelcome visitor was sheathed and in the hands of a bearer. There was no danger of immediate violence. Yuki stood close at the shoulder of my enemy. Nevertheless there was a grim menace in the glinting armor and hideous face-mask of the son of Mito. 384

I bowed in response to his mocking salute, and attempted an ironical greeting: "Keiki Sama comes late to my wedding feast. Yet food remains. Let him be seated."

"I come late and go soon," he replied, in a tone that seemed to bring a sneer to the brazen lips of his mask's gaping maw. "I come late, but still in time. Does the hairy barbarian grieve that I did not come sooner?"

I turned inquiringly to the Prince. Before the enemy he could betray no weakness. His voice sounded harsh and constrained: "Keiki Sama bears the edict of the Mikado, which holds that Woroto is legally neither my son nor Prince of Owari. He whom I have regarded as my son is declared to be a criminal and a man of alien race. Keiki Sama bears the warrant of Minamoto Iyesada and the Council of Elders to arrest Adamisu Woroto and hold him in close confinement."

Satsuma stepped forward. "Keiki Sama is requested to delay the execution of his orders until dawn. The pledge of Satsuma is offered."

"The pledge of Satsuma may not be scorned by any *daimio* or son of a *daimio*. Nevertheless the occasion does not permit of delay. The command of the Shogun is imperative," replied Keiki, and he displayed his warrant with the great vermilion seal of Minamoto Iyesada. 385

"My Lord Woroto," called Yuki, "your enemy has duped the Shogun with evil lies. Are there no *samurais* in Owari Yashiki?"

"The barbarian is welcome to call upon Owari to rebel against the will of the Shogun," mocked Keiki. "The august Reikko, Prince of Mito, now commands the forces of the Shogunate. Ten thousand warriors surround Owari Yashiki."

I stooped before them all, and pressed my lips upon the bloodless lips of Azai. "Farewell, my wife! We will meet on that other side!"

"You go, my lord!" she gasped.

"Better that the *tojin* outcast should suffer than all Owari," I replied, and I loosened her clutching little fingers. No one should share my fate.

She tottered up to follow me down the room. But Nature was more merciful than Keiki. She swooned into the arms of my weeping mother. The Prince averted his head, unable to mask his emotion. I advanced swiftly past the guests that had lingered, and held out my sheathed dirk to Keiki.

"Lead out, badger! The *tojin* is ready," I said.

"Go before, demon!" he commanded, enraged at the shameful name I gave him.

Yuki had disappeared, but the Prince stepped to my side. 386

"Owari dono will escort to the portico him who was his son," he said.

We walked out side by side, followed by Keiki and his swordbearer. We went in silence. The Prince could offer me no hope, and it was no time to give way to grief. In the portico we exchanged formal bows of farewell. I passed on out.

Yuki approached, with his hands in his sleeves, and sought to edge up beside me. I divined that he schemed to slip me one or both of my revolvers. But Keiki was keen-eyed and vigilant. He thrust himself between us. With the swordbearer on the other side, I walked out through the state gate of Owari Yashiki, into the midst of the mail-clad *samurais* of Mito and Hitotsubashi.

CHAPTER XXXI—IN THE POWER OF MITO

At the command of Keiki, men with iron gloves seized me and stripped me of my brocaded wedding robes. Bound hand and foot, I was flung into a *kago* and a net entwined about me. I was spared the shame of daylight, but torches and lanterns exposed the white-skinned captive to all who chose to look and revile.

They bore me along the outer moat to Mito Yashiki and through the great gate into the grim torture chamber. Without loosening the rattan withes that cut my flesh, they dropped me into a dungeon pit built beneath the stone floor of the chamber. I was flung in headlong, but managed to turn in the air and alight upon my feet. Otherwise I believe the fall would have proved fatal. Had I been stunned, I must have smothered in the ankle-deep slime that covered the bottom of the pit.

Even as it was, I could not hold my balance with my bound feet, squarely as I struck. I sprawled prone in the filth. As I struggled up to a sitting position, Keiki flung down a torch at me. The flaming end tore and seared the skin of my naked side and glanced down into the slime with a loud splutter. 388

"Hear the snarl of the *tojin* beast!" he jeered. "We have been told much of frogs in the well. Mito can now tell of the toad in the pit."

With this a great stone was clapped over the mouth of the dungeon, and I was left to the misery of my fetid quarters and the anguish of my thoughts. The moistening of my bonds in the slime eased somewhat the pain of their incutting edges. But nothing could ease my mental agony.

Since the first I had been as it were dazed by the disaster that had befallen me. Now I no longer had the presence of my enemy to sustain the anger that had added to my bewilderment. Cold horror dampened my fury even as the dank air of the dungeon chilled my fevered body. As my brain cooled I began to realize with frightful clearness the full measure of my downfall. One hour, Prince of Owari, in all Yedo second to none other than the Shogun,—the next, a despised barbarian toad in this pit of filth. One hour, the bridegroom of the Shogun's daughter,—the next, an outcast menaced with atrocious torture and infamous execution.

In vain I sought to gain a shred of hope by wild thoughts of rescue. Always I came back to the bitter realization that Mito had outwitted Owari. Backed by the Mikadoic decree, Mito was all but unassailable. Armed with the authority of the Shogunate, old Rekko and his faction held the sword above Owari, eager for a sign of rebellion. My father had forewarned me that he could do nothing if the Shogun commanded my punishment. I thought of Satsuma and the power of his personality with a momentary glimmer. If Mito failed to bar his way to the palace, the great Daimio could reach Iyesada through his daughter. Iyesada would command Abe, and then— 389

But Abe had called upon the tiger for aid, and had been lured on until he had put his head into the tiger's mouth. He would have enough to do to extricate himself and his master, without troubling over the difficulties of a *tojin* toad in Keiki's pit. All was lost to me, all!—my new country and friends, rank and title, father and mother, and—Azai!

I had to thank the mephitic gases of the dungeon for a merciful dulling of consciousness. With the single opening at the top covered over, the air became so close and foul that I sank into a stupor. I cowered lower in the slime, with my chin fallen forward on my breast. My anguish resolved itself into hideous unending nightmares.

A sharp pang in the front of my left breast roused me from my torpor. About me I saw the loathsome walls of the dungeon illumined by a ray of reflected sunlight. The darting pain in my breast redoubled in sharpness. I was jerked upright. A pole had been lowered through the hole above me, and the hook upon its end had been slipped under my left arm. When drawn up, the point of the hook had pierced the muscles of my chest. Strong hands hoisted me roughly upwards to the mouth of the pit. I was swung out and cast down upon the stone flagging of the torture chamber. The shock won a groan from me where even the hook had failed. 390

"The toad croaks!" jeered a voice I should have known had I been dying. Numbed by my bonds I could scarcely twist my head about to glare my hate into his beautiful evil face. He smiled and bowed low to me. "Behold the bridegroom, fresh come from his bridal chamber! Ten thousand felicitous years!"

"My lord will not permit the beast to stand unwashed before the presence of the august Rekko Sama," remarked one of the chamberlains who stood beside Keiki. "The august Prince abhors stench."

"Let hot water be brought," commanded Keiki. "It were a shame to defile even an *eta's* bath with the filth of a *tojin* toad."

At the word, attendants clattered out to fetch buckets of steaming water. The first bucketful was so near scalding that I writhed under it like an eel in the pan. Others, no less hot, followed in quick succession, while men with brooms scoured my parboiled skin and beat me between the drenchings. I thought I should die of the torture. 391

Yet the water was not quite hot enough to scald me, and between it and the scouring brooms, I was cleansed of the dungeon filth. No surgeon could have bathed my wounds more thoroughly. My violent gasps pumped the pure air deep into my poisoned lungs, and the heavy throbs of my heart sent the blood tingling through my benumbed limbs and brain. When Keiki gave command to cease the washing, I lay outstretched on the wet stones, bruised and aching from head to foot, but freed from all the ill effects of the pit.

"My august father will now view the snow white skin of the *tojin sama*," said Keiki. "Cut loose the ankle withes."

The rattan about my ankles was slashed apart, and I was jerked to my feet. Though weak and unsteady, I was able to stand unaided. Prodding dirks drove me across to the front of the torture chamber, where a frame with curtains of split bamboo had been set up on the matting of the raised floor. Keiki stepped up and kowtowed beside the frame. I heard no sound, but presently he turned and addressed me with mock courtesy: "The *tojin* 392

sama is requested to exhibit to august eyes the manners of his people.”

I stared at the centre of the curtain, through which I fancied that I saw the outline of a seated figure.

“The Prince of Mito is said to regard *tojins* as midway between beasts and demons,” I replied. “He will have ample opportunity to judge of *tojin* manners when the black ships of my people return to Yedo Bay.”

“Woroto Sama will not be so unkind as to compel the august one to wait an uncertain event,” purred Keiki. “Request is made that he show the behavior of a *tojin* of low birth who has been overcome with drink.”

“It is evident that Rekko Sama seeks to ape the tricks of the shoguns with the Dutchmen,” I rejoined. “There is this difference—Rekko Sama is not yet Shogun, and I am not a Dutch tradesman.”

Keiki’s smile deepened, and he murmured imploringly: “Yet will not the American lord condescend to exhibit the manner in which a *daimio* of his people salutes his bride?”

Had my hands been free I must have leaped upon the raised floor and throttled him or been killed in the attempt. I bowed over and waited until I had regained my self-control. My reply was uttered as suavely as his jeer: “In my land there is an inferior people, smooth-faced and *not* white-skinned. They are a race of base savages, who, until conquered and subjected by my people, delighted in the torment of their captives.” 393

Across Keiki’s face flitted a look that might have done credit to an Iroquois or Sioux warrior dancing before the stake of a burning enemy. He was defeated on his own ground. There was a short pause. I fancied that I heard a murmur. Keiki signed with his fan, and waved me aside.

Behind where I had been standing was a post similar to the one in the torture chamber of the High Court. A screen slipped open, and two *etas* appeared with a woman between them. As they crossed to the post the woman raised her head. It was Kohana San. She smiled and bowed to me as if I had been seated before her in the state audience hall of Owari Yashiki. She would have kowtowed had the pariahs loosened their brutal grip of her rounded arms. Keiki looked at her with a devilish smile.

“The complicity of the *geisha* in the crimes of the barbarian is established,” he said. “She may yet win the mercy of a swift death by confessing her knowledge of the barbarian’s intent to betray Nippon to his countrymen.”

“Keiki Sama already has the answer of the *geisha*,” replied Kohana in her clear bell-like voice. “Woroto Sama came to serve Dai Nippon, not to betray.” 394

“Kohana forgets. We will aid her memory,” mocked Keiki.

The *eta* torturers dragged the girl to the post and lashed her fast. A silk cord was looped around her head and twisted tight with a stick.

“Speak!” commanded Keiki.

“The truth has been told,” she replied.

The torturer with the stick began to twist. At the first shriek I bounded forward to fling myself upon the *etas*. Guards rushed between and bore me back. The shrieks died away in a moan. Kohana had swooned. The cord was relaxed, and a pungent powder held to the girl’s nostrils. She revived.

“Speak!” commanded Keiki.

“The truth has been told,” she gasped.

Keiki made a sign, and the torturer again twisted the cord. As it tightened, the agony became greater than the girl could bear.

“Wait!—Have mercy!” she screamed.

“Loose the cord,” commanded Keiki, and he cast an exultant look at me. “We shall now learn the truth.”

For a few moments the tortured girl’s bosom rose and fell in gasping sobs. At last she summoned strength enough to lift her head and speak. But it was not Keiki whom she addressed. Her voice rang out in the ecstasy of self-sacrifice: “My Lord Yoritomo! can it be they think I will lie to harm thy friend?—To thee, my august lord, the last word of thy humble servant!” 395

She paused. Blood gushed from between her lips. Her head sank forward. One of the *etas* wrenched open her mouth, and cried out that she had bitten off her tongue. Love had triumphed over hate. The most frightful torture could not now compel the *geisha* to denounce the friend of her dead lord.

For a moment I thought that Keiki would hurl himself upon the heroic girl. A low murmur came from behind the bamboo curtains. Keiki signed to the *etas*. “Return the traitress to the cage until the time appointed for her crucifixion.”

“Demon!” I cried. “Beast! *Aino*!”

A guard struck me a violent blow across the mouth.

“Fling the toad back into his slime hole!” commanded Keiki.

“The nobles of Nippon are civilized!” I gibed at him between my bleeding lips.

The shot struck, though not where I had aimed.

“Stay!” commanded a stern voice from behind the curtains. “The barbarian beast shall have no justification for his revilement of Mito. Let the sentence and warrant be shown him, and let him be caged as a condemned *daimio*.” 396

I had touched the vanity of the hidden Prince of Mito. Keiki bent to mutter a protest. For answer, two documents were thrust out between the slits of the bamboo curtain. Keiki mustered his courtier’s smile, and turned to open the documents before me, that I might see their vermilion seals.

“The sentence of the High Court, condemning to death Woroto the *tojin* for discharging a firearm in Yedo —” he began.

“The Prince of Mito knows that this unjust sentence was annulled by the express command of Minamoto Iyeyoshi,” I interrupted.

“The Prince of Mito has received the sentence of the High Court and the warrant of the Council of Elders,” replied Keiki suavely. “No order of annulment had been received from Minamoto Iyeyoshi.”

To this I had no answer. There could be no doubt of the duplicity of my enemies. The entire proceeding was illegal. But I was absolutely in their power. To have cried out in protest would have served only to gratify their malice. Finding that I remained silent, Keiki made a sign. I was led past the gaping mouth of the pit, and out through a low opening, into a room lined with wooden cages.

A *samurai* covered my wounds with plasters of dampened paper; a tattered silk kimono was wrapped about me, and I was thrust into one of the cages. After a time food and tea were brought and set in between the massive bars. To my astonishment, I discovered that I was ravenously hungry. I devoured the food, and stretched out upon the rough planks of my prison cell, overcome with plethora and exhaustion. A heavy sleep came to ease my aching body and racked brain.

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CHAPTER XXXII—LED OUT TO EXECUTION

For two days I was kept caged, but fed and waited upon by *eta* gaolers with utmost deference. Why there should have been such a delay I could not conjecture, unless time was required to check some move of my friends, or unless Mito wished Kohana and myself to regain our strength, so that we might suffer the more keenly during our execution. Utmost precautions were taken that I should find no means to put an end to myself.

On the third day I was roused before dawn and led to a bathroom. My wounds were now almost healed, and my full strength had come back to me. But when I stepped from the cage, my arms were gripped by two *samurais* in such a manner that a slight twist would have dislocated the shoulder joints. Of this I was given a hint, as a warning against any attempt to escape. Otherwise I was treated with deference. After the bath I was clad in a worn but clean robe of silk, and led back to my cage for breakfast.

When I had eaten, I was again asked to leave the cage. As I stepped through the opening, *etas* seized me and lashed my arms behind my back. I was led out to a court crowded with warriors in full armor, and forced into a *kago*, over which nets were wound. Dawn had not yet come, but torches flung a weird and lurid light over the outlandish figures of the armored *samurais*. 399

Another *kago* was borne forward past mine. Within the nets that enmeshed it I saw the bowed form of a woman. She raised her head, and I perceived the pallid face of Kohana. She greeted me with a smile that wrenched my heart.

"Buddha bless you!" I called. "Be strong. There is one who awaits us beyond!"

Her dark eyes glistened with tears of gratitude at the words of sympathy. But the bearers of her *kago* hastened past. She disappeared among the close ranks of the *samurais*. A signal was given, and the torch bearers filed out of the court. The *samurais* strutted after, with clanking armor. Others appeared and fell in behind my *kago*. I was borne out in the midst of the procession.

Outside the gateway of the *yashiki*, Keiki, mounted on an armored stallion, waited at the head of several thousand warriors. The lowly *geisha* and the despised *tojin* were to be escorted through Yedo by an army of *samurais*—though not in honor.

Dawn was at hand as we started along the causeway of the outer moat towards Owari Yashiki. Far away, over the western suburbs of the city, I caught the glorious vision of Fuji-yama, glowing high in the blue-black sky, like a symbol of hope in the night of my despair. My spirits revived with unreasoning elation. But Keiki led his warriors on along the causeway, and within the half-hour the exultant Mito men were marching past Owari Yashiki in the full light of dawn, with an insolent clamor of conches and wooden clappers. The ranks about me opened out, that I might be seen. 400

No sound came from the *yashiki*; no face peered from the grated windows. We clashed past the great gateway. It was closed tight. The Mito men strutted past, shouting in derision. No band rushed out in fierce sortie, as I had expected. No face appeared at the windows. I was abandoned to my fate. My head sank forward upon my breast.

Before me rose a picture of the beautiful gardens and fairylike palace; of my quaint and gentle little mother Tokiwa, my stately father. But all vanished before the white face of Azai. A pang of doubt and despair pierced my brain. Was Azai still here in the *yashiki*, vainly longing for me?—had she gone before me, with her dirk through that white throat?—or had she been taken away to be given to Keiki? I muttered a curse upon my friends. I was being borne past the end of Owari Yashiki, and not even Yuki my swordbearer had struck a blow for me.... 401

Down through west and south Yedo was a long and tedious march. But I failed to heed the passage of time. I had sunk into a lethargy of despair. Only once I roused up. They were bearing me past the groves of Shiba, now glorious with the tints of autumn. The northeast monsoon, after weeks of steady effort, had blown the moisture of the Japan Current southward. The air was as clear as crystal, the blue sky cloudless. It was no day to lead a man out to a hideous death—I should have been strolling through the gardens with Azai....

On to the Tokaido, and down along the bay shore through Shinagawa, marched the grimly grotesque warriors of antique Nippon. It seemed a lifetime since my dear brother had led me after the cortege of Satsuma, through the black gate and along the broad way and down that narrow street to the house of Kohana. Now the *geisha* was going with me to meet him—through the black gate of death!

At the southern boundary of Shinagawa the main force of our escort halted. We were borne onward, guarded only by a hundred swordsmen and an equal number of pikemen. We came to the pillory upon which I had seen the five heads. My bearers swung past. This was not the place where we were to suffer. 402

Out on the blue bay I saw great foundations of stone rising from the shoals that barred the approach to Yedo. Toiling workers swarmed over and about the half-constructed forts, to which strings of sampans were lightening blocks of stone from junks that lay in the offing. Other craft sailed up or down the bay, or lay at anchor in the deeper water down towards the tall white tower on the cape opposite Kawasaki.

Sailor bred, I looked out upon the wide bay with a sudden rousing from lethargy. Wind, waves, swelling sails—all spoke of life and freedom. If only the majestic *Susquehanna* might come steaming around that towered cape! I could see the grotesque warriors about me scuttling like crabs before the thunder of the *tojin* cannon.

But Perry had promised the reluctant Shogunate many months for deliberation, and I had heard the report from Nagasaki that the Tai-ping rebellion was raging in China. I could hope for no aid either from my own countrymen or the ships of any other Western power. The lives and property of white men were endangered at Shanghai by the Chinese rebels. It was no time for squadrons to be cruising along the remote coasts of Japan.

We approached Omori. A group of villagers shouted at me in derision, and ran ahead of our party. Others 403

joined them by the score. The news spread down the Tokaido. I saw men in silk robes, white-clad pilgrims, and even priests, cutting across towards the bay shore. Keiki turned off the Tokaido. We had come to the execution ground. The mailed *samurais* clattered through the midst of the motley crowd assembled to gloat upon the torture of the victims. There were peasants and fishermen, merchants and porters, cowed priests and pilgrims, and a scattering of *ronins*.

But I had no eyes for those who had come to see me suffer. The Mito men were lining out to right and left. I was borne past after Kohana to the edge of the hideous blood pit. Bones crunched under the iron-shod sandals of my bearers. All about me the ground was composed more of the dead of countless executions than of soil.

Before us stood a heavy post with cross-beams at top and bottom. A few paces to the left was a massive gibbet with a chain dangling from its arm. *Eta* executioners advanced, bearing a huge copper kettle, which they swung to the chain of the gibbet. Oil was poured into the kettle, and a fire lighted below.

The *etas* came to my *kago* and unwound the nets. But as they dragged me out, Keiki called to them. One took up his position beside me, ready to catch me with a grappling-hook should I attempt to run. The others went to Kohana's *kago*. She was dragged out and taken to the cross, which was directly in front of me, less than six yards away. 404

The *etas* tore the robes from about her shoulders. The first dancer of Yedo stood before the gaping mob nude to the waist. In a twinkling she was triced up to the cross, her tender wrists lashed to the upper arm, her ankles to the lower. An *eta* brought a sheaf of slender lances and handed one to his chief.

The executioner moved around and put the lance tip to the girl's side. I knew that his purpose was to pierce upwards through her body without striking a vital organ. My eyelids fell. I could not endure the sight. But again Keiki interfered.

"Hold!" he commanded, and he rode forward until between me and the gibbet. "Wait until the oil is heated. You may miss your thrust. The girl may not linger long enough to enjoy the first dipping of the *tojin* beast."

"My lord," protested the *eta*, "it is known to you that I have more than once thrust through two and even three spears from each side, yet death did not follow until after many hours. This is one who can endure much."

Keiki did not deign to reply. The executioner drew aside a step. The crowd pressed closer, and an oppressive hush fell upon all. The gloating spectators stared from myself to Kohana and from her to the great kettle, where the *etas* were casting brush and faggots on the fire. 405

Even the certainty of torture cannot hold the mind to any one thought for many moments. I found myself heeding such trifles as the downward swoop of a flock of gulls and the heat of the midday sun upon my bare head. I noticed with idle curiosity that those of the crowd who had pressed forward on each side were nearly all men of the lower classes. The upper-class men held back behind the guards, seemingly ashamed of their morbid curiosity.

Gazing out over the bay, I began to count the junks and fishing smacks. Sampans came and went between the anchored craft. From a junk that lay opposite us a large sharp-bowed boat was sculling leisurely shoreward. I flushed with petulant anger at the thought that here was another party coming to see us tortured, yet too indifferent to hasten.

The purring voice of Keiki recalled me to the horror of the situation.

"The kettle boils," he called. "Proceed."

The chief executioner stepped forward with his spear. I caught a farewell glance from Kohana. She raised her face to the sun. I turned my head aside—and found myself gazing into the white face of Azai. 406

I stared, stupefied. She was wrapped about in the white dress of a pilgrim, the dress of mourning. Had she come to die with me? That thought was more fearful than the thought of death in the boiling oil.

A man in white behind her looked up, so that I saw his face under the broad hat brim. My heart leaped. I was to die a merciful death—I and Azai, my wife. Yuki had not failed me!

CHAPTER XXXIII—BARED BLADES

A dart whirred past me, to drive through the mid-body of the executioner as he bent to thrust his lance. In the same instant Yuki flung off his pilgrim robe and leaped at Keiki with outflashing sword, his burnished armor glittering in the sun-glare.

Sudden as was the attack, Keiki flung himself away from the stroke with such quickness that the blade barely cut through the mail on his side. Wrenched about by the powerful bit, his stallion reared above Yuki. Instantly the swordmaster struck a slashing upward blow that half severed the beast's neck at the base.

I saw the stallion rolling over upon his rider—a score of Mito warriors were leaping to drive back Yuki—I saw Azai darting towards me. All about me was a wild swirl of shrieking, fleeing commonfolk, of Mito men yelling and slashing in blind fury, and crestless warriors, still half disguised, who had already cut down their own number of Mito men. I sprang to meet Azai. The *eta* with the hook grappled my robe and dragged me to the ground.

Azai sprang past me. I twisted about and saw her strike at the stooping *eta*. The pariah fell inert, pierced through the nape of his neck. A mob of yelling, slashing warriors surged about us. Azai flung herself upon me to shield me with her tender body. A Mito man fell heavily across us, the blood gushing from a great wound in his breast. I heard the triumphant shout of Yuki. The wave of fighting men surged back. 408

My bonds parted under Azai's dirk edge. She sprang up and tugged with her girlish strength to help me to my feet. From the bosom of her robe she plucked out my revolvers, first one and then the other. As I caught them from her, I glanced around at the wild *mélée*. A group of Mito men were dragging their lord from under his horse. The mass were closing in upon my rescuers, who had rallied with Yuki to drive them back from me. All told, his followers numbered less than fifty. Though picked men, they were falling fast before the overwhelming numbers of the Mito men. The pikemen in the rear ranks thrust at them over the shoulders of the Mito swordsmen.

"My lord! to the shore—the boat!" cried Azai.

"First free Kohana!" I commanded.

With unquestioning obedience, she ran with me to the cross and slashed at the bonds of the *geisha*. A Mito man charged upon me from the side. I shot him through the centre of his demonic face mask. Kohana fell free from the cross. Our defenders were giving back. 409

"To the boat!—to the boat!" I shouted.

"To the boat!" yelled Keiki.

I thrust Azai and Kohana before me, to rush past the kettle gibbet. Our defenders came backing after us, now rallying, now retreating. Keiki's voice called from the midst of the Mito men, and half a hundred came charging around to flank and head us off. I began to fire. But the Mito men were not to be stopped by my balls. They rushed in upon us. I drew Azai back. Kohana was too quick for me. She sprang aside to the gibbet. An oil dipper was lying upon the ground. She caught it up and dipped into the boiling oil. With a skilful sweep she dashed the seething fluid into the faces of the foremost warriors. Shrieking in agony, they turned to fly. Again the girl dipped and flung, and again, in quick succession. The Mito leaders plunged back amongst those behind, in wild panic.

Another ladle lay beside the kettle. I caught it up and helped fling out the oil at those who would have boiled me in it. The Mito men of the flanking party turned and rushed back among those who were engaged in furious struggle with our defenders, throwing them into momentary confusion.

The moment was not lost by Yuki. At his shout, our men closed about us. The ladles were taken from Kohana and me, and we were swept forward with Azai. The Mito men, charging after us, were again thrown into confusion by ladlefuls of seething oil. They spread out on either side to close around us. But we had gained a slight start. 410

A few yards offshore I saw waiting the large scullboat. Naked rowers stood ready at their long sweeps. The shoreward gunwale was lined with women, dressed in black robes and stiff black hats and armed with halberds.

The Mito men closed in again upon our rear and flanks, and sought desperately to push forward and head us. Our men fought them off with still greater desperation. The shore was not far. Five and twenty men were left when we gained the beach and splashed down into the water. Yuki, though severely wounded, yet fought best of all, spurring his fellows to superhuman efforts with his cries.

Down the beach with us plunged the Mito men, goaded on by the furious commands of their lord. I caught a glimpse of his bright-armored figure upborne between two of his retainers. But my pistol ball glanced on the shoulder-piece of a warrior who leaped before him down the bank. Azai slipped upon the slimy clay bottom. I caught her up and plunged forward, dragging Kohana by the arm. 411

On either side of us Mito warriors and our own men fell maimed into the muddied water, to flounder and drown. A dozen of the enemy dashed ahead to board the boat. The *samurai* women, led by O Setsu San, screamed defiance and struck at the mailed warriors with skilful blows of their halberds. Only two of the enemy gained the side of the boat. Both were overtaken and cut down by the foremost of our party.

Almost outspent, we floundered forward through the knee-deep water to the boat. O Setsu San and her *samurai* women beat off the Mito men with their halberds while we clambered aboard. I swung Azai and then Kohana over the gunwale, and vaulted in after them. A few of our men were in before me. Such of the others as had not fallen came staggering alongside, all wounded. The stronger ones paused to meet the furious attempt of the Mito men to overwhelm them and capture the boat.

The women whirled their halberds, the naked oarsmen beat at the Mito men with their sweeps. I fired every

cartridge that remained in my revolvers, and shouted for all to climb aboard. Those already in the boat stood with brandished swords. Those in the water turned to clamber over the gunwale. The Mito men rushed after. The women redoubled their blows. Yuki still stood with his face to the enemy, and shouted to the oarsmen to back offshore. The brave man meant to stand where he was and guard our retreat until cut down. I reached over and dragged him alongside. 412

The boat had begun to back water under the powerful strokes of the scullers. Finding that I would not release him, Yuki turned and leaped aboard. I caught up the sword of a man who lay dying, and thrust out at the Mito men as they grasped at the boat's bows. Yuki and such of his men as could still fight beat at the enemy, slashing through the mailed arms that sought to hold the boat. But the brave women did far more with their halberds.

With a cry of triumph, we beat off the last Mito man and swept clear. I glanced about and saw Azai fling down a halberd to kneel beside one of the wounded men. O Setsu and Kohana and all the other women dropped their halberds to follow the example of their mistress.

Yuki sheathed his hacked sword and sank down before me, the blood oozing through his riven armor.

"My lord," he murmured, "Owari could not strike, but *ronins* could. Your august father gave me the best swordsmen of the clan. It is for my lord to win his way over the sea to Kagoshima. Satsuma-no-kami pledges shelter to my lord and his wife, the Shogun's daughter. Farewell, my lord! I go now." 413

He sank prostrate at my feet. At my cry, Azai darted to me, and after her O Setsu. Other women aided them to strip off the broken armor. They would save him if he might be saved.

I sprang up to order the boat brought about. The Mito men had floundered after us till the water came to their armpits. They could come no farther. No man could swim in armor such as weighted them down. At my command the scullers brought the boat around, bows on, and headed her for the nearest junk. She drove forward, out across the dancing whitecaps, at racing speed.

Aboard the junk the crew was shortening cable, ready to weigh anchor and set sail. One of the wounded men called to me and pointed to the shore. Mito warriors, stripped of their armor, were running swiftly towards Yedo. Others waved banners and garments, in frantic efforts to signal the many passing junks and boats. A fishing smack sheered out of its course to intercept us, but bore off again at sight of our bared blades.

We raced on, the long sculls bowing under the powerful strokes of the rowers. These men, too, were Owari retainers. They stood in their places and thrust at the handles of their sweeps with their broad chests, rejoiced to serve him who had been the chief of the clan. 414

The poop of the junk reared high before us. The hope in my heart rose to a certainty. There was no gaping hole in the stern of the clumsy craft. She was one of the junks that the Shogunate had sought to convert into a warship. I remembered that my clan had offered to equip and man part of the fleet.

We shot alongside. Lines were flung to us and made fast. The rowers helped us lift the disabled warriors up over the low bulwarks amidships, while the junk's crew weighed anchor and hoisted their great square sail. Two men had died of their wounds. But Yuki still breathed. He was lifted aboard and carried into the cabin, followed by Azai and O Setsu and Kohana.

As the ship came about, the crew shouted and pointed up the bay. A squadron of war-junks and guard-boats were bearing down upon us. The women were all aboard. I scrambled after with the rowers. Stones were flung down into the boat to scuttle her, and she was cast adrift with the two dead men.

With the monsoon blowing fresh on her port quarter, the junk was already beginning to run down the bay at a rate that surprised me. The bronzed skipper came pattering down from beside his huge tiller to kowtow to his august lord. I ordered him to rise and come aft with me up on the high poop. 415

The pursuing squadron had ceased to gain on us as at the first. Most of the craft were falling astern, but one at least was still creeping up on us. The skipper admitted that she was slightly the better sailer on the wind, and that she carried a number of bronze pieces. His own cannon had not yet been shipped.

A few inquiries brought me the information that he had aboard spare sailcloth and spars. Within the minute I had his crew rigging jibs and staysails. There was no time to cut and sew canvas. The sheets were knotted and rigged in a manner to shame a marine. Yet even the first jib that was set drew enough to offset the difference in the speed of our foremost pursuer.

After jibs followed staysails, and last of all, studding-sails. The junk heeled over under the freshening wind and drove down the bay at a speed that astonished the incoming craft. Finding themselves fast falling astern, our pursuers opened fire with their feeble carronades. We cheered, and hauled to our peak the first national flag authorized by the Shogunate,—a red ball on a white field.

The many craft which we met or passed mistook the firing of our pursuers for salutes and cheered us as we drove by in our swift flight. Within two hours we were flying past the outjutting point on the east coast which had given Yoritomo and me so much concern that wild night in June. 416

We stood boldly on down past the cape above Uraga. In the narrower waters of the bay between us and Cape Sagami, government guard-boats sculled to and fro in vigilant patrol. We drove on past Uraga without putting in, as the regulations required. Guard-boat signalled to guard-boat. They sculled swiftly athwart our course, signalling for us to lay to. Some we slipped past; others backed water to escape being run down, firing at us with their ineffective swivels. Two managed to strike in alongside. But we cut loose their grappling-hooks before their crews could board us.

By mid-afternoon we cleared the last of the guard-boats off Cape Sagami. Before us opened the broad gulf of the outer bay, beyond which rolled the illimitable expanse of the Pacific,—the broad lap of Freedom! We had won our way out of the clutches of Mito.

I set our course between the smoking mass of Vries Island and the distant coast of Idzu and ordered the

studding-sails struck. We had now only to coast down Hondo and Shikoku and Kyushu to Cape Satanomi before the steady drive of the northeast monsoon,—a rough voyage against the Japan Current in any craft, yet one fairly safe at this season even for our unwieldy junk. The typhoon season was past. 417

I went down into the cabin, where mats had been laid and silk drapes hung for the son of Owari. There, alone in the largest room, I found the Shogun's daughter, waiting to salute and serve her lord. She kowtowed before me, her forehead upon her tiny hands. I bent and caught her up in my arms, and pressed my lips upon her little mouth, after the manner of the *tojins*.

CHAPTER XXXIV—CONCLUSION

The last page of my narrative is finished. I lay it aside with the others and gaze out through the open balcony of my tower room upon the majestically beautiful stretch of Kagoshima Bay. From this pagoda eyrie I can look with equal ease down the blue gulf and upon the gray roofs of the city beneath the castle height.

There, in the mouth of the inlet, off the volcanic island in the head of the bay, is the anchorage where the *Sea Flight* lay that eventful night for Fate to send me my brother Yoritomo.

My thoughts wander from the classroom below me where, as honorable and honored teacher of the *tojin* learning, I instruct the young *samurais* of my great friend Satsuma. I pass in rapid review those eventful months in Yedo. I recall the sacrifice of my dear friend and rejoice to know that the years promise a maturing of good fruit from the seed sown by his spirit and watered with his blood. I recall how even Mito and the cautious Abe were forced to accept the treaty they abhorred, by the menace of Perry's black ships, in the Spring of fifty-four.

The brother of the sweetest woman on earth or in Heaven still sits on the stool of the Sei-i-tai Shogun. But now Ii Kamon-no-kami the Great Elder holds the place of Abe, and seconds the efforts of the wise first consul to Japan, the American Townsend Harris. Word has come that the treaty for the opening of ports to commerce and intercourse will be signed. The Shogunate and feudalism verge towards their inevitable fall. But the truth must penetrate to the ears of our sacred Mikado through the age-old barriers of ignorance and prejudice. I see a new Japan. 419

A hand touches my arm with the lightness of a perching butterfly. I turn and draw to me my wife, the Shogun's daughter, and press my lips upon her coral mouth. So much I have retained of my *tojin* manners.

She withdraws her soft arms from about my neck, and glides back to kneel before her lord and clap her hands gently. There is no responsive "*Hai!*"—but through the entrance floats a graceful woman, bearing a blue-eyed baby girl. Little Azai is handed to her mother, while Kohana San smiles the greeting she cannot speak, and kowtows to the master.

A sturdy boy of four rushes in to fling himself down before his august father in the required salute. But there is a light not altogether Nipponese in his lustrous black eyes as he springs up to tell of his war game with his playmates in the castle garden. 420

And O Setsu San? She still attends upon the Shogun's daughter when not serving her lord and husband, the Swordmaster of Kagoshima, once known as Yuki the *ronin*. But of the august Prince of Owari and his quaint and dainty lady Tokiwa, who for a time I called father and mother,—from them I have been cut off as from the dead.

Kagoshima is far from Yedo, yet even Shimadzu Nariakira, Daimio of Satsuma, dare not whisper abroad the secret of my presence among his counsellors. For Keiki and old Reikko still plot and intrigue in the capital of my wife's august brother, and in Kyoto the Son of Heaven still dwells in the Past, and in his eyes the hairy *tojins* are beasts and demons.

May Ama-terasu, bright Goddess of the Sun, soon illumine the night of Kyoto with her rays of truth!

THE END

Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

In the list of books by the same author, the price for the second one actually was printed as \$150, with no room for a decimal point.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SHOGUN'S DAUGHTER ***

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